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NATIONWIDE FAST AND THANKSGIVING DAYS IN ENGLAND, 1640-1660

BY

LUCY-ANN BATES

ABSTRACT:

This thesis seeks to show that nationwide fast and thanksgiving days were not the handmaidens of a puritan parliamentary cause, but synonymous with monarchy, custom, and traditional English worship. It investigates the question of what happened to nationwide prayer days, which were ordered on royal authority, when Charles's authority was challenged in the 1640s and two rival authorities began to order occasions. It then analyses their continuities and changes through the 1650s and re-emergence in the traditional model at the Restoration.

It is argued that belief in providence was a central motivation in the ordering and observance of special worship. This is in contrast to the predominant historiographical view, which focuses almost exclusively on the relationship between these occasions and their political contexts. This is not to say that politics did not play a significant role; it did. Rather that this should not overshadow recognition that these were primarily religious events. Indeed, these occasions are worthy of investigation precisely because of their politico-religious nature. Examination of the frequency of prayer days demonstrates key turning points in this period, changes in ordering processes reveals the shifting nature of authority, while close analysis of prayer day orders and forms of prayer highlights how the civil war threw theological debates concerning providence, prayer and fasting into sharper relief.

Uniquely, this thesis examines the distribution of printed texts used for prayer days, highlighting the practical difficulties of distribution, particularly for the royalists. Similarly, it contributes to scholarly debate by demonstrating the popularity of the concept of nationwide fast and thanksgiving days, thus challenging current assumptions. The work closes by reflecting on what these occasions can tell us about contemporary debates concerning the royal supremacy, the religious settlements of 1559 and 1662, and the nature of the national church in the early modern period.

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By

Lucy-Ann Bates

Dissertation submitted in 2012 for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

Following research conducted in the Department of History at Durham University as a member of the AHRC-funded British State Prayers project.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

A&O	C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (eds.), <i>Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum</i> (London, 1911)
BL	British Library
Bod.	Bodleian Library
CCA	College Cambridge Archive
CJ	Journal of the House of Commons
COA	College Oxford Archive
CRO	County Record Office
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series</i>
GL	Guildhall Library
HC	History Centre
HJ	Historical Journal
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
L&H	J.F. Larkin and P.L. Hughes (eds.), <i>Stuart Royal Proclamations</i> (2 vols., Oxford, 1973-83)
LJ	Journal of the House of Lords
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (online edition)
PC	Privy Council register
PLP	Maija Jansson (ed.), <i>Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons</i> (7 vols., Woodbridge, 2000-07)
RO	Record Office
SP	State Papers
STC	<i>A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475-1640</i> , compiled by A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, revised and enlarged by W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson and K. F. Pantzer (3 vols., London, 1986-91)
Wing	<i>Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641-1700</i> , compiled by Donald Wing (3 vols., New York, 1945-51)
WKC	William Keatinge Clay (ed.), <i>Liturgical Services: Liturgies and occasional forms of prayer set forth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth</i> (Cambridge, 1847)
WKC BCP	William Keating Clay (ed.), <i>The Book of Common Prayer illustrated; so as to shew its various modifications; the date of its several parts, and the authority on which they rest</i> (London, 1841)

Standard conventions have been followed in writing this thesis. Original spelling and punctuation of primary sources has been retained with superscripts silently lowered. Square brackets indicate my own insertions, while curved brackets indicate contemporary insertions. All dates are Old Style, although the year is taken to begin on 1 January. Titles that appear throughout the thesis are cited in full in the first instance in each consecutive chapter, except for those that appear in the table of abbreviations above. All biblical references used are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise stated. The journals of the House of Commons and House of Lords are referred to by date of diary entry (i.e. 19/12/1640) rather than by volume and page number. This reflects the greater use by scholars of online sources, such as British History Online, in conjunction with paper versions. It is hoped that this style of reference will provide ease of use for both approaches. Similarly, the Calendars of State Papers, Domestic, are referred to by date and item number. All references to State Papers are via State Papers Online unless otherwise stated.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information obtained from it should be acknowledged.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Andrew, for his continual support and encouragement, and our wonderful dog Penny, for not eating it.

Introduction

Nationwide fast and thanksgiving days were specific, extraordinary days set apart for prayer across the nation. As such, they were a distinct and special form of common prayer. Founded upon concepts of providence and the nation as God's chosen people, they were ordered and authorised by state authorities in response to calamities, such as natural disasters (whether disease or 'unseasonable' weather) or war, as a petition for divine aid. The use of national prayer in England in times of crisis was established by the medieval period and had biblical precedents.¹ Given that prayer days were ordered by or on behalf of the monarch, by their very nature these occasions were synonymous with monarchy, civic religion and tradition. The nature of nationwide prayer days can be considered primarily as either petitionary or thankful. Fast and humiliation days were petitionary, a response to affliction.² Recognising the nation's suffering as God's just punishment, they sought to relieve it through regaining divine favour.

Thanksgivings gave thanks for recent divine aid, with the aim of ensuring the continuation of God's blessing. While additional prayers of petition or thanksgiving might be inserted into regular church services to mark the significance of specific events, the setting aside of a separate day with designated church services assigned the occasion a special status.

Belief in providence and the nation as God's chosen people underpinned nationwide fast and thanksgiving days and was an extension of the relationship between man and his maker.³ Just as the free will of man remained completely subservient to the omniscience and omnipotence of the divine, the nation remained utterly dependent on divine favour in order to survive and prosper.⁴ Crudely put, man could not guarantee

¹ A. J. Robertson, (ed.), *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 109-117; J.P.D. Cooper, 'O Lorde save the kyng: Tudor Royal Propaganda and the Power of Prayer', in G. W. Bernard and Steven Gunn (eds.), *Authority and consent in Tudor England : essays presented to C.S.L. Davies* (Aldershot, 2002); Andrea Ruddick, 'National prayer, propaganda and political theology in pre-Reformation England', paper presented at the National worship in international perspective: state prayers, fasts and thanksgivings since the sixteenth century conference (12-14 April 2010). Scriptural Old Testament references, such as Jonah 3.5, suggest that the use of nationwide prayer and fasting in times of adversity has far earlier historical roots.

² I have found no contemporary distinction between the terms 'fast day' and 'day of humiliation'; even the same people referring to the same occasion use the terms interchangeably.

³ The seminal work on providence is Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999). Further discussion of the historiography of providence and the concept of England as God's chosen nation will occur in chapter one.

⁴ As such, the concept of fasting with the aim of averting disaster was consistent with even quite radical interpretations of predestination, for God may well have chosen a national fast day and the pre-ordained

that fasting would avert disaster or that giving thanks would continue to secure divine favour, but they were his only hope.

The theological principles governing nationwide prayer days were contested among different theologians but the vast majority held the following key points. The suffering of the nation was at God's hand and was justified due to the immense sins and unworthiness of his chosen nation, for they continually broke his covenant with them. Only God had the power to remove the affliction set upon the nation, for the people were powerless. It was not the case that the national observance of a fast could guarantee the removal of affliction, but as the Old Testament history of Israel demonstrated, God forgave the truly repentant who recognised their unworthiness because he was merciful and loving. True repentance through fasting was the only way potentially to avert utter, irreversible disaster. When such disaster was avoided or significant blessings befell the nation, God's hand was clearly at work and the people must give thanks for such undeserved favour. God had chosen the nation for his people and made his covenant with them, sinful though they were. Humble and grateful thanks were all they could offer.⁵

The shared cultural ideas of providence and England as God's chosen nation were enforced through the inclusive nature of nationwide prayer days. These were national religious occasions that even some Catholics felt comfortable observing, probably due to the absence of communion in many prayer day services.⁶ Observance was not restricted to church papists; some committed recusants such as Lady Montagu 'did piously observe all the fasts of Lent, the Ember days, and whatsoever other were either commanded by the Church, or introduced by the pious custom of the country'.⁷ As such, fast and thanksgiving days should be seen as state rituals measuring national emotions. They were nationalised and Protestantised developments with their roots in

(but resulting) repentance of the nation as his means of ending the suffering of his people and renewing his covenant with them.

⁵ This will be discussed further below and in chapters one and three.

⁶ Provision was made for possible communions in some forms of prayer but it was not essential for a prayer day service to occur. For further details see chapter three.

⁷ Some church papists, such as Ralph Buckland, avoided communion services but attended other services such as fasts and thanksgivings. See Alexandra Walsham, *Church papists: Catholicism, conformity and confessional polemic in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 77, 85-89. For quotation see Richard Smith, *The Life of the most honourable and vertuous Lady the La. Magdalen Viscountesse Montague* (St. Omer, 1627; STC 22811), sigs. D4v-E1r.

late medieval ‘superstitious’ practices, such as pilgrimages, appeals and prayers of thankfulness to military saints at times of war.

The impetuses for ordering specific nationwide days of prayer largely remained unchanged throughout the early modern period and beyond. Before 1640, fasts were appointed for war or natural disasters, such as disease or ‘unseasonable’ weather, while thanksgivings were called to express gratitude for the removal of hardships, such as plague or drought, from the kingdom. These reasons for state authorities ordering a nationwide occasional day of prayer were points of continuity throughout their history, including the period under consideration in this thesis. For example, plague was the cause of the general fast on 17 November 1640, and the Protector ordered a similar occasion in May 1658. Relief at the plague not reaching London was one of the reasons for parliament ordering a thanksgiving in July 1645.⁸ Anxiety over the lack of rain led both to a day of humiliation in December 1646, and a thanksgiving for relief from drought on 23 May 1654. War and domestic disturbance, like natural disaster, had a long tradition as a purpose for national prayer. Elizabeth I ordered religious celebrations for the defeat of the Spanish Armada.⁹ Nationwide fasts were a consistent reaction to threats to the state by potential invasions that sought divine aid for their aversion; followed by thanksgivings once they had passed.¹⁰ The civil wars, as well as the international conflicts during this period, led to many thanksgivings for military victories, such as the thanksgivings for Naseby on 19 June 1645, and for the victory over the Dutch held on 23 June 1653.¹¹ Such continuities in the purposes for ordering national fast and thanksgiving days throughout the early modern period

⁸ It should be noted that the thanksgiving ordered by parliament for 22 July 1645 was only partially for London’s preservation from the plague. See *CJ* 12/7/1645.

⁹ WKC, pp. 469-470. See also *A Psalme and Collect of thanksgiuing, not vnmeet for this present time: to be said or sung in Churches* (London, 1588; STC 16520).

¹⁰ For example, a thanksgiving was observed on 19 March 1643 for delivery from a plot in Bristol, and another on 15 June and 11 July 1643 after the discovery of a plot in London. See *LJ* 14/3/1643 and *CJ* 16/3/1643; *CJ* 9/6/1643 and 17/6/1643, and *A Brief Narrative of The late Treacherous and Horrid Designe* (London, 1643; Wing B4614). A prayer day on 20 February 1657 recognised the hand of God in the State’s deliverance from a plot and the preservation of the Protector. See *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector and the Parliament, For a Day of Publique Thanksgiving On Friday the Twentieth of February, 1656* (London, 1657; Wing C7066). Similarly, the celebrations on 21 July 1658 recognised divine assistance in the defeat of the invasion, *A Declaration of His Highnesse The Lord Protector for a day of publick Thanksgiving* (London, 1658; Wing C7067). The importance of the return of the King as Head of State was highlighted in the annual thanksgivings for His Majesty’s happy return and birthday from 29 May 1661, see *By the King. A Proclamation, For the observation of the Nine and twentieth day of May instant, as a day of Publick Thanksgiving* (London, 1661; Wing C3498).

¹¹ *CJ* 16/6/1645, *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State To incite all the good People of these Nations to thankfullness and holy rejoycing in the Lord, for the late great Victory at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E775aA).

keenly identifies them as shared cultural concepts held by authorities of widely differing religious and political affiliations.

The issuing of printed orders and specific instructions for observing a particular occasion (often included in a form of prayer) were established procedure by the seventeenth century. While directions varied, there were key areas of commonality. Church services included scriptural readings, sermons (or homilies if no licensed preacher was available), psalm singing and prayers extolling the virtues of fasting or giving thanks, confessing sins and repenting; these activities all focused on the need for divine favour. Collections were often taken at the church doors, and distributed to those in need either locally or elsewhere in the nation, and in some areas communities shared an evening meal together. On thanksgiving days, most communities made additions to the required methods of observance with bell ringing and bonfires.

At an individual level, ‘other duties’ were expected aside from church attendance, which varied between orders but usually included private prayer, contemplation and avoidance of any lewd or overly merry behaviour. Fast days were more restrictive for the individual and usually involved a change and reduction in diet, the wearing of plain apparel and abstinence. Thanksgivings were more enjoyable occasions, but merry-making should not be excessive, they remained solemn days of prayer if more positive in tone. For both fasts and thanksgivings any ‘other duties’ were flexible and open to interpretation. Even with the issue of the Directory (which replaced the Book of Common Prayer in 1645) the extent of the rigour of observation was up to the individual, such as how much time to dedicate to preparing privately for fast days at home before church. This flexible element within the Directory’s instructions demonstrates continuity with previous orders such as the fast order of 1563.¹² The now famous puritan Nehemiah Wallington often arose in the very early hours to prepare for a fast, but it seems unlikely that this was typical among the general population.¹³

¹² *A&O*, vol. I, p. 604. The Directory outlined the general sense of what was expected of the clergy in particular situations as opposed to prescribing a script of the words the minister should speak. See also *A Fourme to Be Used in Common Prayer Twyse a Weke, and Also an Order of Publique Fast, to Be Used Every Wednesday in the Weeke, Durying This Tyme of Mortalitie, and Other Afflictions, Wherwith the Realme at This Present Is Visited* (London, 1563; STC 16506.3), sigs. Ciiv-Ciir.

¹³ For example see BL, Additional 40883, fos. 69v, 71v.

This flexibility in methods of observance in local communities and among individuals could extend beyond the remit of a nationwide prayer day and this requires us to define these occasions against other similar religious practices. For example, nationwide authorised days contrasted with other ‘private’ or local occasional prayer days. These were not organised nor recognised by the state authorities, nor were they designed for the whole nation, despite some attracting audiences of several hundred participants. In 1640 Nehemiah Wallington was of the opinion that ‘the Lord hath had never more prayers put up unto him in no yeere then he hath had this yeere, for I thinke that more dayes of this parliament time theier hath bine private meetings in fasting and prayer and thanksgiving... at some places there have bine hundreds and some parsons of no small account for there have bine coaches at the doore for them’.¹⁴ In addition, the organisers of these private occasions, while perhaps believing that they were aiding the state, did not believe they were acting as representatives of its authority or of the nation as a whole. The popularity of such sizeable unauthorised events (especially fasts) among Protestants, particularly among puritans, can cause difficulties in interpreting whether a particular occasion was ordered by the authorities or should be considered an unauthorised prayer day.¹⁵

In a similar vein, government men or institutions, such as parliament, councils or military leaders, might authorise an occasion solely for their own use rather than as national representatives, resulting in a private (albeit authorised) occasion which potentially could be confused with a national event. For example, in mid-July 1563 Matthew Parker organised private prayers at Canterbury Cathedral for the Mayor and Common Council due to plague and famine, but was very clear that he had not ordered them throughout his diocese.¹⁶ While nationwide prayers were later called, this initial action by Parker was clearly a local occasion. These complications are compounded, for some national fast and thanksgivings days may have been observed only within one locality, such as the capital, but designated as representative of the nation. For example, on Wednesday 4 January 1643, parliament ordered a thanksgiving for the victory of their troops at Chichester. However, given that the occasion was to be held that Sunday, it was only observed in London and Westminster.¹⁷ The decision to observe a national occasion through representatives rather than across the nation did

¹⁴ BL, Additional 21935 fo. 96v.

¹⁵ This will be discussed further below.

¹⁶ BL, Lansdowne 6/62, fo. 154r.

¹⁷ LJ 4/1/1643.

not necessarily reduce the status of an occasion, but could reflect practical difficulties such as issues over disseminating prayer day orders. Therefore, for an event to be considered an official nationwide prayer day, it is necessary to find evidence of its authorisation and some indication that it was intended by the authorities to be observed across the nation or by a group representing it. In the absence of a printed order, it is sometimes possible to use local sources from different localities that refer to the occasion and its order to provide evidence of its nationwide observance. However, in many cases this is not possible and the national status of the event cannot be confirmed.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the question of what happened to nationwide fast and thanksgiving days when the royal authority is challenged and the government split into two competing authorities. Given that the legitimacy of a nationwide prayer day was bound inherently to the authority of those representing the state – the government – there are particular difficulties in examining these occasions in the political turmoil of the 1640s. In consequence, this dissertation adopts the approach of accepting the state's authorities to be those who held key positions in what they themselves believed was the legitimate government of England. Thus, these national leaders (whether royalist or parliamentarian) believed they presided over the English nation, acted on its behalf and represented it as part of the body politic. They relied on law, precedence, and public opinion to support their status of authority and provide the necessary power to rule.

As a result of the potential difficulties in identifying a prayer day as national, as well as the tensions of rival governments in the civil war and subsequent destruction of key royalist documents, it is difficult to establish comprehensively all the nationwide prayer days in the period 1640 to 1660. For while one may be fairly confident of locating all the authorised occasional prayer days observed by parliament, it is likely that further royalist prayer days were ordered and observed but which cannot be confirmed as nationwide as opposed to local events due to the nature of the surviving sources.

Similar difficulties occur when attempting to establish the procedure for ordering an occasion. Parliamentary orders were recorded in the journals and printed for distribution to the localities, whereas records of orders for royalist days of prayer are

often missing or occasions were observed on an *ad hoc* basis as soon as the local community heard about them. Rare entries such as ‘Item paid for a Bonfire by order from [the] King for [the] victory att Newarke -- 3s’ indicate that royal orders existed and were observed, even though the original orders are either lost or were perhaps given verbally.¹⁸ However, in terms of examining the structure of church services on national fasts and thanksgivings the reverse is true, and it is possible to be far more accurate in outlining royalists’ services than those of parliamentarians due to the royalists continued use of forms of prayer. While recognising these limitations, the advantages of examining both royalist and parliamentary occasions, especially in terms of providing a broader understanding and interpretation of national fast and thanksgiving days, ensure that this is a fruitful endeavour. As such, the appendix provides a detailed list of occasions observed between 1640 and 1660, but one that cannot claim to be complete.

I

Whereas the story of national fasts and thanksgivings is often told as a tale of the increasing political influence of a puritan minority in government, which exploded in the 1640s and 1650s, this thesis emphasises their traditional heritage, conservative nature, and popularity among those of conformist and moderate religious tendencies as well as with those of puritan inclinations. In particular, it highlights nationwide prayer days as both political and religious in nature and an accepted part of early modern English culture.¹⁹ To some extent, it seeks to redress the balance of scholarship pertaining to these events. Hugh Trevor-Roper’s essay ‘The fast sermons of the Long Parliament’ is regarded by many, such as John Adamson, as the ‘*locus classicus*’ of that particular aspect of this subject. However, the attention paid to it, inadvertently, has had the effect of reducing the subject of national fasts and thanksgivings in England in this period to that specific topic alone.²⁰ This thesis aims to demonstrate that this subject is far richer and broader than the actions of puritans in the Long Parliament.

¹⁸ Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin’s Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 183r.

¹⁹ On the complexities of the overlap between religion and politics see Patrick Collinson, ‘The politics of religion and the religion of politics in Elizabethan England’ *Historical Research*, 82 (2009).

²⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament’, in idem., *Religion, the Reformation and social change, and other essays* (London, 1984); J. S. A. Adamson, *The noble revolt : the overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), p. 706 endnote 125.

This dissertation adopts a multi-faceted approach to the study of these occasions by tracing them from conception and authorisation by the authorities (top-down), through distribution networks to send the orders from the governing centre into the localities (middle-out), to their reception by individuals and local communities (bottom-up). In doing so, over-simplistic dichotomies are avoided, such as observers versus rebels or religious (or even puritan) versus apathetic. In this way, the thesis utilises a more nuanced approach to analyse these occasions; for example by demonstrating that non-observance was not necessarily an act of rebellion or indifference, and not all those strongly motivated by religion and supportive of prayer days were puritans. Given the flexible nature of orders and methods of observance, it is more appropriate to consider a range of actions and reactions to these occasions and the events that led to them.

Two key themes shape this thesis. First, the non-puritan aspects and history of national fast and thanksgiving days is investigated. This dissertation locates these events within wider contexts: as a distinct phenomenon within nationwide prayer, and in keeping with the traditional religious practices promulgated by the Church of England. While men of more radical religious inclinations were key office-holders in the late 1640s and 1650s their influence did not occur as early as many posit nor did it affect the nature of English religion as fundamentally as one might have expected.²¹ The frequency of national fasts and thanksgivings between 1640 and 1660 is often cited as evidence of puritan power in parliament, yet chapter one demonstrates that this is unfounded. This dissertation rejects the current story of puritans in parliament seizing upon prayer days (and fast days in particular) as a means of dispersing their political messages in a way that royalists could not. Given this rejection as well as the thesis's emphasis on the traditional and conservative aspects of these occasions, further explanation becomes required as to what happened to the royalist occasions. Here the research findings of this project indicate that distribution was a key stumbling block for the reception of royalist nationwide prayers.

Practicality provides a second angle of enquiry. The dissertation begins by establishing the nature and context of nationwide prayer days, challenging the current orthodoxy that they were largely puritan occasions. It then examines the ordering processes of

²¹ For example Kevin Sharpe asserts the 'revolutionary nature of puritanism' as a cause for civil war, Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealth in England, 1603-1660* (London, 2010), p. 612 endnote 61.

national fast and thanksgiving days and how these changed through the period from 1640 to 1660 in relation to shifts in political and religious authority. After considering questions of the distribution of printed items required for nationwide prayer, discussion turns to the reception of these occasions at the grass-roots level. At all levels, practicality pervaded national fasts and thanksgivings whether in terms of difficulties in distributing orders or the demands of daily life conflicting with the instruction to pray. Such practical constraints affected all English men and women regardless of religious or political affiliations, though they might be utilised as an advantage by particular individuals in certain circumstances. Nevertheless, practical problems with observing an occasion should not be automatically dismissed as excuses of the irreligious; even Nehemiah Wallington missed a fast day to receive a delivery of wood.²² Thus, this thesis emphasises that the parliamentarians were far from having a monopoly on national fasts and thanksgivings, nor religiosity in general, for these occasions were popular among royalist as well as parliamentarian authorities and supporters. In doing so, this dissertation highlights flaws in the current historiographical interpretations that confine themselves to celebrating the supposed triumphs of puritans in the Long Parliament.

Though chapter three demonstrates that differing priorities and styles of nationwide prayer can be discerned amongst royalists and parliamentarians, the wider picture is one of similarity and continuity. Chapter five identifies the popularity of the concept of nationwide prayer and the enduring strength of the customs surrounding prayer days within cultural memory. The nature of these occasions as inclusive and a measure of national emotion and anxiety reflects the nature of the Church of England and this discussion brings the thesis to its close. Despite a period of profound experimentation in secular and religious government, the national church did not become exclusive to members of a radical religious minority. Examination of nationwide prayer days sheds light on the negotiations between two tensions present in the Church of England, the demand for exclusivity from a church striving for the highest standards and yet the inclusivity resulting from its responsibility for the souls of a whole nation. These tensions were played out within the nation highlighting the nature of English religion as a series of negotiations between the state, the church, and the people. These

²² See Wallington's diary entry for 18 July 1654 in David Booy, (ed.), *The notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654 : a selection* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 311.

negotiations secured a fundamentally moderate church even in periods of political upheaval and radical influences such as the 1640s and 1650s.

II

The general historiography of the mid-seventeenth century focuses almost exclusively on politics, and this may be attributed to the influence of Christopher Hill who did not see religious concerns as a powerful enough motive for the civil war.²³ While politics is obviously fundamental to understanding this period, there remains a tendency to assume that the only significant measure of cultural influences is their impact on public policy.²⁴ Such an approach is problematic in that it inherently marginalises the idea that many individuals, aside from religious radicals, might perform a religious action entirely for religious reasons. The political emphasis in scholarship is so strong that even when an interpretation accepts a degree of religious motivation, it argues that there were probably other political (and probably self-interested) factors that prompted the action.²⁵ This stems from a revisionist desire to utilise religion as a cause for political change, and, while the political impact of religion is important, our study of religion should not be restricted to this approach.²⁶ The fact that early modern men and women performed religious acts for their own sake is rarely acknowledged unless they went to the extremes of martyrdom. Yet many individuals were motivated by religion throughout their daily lives without being set on the road to martyrdom.

Even when groups of early modern people identified on account of their religious outlooks are studied, such as puritans and Catholics, discussion remains largely confined to their political influence.²⁷ For example, Michael Questier's highly

²³ Durston and Maltby interpret Hill's influence in this way describing Hill as having convinced many that 'genuine religious concerns lacked the power to provoke so momentous and catastrophic an event [as the civil war].' See Christopher Durston and Judith D. Maltby (eds.), *Religion in revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 2.

²⁴ For example see Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991); Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990); John Frederick Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969); Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge, 1974).

²⁵ For strongest example of this approach is Adamson, *Noble revolt*.

²⁶ This is evident even in the work of John Morrill who famously coined the use of 'England's wars of religion' to describe the civil wars, see for example John Morrill, *The nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993). For recent work on martyrdom that acknowledges religious motivation see Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at stake: Christian martyrdom in early modern Europe* (London, 1999); Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (London, 2009).

²⁷ Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and community in early modern England: politics, aristocratic patronage and religion, c. 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 2006).

influential work on early modern Catholicism barely discusses religious practices but focuses on Catholic political influence. The neglect of work on Catholics in general makes this omission in Questier's work more significant than it would be otherwise. Relatively little attention is given to examining how the religiously earnest experienced and understood this turbulent period, though it must be noted that there is far more research into puritan experiences than those of a more conservative nature. How the 1640s and 1650s affected individuals' experiences, understandings and perceptions of religion requires further research.²⁸ Whilst a detailed study of this question is beyond the scope of this project, it is hoped that an examination of a series of religious actions that were intended to be nationwide will provide some foundations for further research into this area.

Recently, scholars have highlighted the need to abandon certain Whig notions that continue to persist in scholarship. The royalist voice has started to be heard, promoted by scholars such as David L. Smith and Jason McElligott.²⁹ Peter Lake and Michael Questier have noted the 'residual Whig assumptions' that England was inherently Protestant and that protestantization was a process integral to 'the national story in a way that Catholics and Catholicism are not.'³⁰ The prioritisation of Protestant history was emphasised even further by highly influential historians, such as Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake, who specialised in puritanism. The wealth of work on puritanism, spearheaded by Collinson's *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, led Lake to comment that 'to review the historiography of Puritanism is to review the history of early modern England' due to 'the close association of the history of puritanism with what we might term the history of modernity'.³¹ While Lake charts the recent shifts in the historiography of puritanism, concluding that it has a bright future despite the efforts of many 'to consign Puritanism, both name and thing, to the trash-can of exploded or abandoned concepts', he recognises that puritanism is now most commonly utilised to

²⁸ This would complement recent research on the experiences of war for the individuals involved such as Ian Gentles, *The English Revolution and the wars in the three kingdoms, 1638-1652* (Harlow, 2007).

²⁹ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars* (Cambridge, 2007); Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester, 2010).

³⁰ See Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, *The antichrist's lewd hat : protestants, papists and players in post-reformation England* (London, 2002), pp. 320-324.

³¹ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan movement* (London, 1967); Peter Lake, 'The historiography of Puritanism', in John Coffey and Paul Chang-Ha Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008).

construct and define various versions of ‘Anglicanism’.³² Yet this still has the effect of attributing puritanism as the driving force of progress, for it remains the measuring rod against which other groups are defined.³³ Even these underlying implications that non-puritan individuals were somehow backward, or that those who held other views were somehow slow to realise Protestantism’s inevitable and assured triumph (with a particular puritan flavour in the 1640s and 1650s) must be overturned. A ‘national story’ should include the whole nation ideally, and where such a narrative is not possible, the views of the majority must be heard and utilised as the unit by which to measure change. We must avoid the temptation to apply puritan definitions and understandings of English cultural influences, such as providentialism, to the nation as a whole.³⁴

Whilst a common cultural occurrence and an ideal subject for sermons, the application of providentialism to interpretations of the chosen nation’s fate was awkward given the questions it raised over collective responsibility. Prophetic discourse as an ‘engine of patriotic feeling’ was inherently problematic as ‘the argument that one Noah, Lot or Nehemiah might ransom an entire community or nation was a natural corollary of the thesis that one Achan or Jonah could be the cause of its undoing.’³⁵ Dissatisfaction with the Caroline approach to the national church encouraged some preachers to blame national calamities on the sins of particular groups within society. It was a small step then to claim that it was only because of the godly that utter destruction had not already occurred, which revealed ‘the latent and unresolved tension between the English Church as an inclusive institution and the little flock of the faithful concealed within it showed distinct signs of exploding’.³⁶ As confidence among some preachers increased in distinguishing between the elect and the reprobate with metaphors of ‘the

³² Lake sees puritanism’s historiographical future ‘as a means of illustrating how ‘the processes of political manoeuvre and public debate and polemic, “religion” and “politics” continually constructed and reconstructed one another throughout the post-Reformation and Civil War periods’ Lake, ‘The historiography of Puritanism’, pp. 364, 360.

³³ An underlying current of this view is found in Nicholas Tyacke, ‘The Puritan Paradigm of English Politics, 1558-1642’ *HJ*, 53 (2010), pp. 527-550.

³⁴ Geoffrey Browell’s study of providentialism is a noteworthy exception here, particularly in his analysis of royalist providentialism, see Geoffrey Charles Browell, ‘The politics of providentialism in England c. 1640-1660,’ PhD. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury (2000).

³⁵ Walsham, *Providence*, p. 303; Patrick Collinson, *The birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 21-27.

³⁶ Walsham, *Providence*, p. 303.

seed and the parasite', Walsham holds that 'the charitable assumption that the whole nation was a chosen people lost all credibility'.³⁷

Yet it is difficult to explain the purpose of any national prayer days for the period 1640-60, let alone reasons for such an intensity in the number of occasions, without accepting that most people (including puritan MPs) believed England to be a chosen nation and that its prayers were pleasing to God. Walsham is convincing in her interpretation that providentialism 'may have fostered a religious sense of nationhood, but ... simultaneously inhibited it'.³⁸ However, providentialism could not be solely responsible for creating the dotted line of discriminations 'along which the civil and ecclesiastical establishments would later divide'.³⁹ Given Walsham's own view that 'the future of the community was fused with the fate of the private citizen's soul', the collective eschatology inherent in the continuing tradition of nationwide days of prayer into the twentieth century demonstrates the continued credibility of a chosen English nation throughout the early modern period and beyond.⁴⁰ Both royalists and parliamentarians clearly held the view that it was possible that the prayers of the repentant could save the nation, though it could not be guaranteed. The regular choice of Psalm 32.6 by both sides highlights this, with it even appearing in the royalist monthly fast form: 'For this shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: but in the great water floods they shall not come nigh him.'⁴¹ Nevertheless, though this view dominated prayer day texts, tensions are evident that reflect Walsham's view from within some puritan parliamentary texts. In a sermon delivered before the Commons on a fast day Stephen Marshall was keen to emphasise that 'God never promised that the sincere Reformation of a few should prevent the judgement of a multitude'.⁴² While, in 1654 Cromwell's text issued for a fast day recognised the sincere professors of the gospel who 'have been instruments of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 306; Wilson, *Pulpit*, chapter 6, pp. 168-169, 185, 189-190; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, 'Federal Theology and the "National Covenant": An Elizabethan Presbyterian Case Study,' *American Society of Church History*, 61 (1992).

⁴¹ See *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Solemn Fast Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4111), though this printing mistakenly identifies this text as verse 26 rather than 6.

⁴² Stephen Marshall, *Reformation and Desolation: or, A Sermon tending to the Discovery of the Symptomes of a People to whom God will by no meanes be reconciled. Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at their last solempne Fast, Decemb. 22. 1641* (London, 1642; Wing M770), sig. G1v.

many mercies, and of obtaining a just freedom for the nation.’⁴³ It was possible that the virtues of the few might save the many, for ten godly men would have been sufficient for Sodom, and the authorities might have halted the national calls to prayer for this reason.⁴⁴ However, it seems likely that, even for puritan parliamentarians, overall nationwide prayer held far greater benefits than relying on the prayers of the godly few due to its preaching opportunities and potential to draw more individuals closer to God.

Therefore, in assigning the godly the power to destroy the concept that the whole nation was a chosen people further difficulties are created than are solved, particularly in explaining why nationwide prayer days continued and why all scholars who have researched them highlight their popularity among puritans. Similarly, if we attempt to use puritan definitions in order to measure change, the distinct nuances in approaches to nationwide prayer from parliamentarians, royalists, puritans, and conformists are lost. Innovations by royalists and conformists in their use and understanding of these occasions would either be ignored or implied as backward. Nor is a puritan measuring rod appropriate for nationwide prayer days given their long history before 1640 or even the emergence of puritanism in the Elizabethan period.

III

The application of puritan definitions and interpretations to nationwide cultural phenomenon is also evident within the limited historiography pertaining to nationwide fast and thanksgiving days in this period. Scholars of the existing literature focus much of their attention on the purpose of fast days and the process of their authorisation. They outline the original aim of fast days as a way of seeking God’s assistance in a time of great crisis, such as plague or unseasonable weather, and highlight the importance of royal authority in calling a nationwide day of prayer.⁴⁵ The current historiographical narrative describes how fast days in particular grew out of the private puritan practice of fasting and became part of national worship at times of puritan

⁴³ *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, Inviting the People of England and Wales, to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1654; Wing C7077).

⁴⁴ Genesis 18.32

⁴⁵ This is true of all the works cited in the following footnote, although Hudson focuses less on the requirement of royal authority.

political influence. There is an underlying suggestion of an inevitability of increase in national fast and thanksgiving days as a reflection of the march of puritan progress.

In addition, from within this limited literature, scholarly work that examines the nationwide prayer days of the 1640s and 1650s frequently focuses solely on fast days and the role of the House of Commons, with thanksgiving days receiving very little attention if any.⁴⁶ This narrow focus has distorted even our understanding of what these occasions were and many scholars have misinterpreted the nature and history of national fast and thanksgiving days prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Furthermore, the dominance within seventeenth-century scholarship of 'high' politics (the politics of Court and parliament), parliamentarians and puritans has left the historiography of nationwide prayer days during the 1640s and 1650s imbalanced and incomplete.⁴⁷

This is evident in most current historiography of nationwide prayer days pertaining to the mid-seventeenth century. National fast days are categorised as merely activities of the 'hotter sorts of Protestants'.⁴⁸ As such they are assumed to be inherently unpopular with the general population and doomed to a rapid demise.⁴⁹ While the godly were certainly keen participants and an increased frequency of nationwide prayer days correlates with their influence in government, the orders for and observance of such occasions came from a wide variety of religious persuasions including Charles I.⁵⁰ The history of prayer days (and fast days in particular) though still to be studied coherently in detail demonstrates their popularity among adherents to traditional religion,

⁴⁶ Key pieces are Roland Bartel, 'The Story of Public Fast Days in England,' *Anglican Theological Review*, 37 (1955); Christopher Durston, "'For the Better Humiliation of the People": Public Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving During the English Revolution', *Seventeenth Century*, 7 (1992); Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1993), especially pp. 79-108; Winthrop S. Hudson, 'Fast Days and Civil Religion', in Winthrop S. Hudson, and Leonard J. Trinterud (eds.), *Theology in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England* (Los Angeles, 1971); Ethyn Williams Kirby, 'Sermons before the Commons, 1640-42,' *The American Historical Review*, 44 (1939); N. Frederick Nash, 'Fast-Day Sermons for the House of Lords in the Long Parliament,' *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 42 (1985); Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons'; Wilson, *Pulpit*; Blair Worden, 'Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England' *Past and Present*, 109 (1985); Blair Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in David L. Smith (ed.), *Cromwell and the Interregnum: The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 2003). On the neglect of thanksgivings see the works cited above by Bartel, Kirby, Hill, Trevor-Roper, and Wilson. An exception to this trend of neglect can be found in the work of the late Christopher Durston, which will be discussed further below.

⁴⁷ For example, the late Christopher Hill locates the call for national days of fasting and humiliation to the 1570s. See Hill, *English Bible*, p. 79.

⁴⁸ The origins of this phrase are found in Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan movement*.

⁴⁹ Durston, 'Humiliation', pp. 139, 142.

⁵⁰ This will be discussed further in chapter one.

puritans, Laudians and Anglicans alike across the early modern period.⁵¹ Nor were they in the process of vanishing from the public domain at the end of the seventeenth-century. The work soon to be published by the State Prayer project demonstrates that nationwide prayer days occurred relatively regularly throughout the period of 1533 to 1947 and beyond.

In a period dominated by war, John Morrill's infamous statement that the civil wars were 'England's wars of religion' helped to bring religion back into the general historiography of the 1640s.⁵² The link between the rise of the parliamentarians and the rise of religious tensions led some scholars to consider interpretations of thanksgivings for military victories – a significant exception to the predominant trends of prayer day historiography.⁵³ It is generally accepted that due to the influence of providence in early modern culture, military victories required thanksgivings in order to keep God's favour. Failure to give proper thanks could lead to disaster and therefore thanksgivings were preventative and forward-looking as well as reflective religious practices. From this point of view, Durston also attributes royalists with some inclination towards fasting (though only for earthly advantage) holding that fast days were not simply to achieve peace for the nation, but were actively and strategically used as a method of military advancement.⁵⁴ As such, Durston is one of the few scholars to recognise that neither side believed that they could win the war without God on their side and the only way to ensure this was by fasting. Nonetheless, Durston's argument still favours political and military motivations for prayer days over religious enthusiasm.⁵⁵

Yet even within a historiography dominated by politics, the possibility of political prowess on the part of the royalists is frequently ignored. The assumption that parliament hijacked nationwide prayer days and made comprehensive use of them in a

⁵¹ For example see Bartel, 'Public Fast Days'; 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); Hill, *English Bible*; Hudson, 'Fast Days'; Dan Beaver, 'Conscience and context: the popish plot and the politics of ritual, 1678-1682,' *HJ*, 34 (1991).

⁵² Morrill admits that he has sometimes regretted using this phrase as it led to some misunderstanding his position. However, it has certainly never failed to create lively debate among scholars and students. For Morrill's own position and the history of his use of the phrase see Morrill, *Nature*, pp. 33-44.

⁵³ Scholars who have not neglected thanksgivings are Christopher Durston, Winthrop Hudson and Geoffrey Browell.

⁵⁴ Durston, 'Humiliation', p. 134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

way that the royalists missed pervades the vast majority of work on this subject.⁵⁶ However, as chapter four demonstrates, royalist prayer days were subject to much more complex problems of communication and distribution than parliamentary occasions. This combined with a more cautious approach in ordering occasions due to royalist interpretations of providence, as identified in chapter three, gives the misleading impression that prayer days were less important to royalists. This was far from the case.

The idea that some occasions and some sermons, such as those prior to the attainting of Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford, were politically motivated at least in part is undeniable. Trevor-Roper is convincing in his view that when the legal case against Strafford became difficult, quickly followed by the Army Plot to rescue him, John Pym was convinced that Strafford's downfall must end with his execution and he used the pulpit, via Sunday preacher Samuel Fairclough, to declare it.⁵⁷ Yet, for Trevor-Roper, from the outset of the Long Parliament and the first joint fast of the Houses on 17 November 1640 the arrangements for all parliamentary fast days were premeditated and organised. 'Nothing, in those early days of the Long Parliament, was casual', including the Commons' choices of fast day preachers, Stephen Marshall and Cornelius Burges.⁵⁸ In the same vein, Trevor-Roper describes the fast sermons of 22 December 1641 as Pym's attempt (via Calamy and Marshall) to appeal to the City mobs. These were the same men he had restrained one year previously in their attempts to attack episcopacy, images and 'popish' ceremonies.⁵⁹

However, the extent of the strategic nature of fast days in Trevor-Roper's piece goes to the extreme. Despite probably being the most frequently referenced work on the subject, it drastically over-estimates the extent to which the monthly fast sermons of the Long Parliament were strategically planned and systematically orchestrated.⁶⁰ This

⁵⁶ This problem may partly be traced to the following statement in Trevor-Roper's article: 'By agreeing to the system [of monthly fasts], Charles I had put into the hands of his enemies a means of co-ordination and propaganda to which he himself had no parallel', Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons', p. 306.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

⁵⁸ Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons', p. 297.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.

⁶⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper outlines that the purpose of his piece is to demonstrate that 'the leaders of the Long Parliament, while there was effective leadership, used the pulpit both for strategic and for tactical purposes: both to declare long-term aims and to inaugurate temporary shifts in policy'. In itself this is convincing; it is the scale of 'strategic sermons' implied which is problematic. Trevor-Roper aligns strategic sermons with 'the regular series of 'monthly fasts'... [that] continue for seven years'. He implies that Pym is able to use fast sermons for his causes, 'If the conservatives on Pym's right were

is due to Trevor-Roper's assumption that 'the parliamentary leaders had direct control [over] the regular "fast sermons" which were preached before Parliament on the last Wednesday of every month from 1642 to 1649'.⁶¹ It is likely that the opening sermons of the parliament and certain other highly significant events, such as the demise of Laud and the decision to execute the king, were 'tuned' for the tactical purpose of persuasion.⁶² However, the suggestion that a 'general party' and Pym specifically, tuned the pulpit for so many monthly fast sermons before parliament seems highly impractical and unlikely. As Hill noted, any member could propose a preacher for the monthly fast, and they only needed to gain the approval of that particular House and the members present within it on a particular day.⁶³

Even if we assume that such a premeditated plan had been attempted, it was frequently unsuccessful. There were many occasions where preachers, such as William Dell, did not make the 'right' impression: they were not invited to have their sermon printed, as was a customary act of thanks.⁶⁴ There were many other occasions when preaching was simply too risky and tentative men sent in excuses of sickness to avoid the pulpit in front of the Commons altogether. For example, Mr Bridge who was appointed to preach before the Commons on the thanksgiving day for the reducing of Oxford asked to be excused 'by reason of some Indisposition that is fallen upon him.'⁶⁵ There is not sufficient evidence to support the idea that Pym or anyone else 'would learn to "tune the pulpits" as effectively as ever his heroine Queen Elizabeth had done'.⁶⁶ While one cannot dispute the power of the pulpit as a means of promulgating a political message, nor that on specific occasions it was used to this effect, it is certainly debateable as to whether the primary purpose in ordering a fast day was to disperse government propaganda.⁶⁷

willing to accept a treacherous peace, he must rely on the radicals on his left and show that, with their support, he would fight on for a more stable settlement. This resolution was clearly shown, on the very eve of negotiations, by one of the fast sermons of 25 January 1643'. *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 308, 310, 328-330.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁶³ Hill, *English Bible*, p. 82.

⁶⁴ Robin Jeffs (ed.), *Fast Sermons to Parliament* (London, 1971), vol. 25, pp. 1, 6, 259-64.

⁶⁵ *CJ* 6/7/1646.

⁶⁶ Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons', p. 296. Elizabeth's 'success' in this was largely in her control of the number of occasions. A few days of national prayer only meant control of a few sermons, rather than needing to control one every month.

⁶⁷ I am in agreement here with Christopher Hill who criticizes Trevor-Roper's 'explanation of the origins of particular sermons ... [as] sometimes a little too pat: it inclines to a conspiracy theory of revolutions still supported by some conservative historians.' Hill, *English Bible*, p. 82.

Despite over-emphasis of puritan parliamentarians in the Commons, such examinations of national fast days have proved useful in some ways. For example, they have informed considerations of how unified opposition to Charles I was and the emergence of the parliamentarians from it in the early 1640s. The monthly fast sermons and their reception have been used by scholars such as Christopher Hill as a method of measuring the unity of opposition and purpose of the opposing 'party'. Hill charts the rise and fall in the unity of parliament's opposition to the king and his counsel through the number of sermons that were printed following their delivery to parliament. For the period 1640 to 1644, Hill suggests that an overall sense that 'something must be done' created a sense of unity. This meant a vote was usually passed for the printing of preachers' sermons, as calls for action. Therefore, Hill argued, the number of sermons that were not printed following their delivery to parliament could demonstrate parliamentary divisions. There were less than ten such cases for the years 1640 to 1644 but this rose sharply to thirty in 1645 and to fifty-one by 1648. It seemed as if unity was returning to its status quo in 1649 with sixteen sermons not printed and only thirty for the years 1650 to 1653.⁶⁸

In further support of Hill's theory, the general content of the sermons before 1645 was a call for action, reflecting the pervading mood desirous of initiating change. After 1645, the content began to express what precisely ought to be done: this was unlikely to produce the same unified response. However, a due sense of caution must be exercised. These figures may simply be a rise in unappreciated sermons (whether they be more radical in nature or simply dull) rather than confirming disunity, as there were simply a greater number of occasional days of prayer during these periods. In fact the years 1643 to 1648 saw the greatest number of occasional days of prayer for the whole period of 1640 to 1660.⁶⁹

The emphasis on politics in this period has not been solely confined to the arena of 'high' politics. Some scholars, such as Hill and Durston, have highlighted the political power of prayer days outside of parliament. For those in positions of authority, yet who felt that the monarch was not hearing their views, these occasions provided an opportunity to criticise the government and express tensions with the crown. Hill holds that Elizabeth refused to allow fasts and fast sermons because she knew the practice

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 83.

⁶⁹ See chapter one.

could be used to imply criticism of the government. Not only did the need for a fast suggest that there were problems in the country that the government alone could not resolve, but the occasions themselves and the associated sermons in particular could be used to spread anti-government messages. As such Elizabeth regarded them as politically dangerous religious occasions in much the same way as she responded to the prophesying exercises supported by Grindal and which evoked such fury from the queen.⁷⁰

Similar attitudes and episodes of active resistance through fasting are discussed with reference to the 1630s. MPs and local authorities during the personal rule of Charles I reacted to the king's refusal to hear grievances in parliament partly by holding private fasts, despite the dangers they faced if caught. Samuel Clarke commented that, by the middle of the 1630s, participation in unauthorized fasts had become 'a dangerous exercise' which and could result in serious repercussions.⁷¹ Laud in particular hated them.⁷² In some cases, private fasts did provide a means of uniting and galvanising public support in order to pressurise those at the top of England's government.⁷³ However, this purpose was not universal in private fasts and may not always have worked in the favour of the neglected authorities when it was. From the point of the people, there must have been some sense of unity with the government, especially the monarch, from the concept that all English men and women were observing these religious practices at the same time. For others, these events may have simply emphasised how 'out of touch' the monarch was with the reality of their daily lives; they could not afford to abstain from work for a day.⁷⁴ Discussions of political motivations as factors in prayer day reception must take other factors, such as the difficulties of daily life for the poor, into account.

⁷⁰ This interpretation of fast days is argued for by Hill, *English Bible*, especially pp. 80, 102.

⁷¹ Samuel Clarke, *The lives of two and twenty English divines* (London, 1660; Wing C4540), p. 158.

⁷² Durston, 'Humiliation', p. 131.

⁷³ See *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁷⁴ Walter Cradock, *Divine Drops Distilled from the Fountain of Holy Scriptures*, (London, 1650 ; Wing C6758). Cradock considered it a mockery to 'talk of humiliation and fasting' that kept people 'from their trading'. See Hill, *English Bible*, p. 100. On the commercial implications of abstaining from work on fast days see Durston, 'Humiliation', pp. 137-139. Though naturally in this period the cost of public fasts to the economy would have paled into insignificance when compared to the costs of the civil wars themselves.

IV

Therefore, overall, the historiography of fast and thanksgiving days in the 1640s and 1650s is in urgent need of attention. It is simply untrue that these occasions were an innovation and a key weapon in the conspiracy arsenal of a puritan parliamentary faction in the early 1640s to ensure their own pre-meditated plan for political domination and subsequent agendas came to fruition, as implied by scholars such as Trevor-Roper. We look in vain for an explosion of these occasions in the 1650s when parliament was at its most puritan. Godly MPs were certainly more predisposed to attend nationwide prayer days in the 1640s, but they did not invent them nor were they the only group of individuals to support them. Yet, there remains in scholarship the false assumption that public prayer days (and fast days in particular) were a puritan innovation. Many fail to recognise the absorption and ‘Protestantising’ of an aspect of the traditional English religion of the fifteenth century. Even fewer appreciate that these practices were absorbed from traditional religion into mainstream Protestant worship and the common cultural currency, while also recognising that puritans in particular enthusiastically seized upon fasting. In essence, the fact that a small minority were highly enthusiastic and regular attendees does not imply that no one outside of that minority ever took part in the practice. This thesis will consider the neglected areas of religious motivations, popular reception and the royalist perspective as well as that of the parliamentarians. In doing so, it will examine the effect of the fracturing of traditional government, and its subsequent return, upon nationwide fast and thanksgiving days between 1640 and 1660.

Chapter One: Foundations

Invoke mercy and help of God by fasts and almsgiving... fast on bread and water, and raw herbs, for three days ... **[go] to church, and renounce all sins...** Everyone shall have his food served during the three days without meat, and whatever he would have consumed in food and drink shall be distributed among the poor ... Every year henceforth, God's dues [are] to be paid, so that God omnipotent may show mercy towards us and grant us victory over our enemies, and peace. Let us earnestly pray to God that we may gain his mercy, here and in the life to come. Amen.¹

And forasmuch as there hath been now a late and still continueth much rain, and other unseasonable weather, whereby is like to ensue great hurt and damage to the corn, and fruits now ripe upon the ground, unless it shall please God of his infinite goodness to stretch forth his holy hand over us; considering by sundry examples heretofore, that God at the contemplation of the earnest and devout prayers oftentimes extended his mercy and grace, and hath also assuredly promised that whensoever we call upon him for things meet for us, he will grant unto us the same; we, having the government and charge of his people committed unto us, have thought good to cause the same ... with an earnest repentant heart for their iniquities, to call unto God for mercy, and with devout and humble prayers and supplications every person, both by himself apart, and also by common prayer, to beseech him to send unto us seasonable and temperate weather...²

These texts speak of the power of prayer and fasting. They express an expectation that prayer and true repentance led to divine mercy and aid. In the first text, the prayers were to be accompanied by a strict fast of only bread, water and herbs for three days seemingly in order to increase their power. The ideas within these extracts are founded upon concepts of providence, and the purpose and power of prayer in the face of adversity. They would not seem out of place coming from the mouth of a puritan minister when giving notices to his congregation and before beginning his sermon on the people of Ninevah (Jonah 3.5). Without further context, following the current historiographical model, we might date these extracts either to between 1642 and 1659 or assume that they were associated with unauthorised godly fasts from a point between the 1560s and early 1640s or after the restoration.³ In fact, these are official orders for

¹ A Proclamation by Ethelred VII (Bath, August 1009?), as transcribed in Latin and translated in A.J. Robertson (ed.), *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 109-113. For a discussion of dating see idem., pp. 49-50. The text in bold highlights where I have made alterations in word order to reflect better that of the Latin cited in Robertson: 'pedibus ad ecclesiam et peccatis omnibus abrenuntiet'.

² John Edmund Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous writings and letters of Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556* (Cambridge, 1846), p. 493.

³ This interpretation follows the interpretation of the origins and development of nationwide prayer days offered by scholars such as Bartel, Durston and Hill. See Roland Bartel, 'The Story of Public Fast Days in England,' *Anglican Theological Review*, 37 (1955), p. 190; Christopher Durston, "'For the Better Humiliation of the People": Public Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving During the English Revolution' *Seventeenth Century*, 7 (1992); Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1993), pp. 79-108, especially 79-80.

nationwide prayer ordered by the crown. As such, they highlight the significance of national prayers and fasting as understood by English government authorities. Church attendance was a fundamental part of the observation of both orders, as was the seeking of repentance for sins by every English person. The role of the government as the leaders of God's chosen people was to organise and direct such prayers. Yet, despite the strict terms of the fast in the first text and the focus on individual prayer as well as collective prayers and church attendance in the second, these orders are not the result of puritan powers of influence over English kings. Indeed, the first text is a quintessentially traditional Catholic order given by King Ethelred in August 1009. The second comes from the early years of English Reformation and is a mandate from Henry VIII given on 23 August 1543. While the personal religion of Henry VIII is still a matter of debate, evangelicalism in the Henrician period was a far cry from the early puritanism seen in the Elizabethan period. Puritan ideology was born out of a religious settlement some could not stomach after their sufferings at the hands of a Catholic queen. As such, puritanism is confined to the historical period following 1558-9, though it was influenced by ideas and experiences that precede this date.

The existence of texts such as these prior to any puritan influences demands a readjustment of the prevailing historiography outlined in the introduction and its interpretation of the origins of nationwide prayer days, particularly fast days. Ethelred's order highlights the centrality of fasting in English national worship from at least the eleventh century, and therefore the history of fasting as a religious practice needs to be considered before it is designated as a 'puritan'. This challenges the historiographical orthodoxy of a causal correlation between the number of occasions and the rise of godly government that also implies a greater religiosity on the part of the parliamentarians ordering them.⁴ However, with some rare exceptions, such as the work of Christopher Durston, most scholars have not provided statistics to support their interpretation, nor do they take account of the different types of nationwide prayer and this places the religiosity of the royalists into greater prominence.⁵ This lack of statistics may be

⁴ Hugh Trevor-Roper and Christopher Durston are examples of scholars who imply such a correlation, for further discussion see the introduction.

⁵ Durston, 'Humiliation'. This contribution will be discussed further below.

due to the issues affecting counting days of nationwide prayer, such as how to account for the monthly fasts – should they be counted once for the year in which they are ordered or each time they were potentially observed? Similarly, how should the issue of rival monthly fasts be dealt with? For while it is relatively easy to separate petitionary occasions seeking divine aid from those which had a primary purpose of giving thanks for blessings received; it is rather problematic to discern even the most basic question of how many nationwide fast and thanksgiving days were there in England between 1640 and 1660. This chapter shows that once a statistical analysis of the number and type of occasions is employed, the rise in the number of occasions in conjunction with the rise of the parliamentarians is demonstrated to be due to the experience of war rather than any puritan design. Such an interpretation also provides a far more satisfactory explanation of the demise in occasions, which currently focus on the end of the monthly fast and the supposed unpopularity of nationwide prayer days.⁶

Despite the implication of greater parliamentarian religiosity, the historiography of prayer days rarely considers that these occasions were ordered or observed out of genuinely religious motivations, but rather focuses on potential political or military advantages.⁷ Yet these occasions were state rituals in times of crisis that responded to national emotions in a society where religion and politics were fundamentally intertwined. It is unsurprising that many individuals ordered and observed these occasions primarily for religious reasons. Ideas of providence and the English as God's chosen nation must be examined as founding concepts for nationwide prayer days but outside of a solely puritan perspective. This approach will enable an analysis of the development of nationwide days of prayer within their socio-political context. Furthermore, these non-puritan orders for prayer suggest considerable continuities between those of differing religious persuasions and historical periods that demand both recognition and explanation. As political orders for religious actions, nationwide prayers are by nature both religious and political, but how particular circumstances might affect their purpose requires further examination.

⁶ Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament', in idem., *Religion, the Reformation and social change, and other essays* (London, 1984).

⁷ Durston, 'Humiliation'.

A final puzzle lies in the current assumption that a godly regime results in an increase in occasional prayer days: why is it, under an increasingly religiously radical regime, that occasional prayer days actually reduce in number and the monthly fast days for Ireland were abandoned? This is surely at odds with the logic employed to explain why puritans increased prayer days? To examine the conundrum of the rise in nationwide prayer day numbers in the 1640s and their demise in the 1650s, this chapter analyses both the number, type and relative frequency of occasions ordered in this period to establish the nature of nationwide prayer days. What cultural influences and beliefs underpinned these occasions? What was the purpose of prayer in the early modern period and what conditions were deemed necessary for it to be successful? How could the chances of prayer working be increased? How did understanding of nationwide prayer differ among puritans and those of more Arminian persuasions and between parliamentarians and royalists? Furthermore, it seeks to identify nuances between parliamentarian and royalist occasions given the considerable continuity between these occasions. After a statistical analysis of the relative frequency of occasions before and after the rise of the parliamentarians, the types of occasions ordered and their purposes; the reasons for the frequency of occasions in this period is examined. This question of the frequency of prayer days is then set within a wider context of the complex issues surrounding the concepts fasting and prayer in early modern England. This process casts further doubt on the historiographical assumption that these occasions were primarily a puritan phenomenon.

I

An initial examination of the number of nationwide special prayers ordered between 1640 and 1660 lends credence to the idea that these occasional prayer days were, if not a puritan invention, a tool utilised to its full potential by godly members of the parliamentarian regime that gained the power of English governance during the 1640s. As demonstrated in chart 1.1 and table 1.2, during this period there were clear peaks in the number of occasions at points of crisis which turned to victory for the parliamentarians, namely in 1645 and 1648, even

with the inclusion of royalist occasions and additional prayers. Thus, there is a clear positive correlation between the rise in the total number of days set aside for special nationwide prayer and the ascendancy of the parliamentary government regime. Most scholars have assumed that this is a simple case of cause and effect. However, the logic is flawed. Indeed, it will be demonstrated below that the rise in frequency of nationwide prayer days was more dependent on circumstance and accident than any puritan ‘design’ for social reform.⁸ It even suggests that this peak in special worship would have occurred had Charles been the victor of the civil war, perhaps even with far greater impact. Prayer days for divine aid were concepts in which Charles believed. The strongest evidence for this is that upon realising that some were abusing the original Wednesday monthly fast for parliamentary gains, Charles did not simply abolish the fasts, but sought to re-establish, purify and make it as accessible to as many of his subjects as possible.⁹

There are considerable difficulties in determining how to count nationwide prayers: should we count the number of orders for prayer (as above) or the number of days on which they were supposed to be observed, since one order could instruct many occasions (as occurred with the monthly fasts)? While both approaches are valid, there is a danger of conflating the two.¹⁰ The tables in the appendix from 1.2 to 2.1 count the number of orders of occasions (i.e. the monthly fasts count as two orders, the original order in 1641 and the proclamation for the royalist monthly fast in 1643). This data forms the basis of charts 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1. Table 2.2 and chart 4.1 count the expected days of observance (with monthly fasts included for one allegiance – i.e. in 1644 only fourteen fasts are counted as most individuals would not have kept both). Table 3.1 shows the total number of occasions if all potential monthly fast days (both parliamentary and royalist) are counted. As table 3.1 highlights, the monthly fast days have the potential to alter the statistics significantly for once a separate

⁸ However, they did utilise many other methods in an attempt at social reform, see Steve Hindle, *The state and social change in early modern England, c.1550-1640* (Basingstoke, 2000); Martin Ingram, ‘Reformation of manners in early modern England’, in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, Steve Hindle (eds.), *The experience of authority in early modern England* (London, 1996).

⁹ Note the changes in the 1643 form for the monthly fast discussed in chapter 3.

¹⁰ For a comparison of the effects of these approaches on the frequency of occasions compare chart 3.1 and 4.1.

royalist monthly was established, the impact of monthly fasts on the total number of occasional prayer days doubled with an additional 24 potential occasions per annum.

The significance of prayer days to royalists counters the idea that the strength of parliamentary government was marked by the rapid increase in the number of days potentially spent observing nationwide prayer, from thirteen in 1642 to 24 in 1643. This rise from the period 1642 to 1643 is even more significant if each monthly fast is counted separately with eleven more occasions in 1642 and fifteen more in 1643 following the introduction of the royalist monthly fast. Prior to the start of the monthly fasts for Ireland this number had been considerably lower with two separate prayer days in 1640 (and one additional prayer) and another two in 1641. Indeed, placing national prayer days between 1640 and 1660 in the context of national prayers more generally (including additional prayers issued by the royalists) further tempers the assumption that the 1640s saw a dramatic increase in the frequency of national prayer due to the rise of the godly parliamentary regime. Similarly, the assumption that the total number of national occasional days of prayer reached far beyond that of prior regimes is shown to be false by viewing these occasions over a longer period as demonstrated by chart 4.1.

Even if one focuses on occasional days set aside for prayer by order of the authorities (thereby excluding additional prayers) from the start of the Stuart dynasty, it is clear that there were key periods of intensity in the number of prayer days of similar levels to 1643-1648. The plague epidemics of 1603 and 1604 were so severe that few parts of England remained untouched.¹¹ The government's response involved public prayer. Prayers were issued for use on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays with Wednesdays set aside as a weekly fast day during the period of plague.¹² As table 2.2 shows even if we only count the

¹¹ J.F.D. Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 275.

¹² *Certaine Prayers Collected out of a Forme of Godly Meditations, Set Forth by His Majesties Authoritie: And Most Necessary to Be Vsed at This Time in the Present Visitation of Gods Heauy Hand for Our Manifold Sinnes. Together with the Order of a Fast to Be Kept Euery Wednesday During the Said Visitation* (London, 1603; STC 16532). It seems likely that the Wednesday fast would have recommenced with the re-visitation of plague in 1604 until it could be replaced in a particular locality with the Thanksgiving prayers to be added into Common Prayer services on

fast days ordered for the key periods of plague (April-October 1603 and probably also June-December 1604) and not the additional prayers for Fridays and Sundays, this is approximately 28 fast days for plague in 1603 and another 28 in 1604. Similarly, Charles ordered a weekly fast in 1625 for plague commencing on 20 July for around 5 months, causing a total of at least 20 fast days between July 1625 and the thanksgiving days ordered for the plague's retreat in January and February 1626 (for inside and outside of the capital). While these intense periods of nationwide occasional prayer days in 1603-4 and 1625-6 did not quite reach the levels of 1645, they were distinctly higher than the one or two occasional prayer days per year assumed to be typical of the early Stuart period. Indeed, the number of prayer days in 1647 was lower than the total number of occasions in 1603 or 1625.¹³

Furthermore, if one were to look at occasional national prayer more generally over this longer period and include additional prayers set for certain days, as well as days entirely set aside for national prayer, the frequency of national prayer in 1603 is significantly higher than the parliamentary occasions between 1640 and 1660. The thrice-weekly prayers ordered during plague in 1603 for seven months would result in around 84 additional days ordered to include the recitation of public occasional prayers, which is more than twice the number of occasions ordered in 1645 – the highest peak in the period 1640 to 1660.

Additionally, at least four collections of additional royalist prayers were issued between 1643 and 1645; these were designed for use on multiple occasions, including for different victories.¹⁴ It is therefore impossible to estimate on how

Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, *A Short Forme of Thanksgiving to God, for Staying the Contagious Sickenes of the Plague: To Be Used in Common Prayer, on Sundayes, Wednesdayes and Fridayes* (London, 1604; 16533).

¹³ There were 27 occasional days of prayer in 1647 including the monthly fasts compared to at least 28 fast days for plague in 1603. Table 1.2 shows three prayer days excluding the monthly fasts; royalist and parliamentarian occasions would add a further 24.

¹⁴ It should be noted that some of these items appear to be meant for use by the army. *A Collection of Prayers and Thanksgivings, vsed in His Majesties Chappell and in His Armies* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4049C); *Prayers and Thanksgivings Used in the King's Army before and after Battle* (Oxford, 1643; Wing M1761); *Prayers Fitted to Several Occasions, to Be Used in His Majesty's Armies and Garrisons* (Exeter, 1645; Wing C4091I); *Private Forms of Prayer for These Sad Times* (Oxford, 1645; Wing D2665). For the spiritual provisions for the Army especially on special days of fasting and thanksgiving see Margaret Griffin, *Regulating Religion and Morality in the King's Armies, 1639-1646* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 140-167, especially 163-164.

many occasions these prayers were used. They could easily be incorporated into any service using the Book of Common Prayer, but some were clearly intended for private use in the home, perhaps even daily. Therefore, it is possible that while parliament held one thanksgiving day for a particular victory, the royalist supporters had far more opportunities to participate in nationwide prayers of thanksgiving for royalist victories. The Sunday service would be the most obvious occasion to give thanks for recent royalist victories, but this could easily be supplemented. While we cannot estimate the number of prayers uttered on behalf of each side in response to requests from their respective authorities, there were clearly more potential royalist opportunities given their more general and widespread approach. Royalist prayers of thanksgiving could spring up from the grassroots in immediate response to the hearing of news of victory; their parliamentary equivalent required an order to set aside a whole day for prayer to be received from above. While parliamentary parishes undoubtedly also prayed for their cause each Sunday, such prayers cannot be said to be national in the sense that they were not ordered by the central government in the way that prayer days or additional royalist prayers were.¹⁵

Clearly, in terms of frequency, the start of the series of monthly fasts had a dramatic impact on the total number of occasions. If one were to accept the views of Hugh Trevor-Roper and his followers that the monthly fasts were established as a means of ‘tuning the pulpits’ and expounding propaganda to the people, one finds a clear correlation between the number of occasional prayer days and the supposed influence of a premeditated group of puritan individuals initially unified under Pym’s leadership, planning the civil war and then pulling the strings of parliament once it was in progress. Occasional prayer days, in this view, naturally increased for they were a tool increasingly utilised for party propaganda as the civil war progressed due to their great success in persuading MPs in particular to support new and ‘hard-to-sell’ policies, such as Laud’s

¹⁵ Indeed, the Directory’s example of a suitable prayer for use before the sermon even includes prayers for the King and royal family. It is hard to imagine similar prayers being spoken in parliamentary strongholds. See *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (London, 1645; Wing D1544).

attainder.¹⁶ However, as demonstrated above, this is too simplistic a model for all occasional national days of prayer in this complex period.

Even the more balanced article by Durston noted the frequency correlation between godly government and the number of occasions, attributing the rise of one with the other:

While public occasions of fasting and thanksgiving had occurred before 1640 and continued to be called after 1660, it was during the revolutionary period between these dates that they were most frequently and enthusiastically promoted by the godly regimes which had temporarily seized control of the country... such collective displays of abasement, contrition and gratitude were an indispensable means of securing divine approbation and assuring that the English people remained God's elect nation.¹⁷

Thus, the unspoken implication of most current historiography that highlights a peak in these occasions between 1640 and 1660 is that the godly parliamentarians were more religious than their predecessors, and, therefore, once in government they increased the number of nationwide occasional prayer days and the number of fast days in particular. Yet further research reveals that this is far more the result of accident than design. There is no evidence to suggest that parliamentarians were more religious than their royalist counterparts. Furthermore, this view fails to take into account that there were different types of nationwide prayer. By 1640 nationwide prayer often took the form of an additional prayer with a special purpose being inserted into regular church services, such as the prayer for Charles' expedition against the Covenanters.¹⁸ Occasionally, where orders for additional prayers had a petitionary purpose, they included a further order for a regular fast (usually weekly) to be kept while the threat lasted, as occurred when Charles proclaimed a nationwide prayer in

¹⁶ Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons', pp. 317-319.

¹⁷ Durston, 'Humiliation', pp. 145-146. It should be noted that earlier in the piece, Durston does note the thanksgivings for military victories. He states that parliament 'authorized a number of occasional days of public thanksgiving, particularly during the latter stages of the civil war when they were called to celebrate military successes achieved by their forces', Durston, 'Humiliation', p. 133. However, as will be discussed below, this does not adequately address the scale of these thanksgivings or their influence on the total number of occasional prayer days in this period.

¹⁸ *A Prayer for the Kings Majestie in His Expedition against the Rebels of Scotland; to Be Said in All Churches in Time of Divine Service, Next after the Prayer for the Queen and Royall Progenie* (London, 1640; STC 16558)

response to plague in 1625. This included directions for additional prayers in regular church services on Fridays and Sundays with Wednesday being set aside as a fast day until the plague abated.¹⁹

Indeed, between 1603 and 1640 the use of additional prayers (with or without fast days) was more frequent than setting aside a separate single occasion. By the end of 1640 Stuart England had received at least 23 orders for additional prayers compared to seven fast and thanksgiving days.²⁰ However, these prayers and their associated fasts are not recognised in calculations (implied or actual) within the current historiography. Most scholars simply state a rise in occasions in the 1640s and the instigation of the monthly fast before turning to its demise, without providing detailed numbers of occasions. Durston is something of an exception here, noting that parliament observed 85 monthly fasts from February 1642 to February 1649, ‘a number of occasional days of public thanksgiving’ and ‘at least twenty public days of fasting and humiliation ... between 1649 and 1660’.²¹

While research for this thesis has revealed some prayer days missed by previous scholars (for example it raises the total number of parliamentarian prayer days between 1649 and 1660 to at least 48), more significantly it takes account of the effect of orders for royalist occasions and additional prayers.²² When royalist occasions and additional prayers are excluded, there were 105 orders for nationwide prayer days in this period, but their inclusion raises this to 122.²³ These figures also take account of thanksgivings ordered by parliament but which took place on a Sunday (and therefore not ‘set aside’ especially in quite the same sense as those ordered on week days).²⁴ While it might be argued that there were daily church services (whether using the litany or the Directory) and, therefore, all occasions had the same status as Sunday thanksgivings, the Sabbath

¹⁹ *By the King. A Proclamation for a publike, generall, and solemne Fast* (London, 1625; STC 8787).

²⁰ See appendix, table 2.1.

²¹ Durston, ‘Humiliation’, p. 133.

²² See appendix, table 1.3.

²³ See table 1.1.

²⁴ It should be noted that Durston did highlight royalist occasions, but did not specify their number or frequency. However, additional prayers were not recognised. Durston, ‘Humiliation’, p. 133.

was the only day of every week where all individuals were expected to abstain from their vocations and attend church. Thus, to do so on another weekday for most individuals was a significant change. Indeed, we might see parliamentary thanksgivings ordered on Sundays as an adaptation of the traditional additional prayers they abandoned (though after 1653 they appear to abandon Sunday thanksgivings too).²⁵ Royalists did not tend to order separate prayer days for Sunday with only one possible occasion on 24 March 1644 (thanksgiving for Newark). Furthermore, some parishes such as St Mary on the Hill in Chester seem to have celebrated the thanksgiving on Monday 25 March in any case.²⁶ By excluding additional prayers (and probably including parliamentary Sunday thanksgivings) definite statistics are lacking. In addition, a pro-parliamentarian weighting is given to an imprecise vague notion of the frequency of prayer days.

Explanations for the reduction in the frequency of nationwide prayer days from 1649 onwards, despite the rise of puritan regimes, have largely focused on the abandonment of the Wednesday monthly fast by parliament. Since this removed twelve fast days a year, it was significant alteration. Current discussions on the cause of the demise of the parliamentary monthly fast focus upon the unpopularity of the occasions, the disunity among the parliamentary leaders once they were no longer occupied by the civil war, and the fear of fast days being utilised by royalists to provoke dissent and disorder (in the same way that such historians argue that the parliamentarians had done to the original Wednesday fast).²⁷ More sophisticated explorations of the problem might highlight an extension of rejection of set forms of prayer, to a rejection of set days ordered for prayer more generally, seemingly an attitude held by Cromwell himself.²⁸

²⁵ See table 1.3.

²⁶ Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, 1644. Royalists do not appear to have favoured a particular day of the week for separate prayer days with one on Monday (9/6/1645), two on a Tuesday (17/11/1640, 28/5/1645), three on a Wednesday (8/7/1640, 5/2/1645, 2/10/1645), one on a Thursday (12/6/1645), four on a Friday (10/11/1643, 16/5/1645, 12/12/1645, 15/9/1648) and the aforementioned Sunday thanksgiving for Newark. The occasions on 10/11/1643 and 12/12/1645 are royalist monthly fast days but of special significance. The first is the establishment of the royalist monthly fast while the second was recorded in Oxford sources as a thanksgiving day.

²⁷ Trevor-Roper, 'Fast Sermons'.

²⁸ See chapter 3.

Yet, there are distinct problems with each of these explanations. On the question of popularity, undoubtedly these occasions were ignored, abused and mocked by some – episodes of misdeed found in legal cases and other local sources clearly attest to this.²⁹ However, this had always been the case. Why should the parliamentarians turn from attempts to reform the fast days to abandoning them altogether? This is even more problematic when it is noted that they continued to order occasional fasts and thanksgivings (albeit less regularly) throughout the 1650s, clearly believing that they were important and beneficial. Similarly, fear of royalists hijacking fast days for their own use is difficult as a means of explanation. Royalists had been, and continued to be, more than capable of mocking parliamentary fasts and thanksgiving days. At present there is no evidence that there was greater mockery of the monthly fasts than any other occasional prayer days. Furthermore, surely the most dangerous monthly fast day, from the point of view of being likely to incite royalist rioting, was the one scheduled to take place the day after the regicide. Yet that fast went ahead as planned.

Thus, disunity among those who found themselves part of an unchallenged government in 1649 is only persuasive as an explanation for the end of the Wednesday monthly fasts if one accepts that they were a tool utilised for propaganda purposes by a puritan minority to ‘tune the pulpits’ to new, difficult ‘party’ policies.³⁰ If this is rejected, the argument becomes awkward, especially given that there was sufficient unity to order the many occasions that did go ahead in the 1650s. Evidence is not forthcoming that some puritan MPs repeatedly petitioned for occasional prayer days but were unsuccessful in their attempts. There were some requests for occasions that ultimately come to nothing, but not in any greater number than those in the 1640s; indeed, it may even have been lower. It seems highly likely that there was disunity among the civil war victors after the regicide. The attitudes of some, such as Cromwell, with regard to occasional prayer days clearly differed from others, such as the

²⁹ For example, Holwell parish in Blackmore Vale had a feast with games of skittles on a nationwide fast day in 1653, SRO CQ 3/1/86 (2) (Session Rolls, 1653), fo. 155 as quoted by David Underdown, *Revel, Riot & Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985), p. 264.

³⁰ Trevor-Roper, ‘Fast Sermons’, p. 294. For evidence to the contrary, see chapter two.

majority of men in the Protectorate parliaments. Yet, Cromwell must have accepted that occasional prayer days were part of English culture and that it was reasonable, if personally a little distasteful, for the state to order them for traditional purposes such as military victory, plague or drought.³¹

Nonetheless, it remains the case that the period between 1645 and 1648 saw an explosion in the numbers of nationwide prayer days ordered.³² This leads us to question what caused such an increase in occasions? With twenty new occasional prayer days ordered in 1645 and twelve in 1648, historians have presumed that this period had an unprecedented number of occasions of national prayer. That this intensity coincided with a period of so-called ‘revolution’ spear-headed by many of the ‘hotter’ sort of Protestants, led many to believe that puritan parliamentarians had seized power with the aim of utilising occasional prayer days as a means of persuading the people to support their political and religious policies as well as turning the English into a nation of God-fearing, puritan, and humbled people. It is assumed that national fasts were the key to deploying this plan and that therefore this explains the intensity of occasions in this period. Unfortunately, the case is not so clear-cut, and if the monthly fasts are excluded (which were ordered by both sides) only a tiny number of occasions that produce the explosion of occasions in 1643-1648 were national fast days.

One might suppose that the years 1645 and 1648 marked high points in influential power of godly-minded individuals. The years 1645 and 1648 follow a time when a royalist victory had seemed possible, even likely. The campaign season of 1644 had resulted in Charles achieving his short-term objectives and culminated in the second battle of Newbury and the relief of Basing House. The despair among the parliamentarians in the winter of 1644 was aptly summarized by the Earl of Manchester in the November: ‘If we fight 100 times and beate him

³¹ As chapter three highlights Cromwell personally found forced prayer distasteful, possibly even offensive. Other Independents were clearly of the same mind, and the most religiously radical parliament stripped of any ungodly or royalist sympathisers, the Nominated Assembly (Barebones), only ordered one nationwide prayer day whilst sitting. The occasion on 25 August 1653 was not a strict and godly fast day attempting to reform the wayward souls of the English nations, but had a very traditional cause – victory against the Dutch fleet. Had he remained in power, Charles I may well have ordered precisely the same occasion.

³² See chart 1.1.

99 he wilbe king still, but if he beate us but once (or the last time) we shalbe hanged, we shall loose our estates, and our posterityes be vndonne.’³³ The year 1648 was marked not only with threats of royalist support from the Scots but, more worryingly, internal uprisings of royalists in England from May.³⁴

At these times the parliamentarians had struggled, but believed that through seeking God they had found new unity and military success. The difficulties of setting up of the New Model Army due to the self-denying ordinance were overcome through godly behaviour in 1645, such as Cromwell publicly stating that he had made mistakes. The Windsor fast of April 1648 re-established unity and reignited the thirst for a crushing, ultimate defeat of the ‘man of blood’. In 1645, ‘pride and covetousness’ were uncovered as the faults that had given the royalists the upper hand. In 1648 ‘not following the ways of the Lord’ was to blame.³⁵ The reparations of prayer by leading parliamentarians in these instances proved their worth and a series of parliamentary victories followed.

The association of parliamentary humiliations before military victory remained part of the national conscience for many years, writing in at the end of the seventeenth century John Aubrey recorded that:

Some did observe in the late civil wars, that the Parliament, after a humiliation, did shortly obtain a victory. And as a three-fold chord is not easily broken, so when a whole nation shall conjoin in fervent prayer and supplication, it shall provide wonderful effects.³⁶

To a puritan mindset, such victories were clearly the result of divine aid and must be recognized as such with acts of thanksgiving to the Almighty. However, it should be noted that it was large-scale ‘private’ fasts of leading parliamentarians,

³³ SP 16/503 fo. 158r.

³⁴ Ian Gentles, *The English Revolution and the wars in the three kingdoms, 1638-1652* (Harlow, 2007), p. 328.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 247.

³⁶ Aubrey continued to describe Archbishop Laud’s praise for national prayer at the start of Charles’ reign. No mention is made of the obvious tension regarding the downfall of Charles’ regime despite their use of national prayer. John Aubrey, *Miscellanies upon various subjects* edited by Sir Thomas Browne (London, 1890), p. 163. The first edition was written in 1696 (not consulted). Aubrey’s account seems reasonably reliable as a recording of miscellaneous events that he either saw or heard of and believed to be true. Aubrey certainly lived through the civil wars (being sixteen in 1642), though obviously the work was written long after some of the events and narratives it describes.

such as that at Windsor, which apparently produced these major turning points in the two civil wars, rather than national and public days of prayer.

Furthermore, the cause of the majority of the occasional prayer days in 1645 and 1648 was parliamentary military victory. Aside from the royalist fast on 5 February and the regular monthly fasts, all other occasions were parliamentary thanksgivings for victory on the battlefield. Totalling fourteen, these thanksgivings represented at least one additional prayer day every month. The avalanche of thanksgivings starting in 1645 continued until December 1646 when humiliation days briefly came to the fore (first for heavy rains and then for blasphemy, errors and heresies) before parliamentary victories once again became the focus of national prayer leading to the second peak of intensity in 1648.

The fact that the peaks in intensity were caused by military thanksgivings for victory suggests another cause for the peak in occasions. For, had Charles been the victor of these battles, it is likely that prayers of thanksgiving for victory would have been issued as they had been in November 1642.³⁷ Yet parliament's abandonment of set forms of prayer combined with a theological principle of hierarchy of prayer (which will be discussed further below) made this type of expression of thankfulness by the nation unavailable for such miraculous divine aid.³⁸ Since an additional prayer (even if *ex tempore*) was unsuitable, a separate day must be ordered. Thus, the increase of days set aside for national prayer may have owed more to the unsuitability of other options, such as additional prayers, rather than any increased religiosity of the men in government in London.

It is not just the number of occasions in 1645 and 1648 that is striking; it is the type of victories that are given this special treatment. We might consider many of

³⁷ See *A Prayer of Thanks Giving for His Majesties Late Victory over the Rebels* (London and Oxford, 1642; Wing P3193-5).

³⁸ The abandonment of set forms of prayer was not altogether successful. It is possible that some of the congregations who did purchase the Directory used its prayer models as set prayers for each service. Parliament did re-endorse set prayers in some circumstances, such as on ships without a minister, from at least 1645. See *A Supply of Prayer for the Ships of This Kingdom That Want Ministers to Pray with Them: Agreeable to the Directory Established by Parliament. Published by Authority* (London, 1645; S6191).

them rather insignificant. It is certainly strange to treat some of these smaller victories, such as Dartmouth, with the same reverence (by setting aside a day of prayer for a single victory) as major turning-points such as Naseby.³⁹ The lack of additional ‘special’ status for highly significant victories such as Naseby suggests that the parliamentarians had no other options by this point; even annual thanksgivings seemingly were not popular enough with the divines.⁴⁰

Further support for the notion of the limited possibilities for parliamentary expressions of thankfulness is the evidence that, by 1645, many victories were grouped together, with one day set aside for several victories. For example, a thanksgiving day was ordered for 12 March 1645 that was to be celebrated in London and the surrounding area for ‘the gaining of Weymouth, Shrewsbury and Scarborough, and the deliverance of Plymouth and the victory over Wyntour’.⁴¹ This practice developed over the course of 1645: in July followed a thanksgiving for ‘successes in the west and north, especially at Bridgewater and Pontefract’, and in August another for ‘various successes, including at Bath, Bridgewater, Scarborough, Sherborne, Pembrokeshire and Canon-Froome.’⁴²

By October 1645 some days were ordered to be set aside with no specific victory mentioned; the purpose of thanksgiving was simply ‘for successes’ with specific areas mentioned.⁴³ Presumably, this allowed for the possibility that victories obtained after the order had been sent out into the localities might be included if the minister heard news of them prior to the occasion. This practice is surely the result of fervent belief in the need to give thanks for military victory, but this was a view held by both sides in the civil war not just puritans or parliamentarians.

³⁹ See appendix, list 1, 38, 51.

⁴⁰ It might be argued that the parliamentarians simply believed that every victory was important. However, not every victory resulted in a day of prayer. Indeed, some very significant victories, such as the battle of Montgomery (the largest battle in Wales and a major parliamentary victory) did not result in a nationwide thanksgiving. It is not clear why some major victories did not result in a day of special prayer. However, that they did not implies that not every victory required a nationwide thanksgiving and underlines the idea that parliament were unable to distinguish between the status of occasions that did require a day of prayer.

⁴¹ *CJ* 4/3/1645, 10/3/1645. There had been occasions where more than one area was mentioned prior to 1645, but these tended to be limited to two reasonably close by areas, such as the thanksgiving for the victory at Nantwich and the delivery of the garrison at Nottingham held on 4 February 1644. See appendix, list 1, 21.

⁴² See appendix, list 1, 41.

⁴³ For example see appendix, list 1, 46, 47.

Yet, from the point of view of the parliamentarians, with more limited methods of expressing this desire, a nationwide occasional prayer day, became necessary for almost every victory, though a few victories might be grouped together.

Therefore, a simple explanation presents itself as to the cause in the reduction of the annual total number of occasional prayer days from 1649 – peace. Since thanksgiving days for military victory have been shown to be the primary cause of the swell of occasions in the mid-late 1640s, that these dramatically reduced once the civil war was over is to be expected. Overall, occasional nationwide prayers and prayer days increased in frequency during the civil war, though when examined in a wider context not as dramatically as it first appears. Once the war was over, and national emotions calmed, occasions were less frequent, but almost always called for traditional causes such as victory or natural disasters.⁴⁴ Occasional days of prayer are an area where we might expect history to be largely similar had Charles won at Naseby.

After the civil war the number of nationwide prayer days per year returned to similar levels of other periods before the war that were marked with military campaigns abroad. After the Restoration, the frequency of occasions reduced still further until politically tense episodes occurred, such as the popish plot for which a national fast was ordered for 13 November 1678.⁴⁵ For with Charles II's accession stability seemed assured and a calm, peaceful and happy nation devoid of high emotions had few occasions that required divine petitions through nationwide prayer days. This was not the demise of these occasions altogether, but a reduction in the intensity of their frequency until the nation had need of them.⁴⁶ Had another civil war beckoned over the exclusion crisis, it is likely that the nation once again would have been required to set aside multiple days for prayer for their side's cause (as well as including additional prayers into other

⁴⁴ Exceptions are those for specific sins; these do appear to reflect a puritan regime in government, such as the fast in April 1649 for national and private sins. See appendix, list 1, 74.

⁴⁵ Dan Beaver, 'Conscience and context: the popish plot and the politics of ritual, 1678-1682,' *HJ*, 34 (1991), especially p. 304.

⁴⁶ For discussion of the political uses of later seventeenth-century nationwide days of prayer see John Spurr, "'Virtue, Religion and Government': the Anglican Uses of Providence", in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990).

forms of worship) at similar levels to those in the 1640s. That separate nationwide prayer days did not reach the levels of the 1640s again is due more to England's successful avoidance of another civil war than any lack of commitment to nationwide days of prayer by later governments.

In this wider context, it is difficult to justify the idea that the increase in puritan power through the parliamentarians was the cause of the increase in the frequency of occasional prayer days in the 1640s. Charles I's personal interest in and support of nationwide prayer, and even weekly fast days, as a state response to crisis underlines this further.⁴⁷ As emphasised in the opening to this chapter, occasional national prayers and prayer days were part of English culture from at least the medieval period. Occasional prayer days were set aside for peaks in national anxiety or high national emotion, such as natural disasters and their aversion. A prolonged period of anxiety would naturally result in an intense peak in the frequency of occasional prayer days. It is difficult to conceive of a national situation more likely to provoke anxiety in the nation than a civil war. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that 1645 and 1648 saw an intense frequency in occasional prayer days – this is likely to have been the case whichever side won the war. Indeed, with Charles' interest in national prayer and the precedence of 5 November (arguably the most popular English prayer day of all, and certainly the one with the greatest longevity), had he won, he surely would have ordered an annual thanksgiving for the suppression of the parliamentary rebels?

This suggests considerable continuity in the purpose of occasions ordered by royalists and parliamentarians. Indeed, the shared cultural ideas of providence and England as God's chosen nation were enforced through the inclusive nature of nationwide prayer days. These occasions were part of a national religion, which Hudson terms a 'civic religion', in much the same way that Hill describes biblical commentaries of the 1640s being 'lengthy interpretations of and glosses

⁴⁷ Between July 1625 and January 1645, ten royal proclamations issued by Charles ordered general fasts. The King and Council initiated five of these, while the others were in response to parliamentary petitions. The 1636 regular Wednesday fast was, according to Griffin, 'clearly initiated by the King'. Griffin continues, 'Counter to expectation, the first instance of a regular course of fasting days in the reign of Charles I was a royal initiative; the regular fast was not the creation of a Puritan opposition.' See Griffin, *Regulating*, p. 156.

on current affairs'.⁴⁸ Therefore, we might view the prayer days, and particularly the purposes for which they were ordered, as a means of charting the anxieties and joys of the whole nation. For the most part, such an examination of nationwide days of prayer in the 1640s and 1650s as genuine religious expressions of emotions is missing from scholarship. This is especially true of consideration of parliament's reasons for ordering days of prayer, which are frequently presented almost entirely as premeditated and calculated methods of propaganda. More accurately, fast and thanksgiving days should be seen as state rituals measuring national emotions. They were nationalised and Protestantised developments with their roots in late medieval 'superstitious' practices, such as pilgrimages, appeals and prayers of thankfulness to military saints at times of war. As such, a large degree of continuity of purpose for ordering (rather than an influx of puritan purposes in the 1640s) should be expected throughout the early modern period, particularly once a post-reformation world-view had become established.

Indeed, the impetuses for ordering specific nationwide days of prayer did remain largely unchanged throughout the early modern period and beyond. Before 1640, fasts were appointed for natural disasters, such as disease or 'unseasonable' weather, while thanksgivings were called to express gratitude for the removal of hardships, such as plague or drought, from the kingdom. These reasons for state authorities ordering a nationwide occasional day of prayer were points of continuity throughout their history, including the period under consideration in this thesis. For example, plague was the cause of the general fast on 17 November 1640, and the Protector ordered a similar occasion in May 1658. Relief at the plague not reaching London was one of the preoccupations of parliament in ordering a thanksgiving in July 1645.⁴⁹ Anxiety over rainfall (or lack of it) led both to a day of humiliation in December 1646, and a thanksgiving for relief from drought 23 May 1654.

⁴⁸ Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 104-105.

⁴⁹ It should be noted however that the thanksgiving ordered by Parliament for 22 July 1645 was only partially for London's preservation from the plague, see *CJ 12/7/1645*.

War and domestic disturbance, like natural disaster, had a long tradition as a purpose for national prayer. Elizabeth I permitted religious celebrations for the defeat of the Spanish Armada.⁵⁰ From the Elizabethan period, nationwide fasts were a consistent reaction to threats to the state by plots, potential invasions, or threats against the head of state that sought divine aid for their aversion; followed by thanksgivings once they had passed. For example, a thanksgiving was observed on 19 March 1643 for delivery from a plot in Bristol, and another on 15 June and 11 July 1643 after the discovery of a plot in London.⁵¹ A prayer day on 20 February 1657 recognised the hand of God in the State's deliverance from a plot and the preservation of the Protector.⁵² Similarly, the celebrations on 21 July 1658 saw divine assistance in the defeat of the invasion; while the importance of the return of the king as head of state was highlighted in the annual thanksgivings for His Majesty's happy return and birthday from 29 May 1661.⁵³ The civil wars, as well as the international conflicts during this period, led to many thanksgivings for military victories, such as the thanksgivings for Naseby on 18 June 1645, and for the victory over the Dutch held on 23 June 1653. Such continuities in the purposes for ordering national fast and thanksgiving days throughout the early modern period keenly identifies them as shared cultural concepts held by authorities of widely differing religious and political affiliations.

Both sides of the civil war saw peace negotiations and potential treaties as suitable reasons to fast. However, the execution of these fasts differed. Parliament ordered ministers to use the monthly fast to seek divine blessing on the negotiations at the end of January 1645, while the royalists set apart 5 February entirely to petition the Lord for a successful treaty at Uxbridge.⁵⁴ We

⁵⁰ WKC, pp. 469-470. See also *A Psalme and Collect of thanksgiuing, not vnmeet for this present time: to be said or sung in Churches* (London, 1588; STC 16520).

⁵¹ See LJ 14/3/1643 and CJ 16/3/1643; CJ 9/6/1643 and CJ 17/6/1643, and *A Brief Narrative of The late Treacherous and Horrid Designe* (London, 1643; Wing B4614).

⁵² See *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector and the Parliament, For a Day of Publique Thanksgiving On Friday the Twentieth of February, 1656* (London, 1657; Wing C7066).

⁵³ *A Declaration of His Highnesse The Lord Protector for a day of publick Thanksgiving* (London, 1658; Wing C7067); *By the King. A Proclamation, For the observation of the Nine and twentieth day of May instant, as a day of Publick Thanksgiving* (London, 1661; Wing C3498).

⁵⁴ See CJ 25/1/1645 and *By the King. A Proclamation for a Solemn Fast on Wenesday the Fifth of February Next, Upon Occasion of the Present Treaty for Peace* (London, 1645; Wing C2585).

can only speculate as to the motivation of the two sides here but a separate fast day by the royalists (who could also have used their own monthly fast day for additional prayers but chose not to) would tend to suggest that they held an increased anxiety over and importance attached to the Uxbridge treaty when compared to the parliamentarians. Similarly, though the desire for God's blessing on troops going into battle was held on both sides of the civil war, each tended to employ a different method to obtain it. The royalists continued the tradition of additional prayers on days already set apart for prayer, usually Sundays, which had been employed before the civil war. A comparison of the prayer for the king's expedition against the Covenanters in the summer of 1640 and the prayer for the king's victory over the rebels in November 1642 keenly demonstrates this.⁵⁵ Initially, parliament took a similar approach using the monthly fast days by ordering ministers to seek a blessing on their forces, yet they soon moved to setting aside an entire day of prayer for a blessing on the forces.⁵⁶ This method continued in the interregnum with a blessing on Cromwell's forces going into Ireland in July and August 1649. Yet, the nuances in the observance of prayer days leads us to question what distinguished royalist and parliamentarian attitudes to nationwide prayer, and how they utilised different types of nationwide prayer.

Therefore, examination of the statistics of nationwide prayer highlights its continuity. Times of heightened national anxiety, due to issues such as plague and civil war, correspond with an increase in the number of days upon which the nation was expected to pray throughout the period 1603 to 1660. This tempers the view of an unprecedented explosion of occasions in the 1640s charting the rise of godly government. However, in outlining the difficulties of counting occasions of nationwide prayer between 1640 and 1660 the nuances between parliamentarian and royalist approaches to this phenomenon are thrown into relief. In order to consider this further, it is essential to consider the history of

⁵⁵ See *A Prayer...against the Rebels of Scotland* (STC 16558); *A Prayer...late Victory over the Rebels* (Wing P3193-5).

⁵⁶ See for example the additional order given for the monthly fast in September 1642 and the prayer day of 24 September 1643 for a blessing on the Lord General and his forces, see *CJ* 27/09/1643, 23/09/1643.

fasting and the early modern developments of the foundations of nationwide prayer – providence and prayer itself.

II

The setting aside of a period of time for spiritual reflection accompanied by a restricted diet, a fast, is common to all religions with a Judeo-Christian heritage. The history of Christian fasting is plagued by competing definitions of the term ‘fast’. From the earliest records of the Christian church, ‘fast’ has been simultaneously used to describe an entire range of practice from total abstinence from food and drink for days at a time to simply avoiding meat, or not eating until a particular time of day. In general, when fasts were to last several days, such as during Lent, the requirements were less restrictive than those of shorter durations.

That both Catholicism and later Protestantism developed and modified the religious practice of fasting in their own ways is unsurprising, yet often ignored. It is considerable testament to the impact of the work of Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake (among many others) that the practice of seventeenth-century fasting is synonymous with the puritan movement in early modern historiography. While the practice of private fasting does seem to have been particularly prevalent among puritans, it is a considerable error to assume that only puritans participated in the practice of fasting, especially public fasts.⁵⁷ Care must be taken not to amalgamate all the religiously earnest into the label of ‘puritan’, particularly as many who were theologically opposed over many issues held very similar opinions on the importance of the practice of fasting.⁵⁸ This shared value of the practice by Calvinists, Laudians and Catholics alike demonstrates its deep penetration into the fabric of English religious culture.

⁵⁷ It must be noted that neither Collinson nor Lake makes such an assumption directly in their work.

⁵⁸ For example compare views of John Browning with those of the puritan Arthur Hildersham. John Browning, *Concerning Pvblike-Prayer and Fasts of the Church. Six Sermons, or Tractates* (London, 1636; STC 3919); Arthur Hildersham, *The Doctrine of Fasting and Praier, and Humiliation for Sinne* (London, 1633; STC 13459).

When distinctly Protestant fasting started to develop in the 1540s and 1550s, the degrees of regularity and abstinence became both issues of tension and a means of separating from late medieval practice.⁵⁹ Over time these distinctions became less pronounced and by the mid-1640s it can be very difficult to see any fundamental difference between a Protestant and a Catholic fast. However, initially these two key distinctions were emphasised by men such as Thomas Cartwright who were calling for national prayer days in the 1570s, but who needed to expunge any possible accusations of popery from these occasions.⁶⁰ While Catholics observed fast days every Friday as well as during Lent and on other specific holy days; this intense regularity was something Protestant authorities avoided, at least at first. For the religion of the word, fasting should be an extraordinary activity; regularity could make it mundane and hence mechanical.

As inherited from the Israelite religion, Catholic fasting involved abstinence. This was usually interpreted as abstinence from sexual unions and the consumption of meat. However, fasting was equally understood by some to mean denying the body food entirely. Catholic holy women, in particular, were admired for their great periods of starvation. This ‘spiritual anorexia’, as some have termed this phenomenon, not only brought these individuals closer to God but also proved their relationship with him regardless of their inferior gender. Yet for the majority, the traditional religious practice of Catholic fasting was to eat a single meal (that did not contain meat) after midday.⁶¹ Regular dietary restrictions have a keen effect on identity and Bossy noted that the ‘ascetic regime’ of regular fasting ‘was the branch of pre-Reformation religious practice held on to most firmly by Elizabethan Catholics’.⁶² It is easy to appreciate how this regular avoidance of meat could have separated Catholics from their Protestant neighbours. However, in practice such separation for this reason was

⁵⁹ Browning, *Concerning Pvblike-Prayer* (STC 3919), p. 208; Albert Peel and Leland Henry Carlson, (eds.), *Cartwrightiana* (London, 1951), pp. 134-140. There is some doubt over Cartwright’s authorship of *The Holy Exercise of a True Fast, Described out of Gods Word* (STC 4324), which is printed in *Cartwrightiana*. The current consensus seems to be that Cartwright is the most likely author and this will not be challenged here. On authorship, see Peel and Carlson, (eds.), *Cartwrightiana*, pp. 125-127.

⁶⁰ Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 79-80; Peel and Carlson, (eds.), *Cartwrightiana*, pp. 127-136.

⁶¹ John Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* (London, 1975), p. 100.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

probably rare. It appears that few Protestants rushed to eat meat on Fridays and continued to fast in Lent. Fish on Fridays was simply a traditional part of English culture and for most there appeared no threateningly popish theological reason to change this.⁶³

While the consumption of fish on Fridays by Catholics (who were obliged to abstain from meat in order to avoid mortal sin) only became established as a tradition after the eighth century, the practice of setting aside Fridays for fasting can be discerned in Christian teachings as early as the second half of the first century AD. Indeed, chapter eight of the *Didache* (the teaching of the twelve apostles) demanded fasting to occur on Wednesdays as well as Fridays and this may be one reason why Wednesday was a day of choice by authorities ordering fasting or fish consumption in the early modern period. During the medieval period, the spread of Christianity was synonymous with the rapid growth of the fish industry, which became essential to the English economy and as a staple food for a growing population.⁶⁴

As Protestantism sought to define itself against late medieval Catholicism particularly whilst still in its infancy, one might have expected the Friday and Lenten fish fasts to be abandoned. However, the centrality of scripture for Protestantism, containing examples advocating fasting that include Christ himself, ensured that some form of fasting continued as a Christian practice.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, fasting could still be defined in opposition to Catholic practice by emphasising prayer, total abstinence from food and that it should not be so regular that it became mundane to its practitioners.⁶⁶ Many Protestants were keen to highlight that the act of eating fish and avoiding meat did not constitute

⁶³ However, out of prudence, the homily on fasting was keen to justify the continuation of the practice. See 'An Homyly of Good workes, And fyrst of fastyng' in *The seconde Tome of Homelyes of such matters as were promised and Intituled in the former part of the Homelyes, set out by the auctoritie of the Quenes Maiestie: And to be read in every paryshe Churche agreablye* (London, 1563; STC 13665), sigs. Mm3r-Oo1r.

⁶⁴ For more on the history of fish consumption in England and America see Brian M. Fagan, *Fish on Friday: feasting, fasting, and the discovery of the New World* (New York, 2006).

⁶⁵ For example, see Jonah 3.5-10, Daniel 9.3, Joel 1.14, 2 Samuel 12.16-22, Isaiah 58.3-7, Matthew 6.16-18, Mark 2.18-20, Luke 4.2, 5.33-35, and Acts 13.2-3.

⁶⁶ For example see Thomas Becon, *A Fruitful Treatise of Fasting, Wherin Is Declared What the Christen Fast Is, How We Ought to Fast, [and] What [the] True Vse of Fastyng Is. Newlye Made by Thomas Becon* (London, 1552; STC 1722); Peel and Carlson, (eds.), *Cartwrightiana*, pp. 127-143.

fasting. This argument was described in lavish detail by Thomas Becon who outlines the cakes, white bread, ale, ‘most delicious fishes’ designed to make the Catholic faster so full that they fell asleep after dinner and cannot fail in their ‘fast’.⁶⁷

Yet, the practice of regularly abstaining from meat and consuming fish instead continued partly for reasons of cultural tradition, partly as a government measure to boost the fish industry. Fish days initially remained closely tied to their roots of Catholic fish fasts, as a means of instigating virtue but were extended under Edward VI to include Saturdays as well as Fridays and Lent. Under Elizabeth, the Navigation Act (1563) sought to include Wednesday as a weekly fish day, but the reasons given emphasised secular benefits (to save beef stocks and maintain a skilled and growing navy) rather than spiritual ones.⁶⁸ Proclamations prohibiting the eating of meat in Lent and on fish days continued under the early Stuarts.⁶⁹ Despite many attempts to separate fish consumption and Fridays from their religious heritage, the connection between fish and fasting remained strong. On 14 February 1661, Samuel Pepys remarked upon ‘the talk of the town’, that the poor could not strictly keep Lent because they ‘cannot buy fish’.⁷⁰ Fish days continued to be considered some form of holy day by many and were frequently linked with Lenten religious practices in legislation. Secular pressures largely prevented governments from outright attacks on regular fish days as popish remnants, and in the absence of clear government direction these customs largely continued, especially on Fridays.⁷¹ As a result the relationship between eating fish on Fridays and fasting in early modern England remained somewhat confused.

⁶⁷ See Becon, *A Fruitful treatise* (STC 1722), sigs. D.iiv-D.iiir.

⁶⁸ See G. R. Elton, ‘Piscatorial Politics in the Early Parliaments of Elizabeth I’ in G. R. Elton (ed.), *Studies in Tudor and Stuart politics and government*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1992).

⁶⁹ Charles first issued a proclamation of this kind on 14 January 1626, *By the King. A Proclamation for restraint of killing, dressing and eating of Flesh in Lent, or on Fish dayes, appointed by the Law, to be hereafter strictly observed by all sorts of people* for the full text see L&H, vol. II, pp. 78-82, see also 120-125, 180, 220. For examples under James I see L&H, vol. I, pp. 413-416, 424-426, 450-454.

⁷⁰ See <http://www.pepysdiary.com/archive/1661/02/14>, last accessed 8/2/2011.

⁷¹ Attempts were made by the Parliamentarians towards the end of the 1640s to restrict Lenten practices and that of other holy days, including Christmas. For example, on 8 June 1647 *An Ordinance for the Abolishing of Festivals* legally abolished all holy days, though it made no reference to the consumption of fish on Fridays. Presumably, those in power considered it a secular concern. See A&O, vol. I, p. 954.

Nevertheless, for Protestants, fasting was less to do with the physical denial of food than with inward spiritual reflection. Though fasting frequently did involve a change in diet such as avoiding meat and replacing it with fish, or replacing a full meal with a light one of wine and cakes, self-examination of one's conscience, repentance, prayer, the reading and hearing the word, and reflection upon the sermon preached were of far greater importance. Tears were thought by some to increase the likelihood of divine response, presumably as they proved the sincerity of an individual sinner's repentance.⁷²

Therefore, in both Catholic and Protestant traditions, fasting was flexible. Not only was the severity of starvation to some extent optional, but also the practice itself could be incorporated into an individual's own personal pattern of worship. Private fasts could involve an individual, a household or a network of friends or kin - for only public fasts required the approval of church authorities. While initially this appears to make fasting a very flexible and therefore appealing practice, this malleability troubled the English state authorities and the practice of fasting was a source of political tension long before the 1640s.

Given the permanence of a Protestant and inherently anti-papist church in England from the Elizabethan period, Catholic fasts were by nature threatening and observed privately, whether initiated by a member of the laity or by the papacy. Protestants gathering for private fasting was equally perceived as threatening both to the established church and the state. They provided too much opportunity to criticise the authorities. While many private fasts were not attempts to subvert the status quo and were a gathering of a few like-minded individuals (such as those observed in the home of Lady Brilliana Harley), it is easy to see why the gatherings of several hundred Protestants for a 'private' fasts were perceived rather differently and it was difficult to differentiate between the two in legislation.⁷³ Elizabeth I, in particular, feared such gatherings and sought

⁷² This view was held by William Spurstowe in his fast day sermon of July 1643 later printed as *England's Patterne and Duty in Its Monthly Fasts*. See Durston, 'Humiliation', p. 135.

⁷³ For example, on 2 February 1639 Lady Brilliana wrote a letter to her son Ned mentioning her hopes for a private fast the following week. Thomas Taylor Lewis, (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan* (London, 1854), p. 28.

to prevent them. She saw such private fasts as potential opportunities for criticism of her government and to spread more radical puritan ideas than with which she was comfortable. Ultimately, the Elizabethan campaign to end private fasting was unsuccessful, and, by 10 April 1640, organisers of large-scale private fasts had grown in power as these gatherings increased in popularity to such an extent that the ‘a general fast was held ... privately in England, Scotland, Germany ut dic. p. success of the Parliament.’⁷⁴

However, public fasts were another matter and Elizabeth tolerated, if not encouraged, these.⁷⁵ Yet as the established church moved further towards Arminianism, even public fasts came under attack. Laud despised public fasts, and in 1635 had tightened the regulations for authorising public fasts by denying the power of bishops to order fasts within their own diocese, insisting that this power remained solely the prerogative of the king.⁷⁶ By the opening of the Short Parliament there was a large degree of tension between demands for public fasts from a significant portion of the populace and an archbishop determined to end the practice.⁷⁷ However, it is far from certain that all those desirous of public fasting in 1640 should be ascribed the label of ‘puritan’.

The non-puritan origins, developments and theological purposes of nationwide prayer days and their associated activities is keenly demonstrated by their continued importance to non-puritans throughout this period, most notably within royalist circles. Common cultural belief in the power of nationwide prayer and fasting can be identified by examination of contemporary critics of puritanism, such as Peter Heylyn. Heylyn distinguished clearly between official days of prayer and fasting and private occasions, seeing private fasting as

⁷⁴ Quoted in Esther S. Cope, *Politics without parliaments, 1629-1640* (London, 1987), p. 187.

⁷⁵ For example, *A Fourme to Be Used in Common Prayer Twyse a Weeke, and Also an Order of Publique Fast, to Be Used Euery Wednesday in the Weeke, Durying This Tyme of Mortalitie, and Other Afflictions, Wherwith the Realme at This Present Is Visited* (London, 1563; STC 16506.3).

⁷⁶ John Bruce, (ed.), *CSPD*, 1635 (London, 1865), p. 522; Hill, *English Bible*, p. 81. In his denial of the power of bishops to order occasions within their own diocese Laud shows similarities with Matthew Parker and his actions over special prayer in 1563. The extent of the authority of the episcopate in ordering extraordinary prayer remained a matter of debate. For further details, see conclusion.

⁷⁷ Robert Ryece, correspondent of John Winthrop, complained of the lack of public fasting in 1636 ‘which was deemed as hateful as conventicles’. Allyn Bailey Forbes, Stewart Mitchell and George Washington Robinson, *Winthrop papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 3, (Boston, 1929), pp. 298-306 as cited in Cope, *Politics*, p. 64.

incompatible with the true doctrines and practices of the Church of England.⁷⁸ Indeed, Heylyn used the neglect of official fasts and use of independent fasts instead as means of identifying puritan subversion within parish churches.⁷⁹ As the first historian of Arminianism, Heylyn's support of national fast days further questions current historiographical assumptions that these occasions originated through puritan innovation.⁸⁰ The claim of godliness as the cause for the frequency of prayer days in this period is only valid in the sense that puritan focus on distinguishing between 'levels' of prayer and fasting (ordinary and extraordinary, local and general) reduced the options for national thanksgiving with additional prayers (whether they be set or *ex tempore*) lacking the necessary status to recognise such divine assistance. Nonetheless, some nationwide thanksgivings were held on Sundays, and these can be seen as cousins of additional prayers.

III

Thus, there was considerable continuity in nationwide prayer in this period, as well as distinct nuances being determinable in the type and frequency of royalist and parliamentary occasions. This can be further explained by examination of the broader context of early modern attitudes towards providence and prayer. Unlike the medieval order that opened this chapter, nationwide prayer day orders from established Protestant authorities could not rely on a supernatural explanation for how prayer might result in relief from national adversity. One of Protestantism's solutions for its fundamental problem of rejecting the power of the supernatural and yet requiring assurances for the uncertainties of early modern life such as plague, disease and war is highlighted through examination of nationwide days of prayer.⁸¹ At a fundamental level, these occasions were based upon belief in the concept of providence, the idea that God was active in

⁷⁸ Anthony Milton, *Laudian and royalist polemic in seventeenth-century England* (Manchester, 2007), p. 228.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 24-25.

⁸⁰ Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the rise of English Arminianism c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 8.

⁸¹ This problem for Protestant theology and the role of fasting as part of its solution was first discussed in Keith Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England* (London, 1971).

the world and that his direct intervention was responsible for the pleasures and pains of human existence. Alexandra Walsham demonstrated the permeation of providence into almost every aspect of early modern life in the early modern period and its hold on the marketplace of cheap print.⁸² Furthermore, Walsham showed that puritans were simply ‘hotter sorts of providentialists’ than their neighbours, and that providentialism was a cultural phenomenon that cut across the boundaries of religious divisions (including the boundary between Protestant and Catholic). In doing so, she established that such divisions were not as clear-cut as was once assumed.⁸³ This broader understanding of providentialism can equally be applied to contemporary interpretations of nationwide days of prayer.

While these occasions rested on an understanding of providence, in turn providentialist interpretations of national events were based on the concept that the English were God’s chosen nation. Hill’s assertion that attempts to distinguish as to whether English contemporaries believed England was ‘a’ or ‘the’ chosen nation are largely irrelevant is convincing within this context and no attempt will be made to draw a conclusion on this issue here.⁸⁴ England had superseded Israel in the covenant outlined in the Old Testament and this explained God’s hand in England’s fate - her triumphs and her troubles.⁸⁵ Many

⁸² Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999). See also Tessa Watt, *Cheap print and popular piety, 1550-1640* (London, 1991). For a critique of Walsham’s work (though somewhat unreasonable in places) see Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, *The antichrist’s lewd hat : protestants, papists and players in post-reformation England* (London, 2002), pp. 315-331.

⁸³ Walsham, *Providence*, especially pp. 2-3, 327-334; Patrick Collinson, *The religion of protestants: the church in English society 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 219-220. Ironically, the same point is also made in Lake and Questier, *Antichrist’s lewd hat*, pp. 315-331.

⁸⁴ Hill, *English Bible*, p. 264. For an alternative view see 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), especially pp. 24-27. Hill’s view should be tempered in other contexts and Theodore Bozeman’s work clearly demonstrates that preachers shifted their meaning within their sermons. Therefore, England was both ‘a’ and ‘the’ chosen nation depending on the context – in this sense Hill is correct to assert that it is irrelevant. Theodore Bozeman, ‘Federal Theology and the “National Covenant”: an Elizabethan Presbyterian Case Study’, *American Society of Church History*, 61 (1992).

⁸⁵ See John W. McKenna, ‘How God became an Englishman’ in Delloyd J. Guth and John W. McKenna (eds.), *Tudor Rule and Revolution* (Cambridge, 1982); Hill, *English Bible*, pp. 264-270. I agree with Hill’s assertion that attempts to distinguish as to whether English contemporaries believed England was ‘a’ or ‘the’ chosen nation are largely irrelevant, Hill, *English Bible*, p. 264. See also Collinson, ‘Biblical rhetoric’; Blair Worden, ‘Providence and Politics in Cromwellian England’ *Past and Present*, 109 (1985). Although these works do focus on the popularity of this concept with puritans most it seems would agree with Hill that ‘from the widespread belief that England qualified for succession to the Jews as a chosen people a whole series of conclusions could be drawn’, Hill, *English Bible*, p. 273. It just so happened that these

believed that divine aid might reach God's people in times of trouble through extraordinary prayer, perhaps accompanied by fasting.⁸⁶ Yet nationwide providential interpretations were potentially problematic. Historians, such as Collinson and Walsham, have noted tensions emerging when providence was used in conjunction with the concept of England as God's chosen nation. Research into the godly of the Elizabethan and Stuart period clearly demonstrated the prevalence of providentialism in the puritan mindset from its inception and its role in the increasing divisions of the Church of England as the concept of a chosen nation ran into difficulties in the 1620s and 1630s when many came to believe that 'the Caroline government was not merely conniving at popery and profanation of the Lord's Day but actively enjoying these abominations'.⁸⁷

While providentialism formed part of the cultural currency of early modern England, it was not static and remained subject to religious and political influences. The significance of providence for the actions of parliament (and especially key puritans within the Long Parliament) at particular turning points in the 1640s and 1650s has long been recognised.⁸⁸ More recently, Geoff Browell's research explored its political role more closely for both parliamentarian and royalist leaders establishing providence as 'an indispensable constituent of political decision-making' in this period.⁸⁹ In doing so, he successfully highlighted the historiographical error in assuming providentialism was solely the handmaid of the parliamentarians, noting that 'royalist sources often betray a measure of ambivalence towards providence... stressing its private, devotional implications and tending to distrust the extension of providential interpretation

scholars chose to focus on puritan interpretations rather than more moderate or even catholic understandings of the nature of God's relationship with England. For an examination of royalists seeing England as God's chosen nation see Geoffrey Charles Browell, 'The politics of providentialism in England c. 1640-1660', PhD. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury (2000), chapters 2-3.

⁸⁶ Becon, *A Fruitful treatise* (STC 1722), especially chapter 6, sigs. Cir-Ciiiiv.

⁸⁷ Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 292, 303; Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan movement* (London, 1967), p. 25.

⁸⁸ Blair Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in David L. Smith (ed.), *Cromwell and the Interregnum: The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 2003); Worden, 'Providence'; Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 175-204; John Morrill, *The nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 58; John Frederick Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 168-170.

⁸⁹ Browell, 'Providentialism', p. 2.

into the sphere of public policy.’⁹⁰ To some extent distinctive tones can be discerned in contemporary providentialist sources, which broadly indicate predominately royalist or parliamentary characteristics. As such, royalists and parliamentarians, conservatives and puritans had different understandings of the nature of providence and how to seek divine favour. Equally, previous experiences whether formative or recent frequently made an impact on providential interpretations - how well the military were performing played a key role in providentialist interpretations in the 1640s and 1650s.

Yet particular nuances of providentialist interpretation were dependant upon one’s viewpoint on a number of cultural spectrums which generally had positive but not perfect correlations: such as royalist-parliamentarian, Catholic-Protestant, Laudian-Calvinist, conformist-sectarian. In other words, while most puritans sought further religious reform and became parliamentarians during the civil war, there were still examples of puritan royalists. The concept of a number of spectrums affecting cultural interpretation avoids giving too much weight to the generalisation that those of a more radical religious nature tended to support parliament and the more conservative were for the king, but still recognises its broad validity.⁹¹ Browell identified a form of ‘puritan royalism’ among some sources, and many parliamentarian sources were not as puritan in outlook as we might expect.⁹² As with providentialism, there were characteristic attitudes towards nationwide days of prayer, but these were subject to multiple, and sometimes competing, cultural spectrums.

The characteristically different nuances of the nature of providence by royalists and parliamentarians, conservatives and puritans affected the uses these groups made of providentialism even at the outset of the civil war. The moderate royalist attitude towards providence was bound to an innate hesitancy to pronounce any judgement or interpretation as the only possible truth without scriptural, synod or historical authority. This frequently caused royalists to avoid discussion of

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 2, 29.

⁹¹ For the broad validity of this generalisation from among members of the House of Commons see data in the appendix of Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 220-226.

⁹² Browell, ‘Providentialism’, p. 29.

providential interpretations in favour of emphasising the unquestionable truth of scripture, such as the obedience due to the king. Even in his provocative sermon of 1642, *A Sermon Touching Schisme*, Richard Watson avoided pronouncing providentialist judgements. Instead, he fearlessly attacked those who did, the ‘schismatics’ who ‘feign to themselves a peculiar familiarity with God’, ‘boast of their transcendent knowledge... and admit none but their vain glosses, and absurd interpretations.’⁹³ For ‘schismatics’ we should read parliamentarians generally, as well as those who attacked the Church of England specifically; Watson believed that if the ‘schismatics’ would only take instruction ‘the desired union of the Church restored and many seditious practices in the State [would be] happily prevented.’⁹⁴ Watson epitomised the majority royalist view that the individual alone did not have the authority to interpret meaning, that obedience and the humble receiving of instruction were pleasing to God since they avoided schism – a far worse fate for the Church than a tyrant.⁹⁵ Therefore, detailed discussion of providence must be avoided for it required pronouncements to be made for which very few (if any) had the authority to make.

A similar attitude was espoused in the form of prayer for the royalist monthly fast where the key themes emphasised were the necessity of repenting of sins and demonstrating due obedience to God and king, rather than a detailed exposition on the providential nature of the rebellion. While God’s judgement of the nation was demonstrated by the rebellion itself, it was man’s sin that had caused it and no further discussion was needed. Perhaps it was feared that detailed discussion of providence might encourage some to question the sins of the king and his government, instead of focusing on their duty of obedience in order to create unity. The promotion of obedience was further highlighted by the inclusion of the Elizabethan homily against disobedience and the prayer against rebellion at the end of the form.⁹⁶ This may have had a comforting effect and reduced further any focus on the king’s sins for even the golden age of Elizabeth had suffered

⁹³ Richard Watson, *A Sermon Touching Schisme* (Cambridge, 1642; Wing W1095), sig. B3r.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C2r-v.

⁹⁶ *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Solemn Fast Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4111).

rebellion, but Gloriana had recovered with God's aid and surely God would continue to protect his anointed King Charles.

However, as the war continued questions arose as to why the prayers to God went unanswered, and the issue of royalist sins could no longer be avoided for some. William Stampe commented, 'Never did any age produce more fasting, more preaching, more praying. Never did these holy exercises produce lesse fruit'.⁹⁷ In searching for a cause for the war and the ineffectiveness of prayers and fasting evident by 1643 and 1644, preachers such as William Chillingworth and Stampe identified sins more usually remarked upon by puritan preachers as the cause, such as the wearing of lavish apparel and feasting.⁹⁸ This trait equally tended to correlate with more certain pronouncements over acts of providence. For example, Stampe willingly identifies God's hand as having been at work at the battle of Edgehill, 'the same hand that saved a Crowne, and sheltered Royall bloud Octob. 23... the same Canopy of good providence and protection does as yet hang over is, if we doe not runne away from under it.'⁹⁹ This more puritan-style royalism was more divisive as it tended to see a war on two fronts, between the parliamentarians on the one hand and the hypocritical royalists who did not amend their sinful ways on the other.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless the essential royalist position of a unified state and church which was marked by obedience pervaded even Stampe's sermon: 'But mistake not; This hand of mercy is not held out to every idel, squandering thought, every extemporary, indigested prayer: but confin'd to prayers qualified with faith; thought regulated by obedience; fasting governed by sincerity.'¹⁰¹ The role of the king as head of the Church of England as well as the kingdom should not be questioned - on this point both Watson and Stampe agreed.

⁹⁷ William Stampe, *A Sermon Preached before His Maiestie at Christ-Chvrch in Oxford on the 18. of April 1643* (Oxford, 1643; Wing S5194), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14; William Chillingworth, *A Sermon preached At the publike Fast Before his Maiesty at Christ-Church in Oxford* (Oxford, 1644; Wing C3894), sig. B2v.

⁹⁹ Stampe, *A Sermon preached before His Majestie* (Wing S5194), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Chillingworth, *A Sermon preached...in Oxford* (Wing C3894), sigs. B3r-B4r.

¹⁰¹ Stampe, *A Sermon preached before His Majestie* (Wing S5194), pp. 11-12.

The battle of Edgehill was a providential act for the parliamentarians too. In *The Covenant avenging Sword brandished*, John Arrowsmith emphasised the omen of the date of 23 October:

blood of thine lately spilt at Edgehill on the same day of the moneth in which the rebellion brake out here [Ireland] the yeer before; yea and upon the self same day (if my intelligence be true) in which that bloody battell was fought neer Leipsick in Germanie; this conjuncture is to me a sad presage (God almightie avert the omen) but it me it presageth Englands being to drink deep in Germanies and Irelands cup.¹⁰²

Arrowsmith highlighted the providential nature of Edgehill further by interpreting the location of the battle as an act of providence, ‘the late terrible battell betweene Kynton and Edgehill was fought in a place called, *The vale of the red horse*: as if God thereby had meant to say, I have now sent you the red horse to avenge the quarrels of the white; intending to punish your contempt of my Gospel by the sword, even by your own.¹⁰³ The red and white horses would have been readily understood by members of the audience with a knowledge of Revelation as being two of the four horses released from the seven seals by the Lamb of God. The red horse in particular was pertinent to a nation experiencing civil war for ‘its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another; and he was given a great sword.’¹⁰⁴

While not all parliamentarians preachers made such frequent or detailed providential interpretations as Arrowsmith, many appear to have had a far more confident tone from the outset of outright hostilities than their royalist counterparts. Stephen Marshall in *Meroz Cursed* asserted, ‘I can more truly speak from God, that in every congregation where godly Ministers, and godly people shall, according to publike direction, lie in the dust, fasting, and mourning, and praying before the Lord; there are strong holds set up for the safetie of the Kingdom.’¹⁰⁵ There was clear expectation from many that prayer would result in triumph, ‘O pray, pray for the Parliament, O pray, pray for Ireland, and call upon others to pray, there is no man so meane in his estate, or

¹⁰² John Arrowsmith, *The Covenant avenging sword brandished in a sermon before the Honourable House of Commons at their late solemne Fast, Jan. 25* (London, 1642; Wing A3773), sig. C2v.

¹⁰³ Arrowsmith, *The Covenant* (Wing A3773), sig. C4v.

¹⁰⁴ Revelations 6.4.

¹⁰⁵ Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed. Or, A Sermon, preached to the Honourable House of Commons, at their solemne Fast, February 23.1641* (London, 1645; Wing M764), sig. G2r.

weake in his body, but if he be a Christian, he may contribute something towards this great worke ... if all Christians would exercise this talent aright, their prayer would be as a thundering army against the enemies of Gods Church.’¹⁰⁶

Key elements of the parliamentary worldview were linked to providence, such as the Lord’s covenant with parliament and therefore the necessity of immediate further reformation along with continual recognition of God’s judgements and mercies in order to avoid further breaching of it. Parliament, Marshall told the Commons, was not the cause of God’s mercies and deliverances but the instrument through which he worked.¹⁰⁷ The Church ‘without Reformation will have no windows to let in light’ warned Arrowsmith, before highlighting that ‘there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing, because there is yet a God in heaven, and a Parliament in England. So long as you do not turn away from following the Lord, we hope he will make you able to turn away wrath from pursuing us.’¹⁰⁸ Parliament was the means through which disaster could be averted if they kept his covenant and reformed his church, remembering that when prayers were answered and battles were won praise was due to God ‘to whom alone it is due... [for] what is won by Prayer is worn with thankfulness; there being a naturall relation betwixt praying and praising.’¹⁰⁹

The parliamentary use of providence was as a unifying call to arms in the early 1640s, focusing on the need to join together in a war led by the Lord. Marshall sought to gather the troops of the godly against the mighty who ‘doe frequently oppose the Lord...Kings, and Captaines, Merchants and Wisemen, being drunk with the wine of the Whores fornications, proceed to make warre with the Lamb.’¹¹⁰ God’s lead, therefore, justified rebellion against the king though this was not dwelt upon in sermons in the early stages of the war such as *Meroz Cursed*; instead, parliamentary preachers tended to focus on how the nation had

¹⁰⁶ *Meroz Cvrse for not helping the Lord Against the Mighty. Being The Substance of a Sermon, Preached on a day of humiliation, at S. Sepulchers, London, December 2. 1641, By that powerfull and Godly Divine, Mr. Stephen Marshall, published in one sheet of Paper, (not by the Author) but by a Lover of the Truth, for their good especially that are not able to buy bigger books* (London, 1641; Wing M761B). Wing M764 ran to 39 pages.

¹⁰⁷ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sig. G1v.

¹⁰⁸ Arrowsmith, *The Covenant* (Wing A3773), sig. C3v.

¹⁰⁹ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sig. G1r-v.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B4r.

rebelled against God and thus caused God's judgment to fall upon them. As Arrowsmith outlined, 'such is the course if Divine providence: where Iniquitie breaks fast, Calamitie will be sure to dine'.¹¹¹

This confidence of some parliamentary preachers was not to last and, as the unity of the parliamentarians began to fracture into competing groups from the mid-1640s, interpretations of providence began to reflect internal divisions in much the same way as in the royalist camp. Those of Presbyterian persuasions accused the Independents of tolerating the 'subtle and undermining Sectaries and Seduces, who cast dirt upon the very paps which they have sucked, vilifying those Ministers and that Ministry, whereby they were first enlightened' among other 'abominations upon the conscience'.¹¹² Whereas, the Independents accused the Presbyterians of wishing to build a church without a place for the individual conscience, which was almost papist in its assumption of authority to pronounce judgement. William Bridge asserted the common view that 'Gods judgement is one, and mans judgement another' but this was clearly directed against a Presbyterian style of church government for he continued with rhetorical sarcasm, 'before, prophane men oppressed the Saints, and opposed Professors; but now Professors (oh! that I might not speake it) oppose Professors. And is this more pleasing to God, That Professors should oppose Professors, then that Profane men should oppose them?'¹¹³

Therefore, by the mid-1640s, both parliamentary and royalist views of providence contained many different strands of providentialism within a fracturing whole. These differing views of providence led in turn to variations in how these groups characteristically sought divine favour and their approach to nationwide prayer, producing typical royalist, parliamentary, puritan or conformist methodologies. In essence, royalists preferred to insert nationwide prayers into existing services and only utilise separate days of prayer for particularly significant occasions, whereas parliamentarians set aside days for

¹¹¹ Arrowsmith, *The Covenant* (Wing A3773), sig. B1r.

¹¹² James Nalton, *Delay of Reformation provoking Gods further Indignation* (London, 1646; Wing N122), sigs. C4v-D1r.

¹¹³ William Bridge, *The Saints Hiding-Place in the time of Gods Anger* (London, 1647; Wing B4461), sigs. D1r, D3v.

prayer more readily and regularly. Methods of observance tended to separate those of conformist or ‘hotter’ tendencies, with those of puritan inclinations promoting ex tempore prayers and stricter regulations for fasting and avoiding merriment, while conformists endorsed set forms and tended to have a more flexible attitude to observance outside of church. The question remains as to how these nuanced approaches to nationwide prayer came about if not the result of a puritan/non-puritan dichotomy?

IV

For John Browning, prayer was ‘our petition to the Star-Chamber of the Highest God’.¹¹⁴ For Marshall it was ‘a pouring out of the soul’. Yet the importance of prayer was a point of agreement between all English Christians.¹¹⁵ Browning would have concurred with Marshall that prayer is ‘the first and chiefest service we can perform. If any other talent be a peny, Prayer is a pound’.¹¹⁶ Prayer was perceived as a means of giving ‘the greatest glory to God’ and a gift of grace from the Almighty.¹¹⁷ The potential power of prayer, especially when used in conjunction with fasting, was a cornerstone of early modern religious culture. Furthermore, this ‘rare unknowne powerful Engine of Prayer and Fasting’ had protected Israel and later ‘the most Remarkable deliverances that have without ever fayling attended upon this Godly and holy Practice here in this Kingdome of England’.¹¹⁸

Nonetheless, what made a good prayer and how should one pray? In terms of physical requirements for prayer, for puritans these largely consisted of avoiding any action that might be tainted with popery, though the presence of the Spirit in a pure heart might present itself physically in the form of tears. For non-puritans prayer had physical demands beyond the use of heart and mouth. The traditional position for prayer was on the knees ‘with the body cast down to the earth,

¹¹⁴ Browning, *Concerning Publike Prayer* (STC 3919), sig. I1v.

¹¹⁵ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sig. G3r.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. F4v.

¹¹⁷ For some, including Marshall, only faith could rival it. *Ibid.*, sig. G1r.

¹¹⁸ *The Wonderful Effects of a true and Religious Fast, or, An Exhortation to our Monethly Fasting and Prayer For England and Ireland* (London, 1642; Wing W3365), sigs. A1r-A2r.

whence, and of which we are'.¹¹⁹ The eyes should be lifted up to heaven 'from whence cometh our helpe', and the hands should also be raised up recognising that 'all we can doe, is too little to give him thanks for that he hath done for us.'¹²⁰

For puritans such as Marshall, four things met in prayer. First, the people as 'Gods own children' are 'dearer to him then Heaven and Earth'. Second, the spirit of the Lord dictates the prayers: 'we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self makes intercession for us'. Third, Jesus as 'high priest' offers the prayers of God's people up to him. Finally, it gives glory to God.¹²¹ The concept of the spirit dictating prayer was the cornerstone of puritan emphasis on ex tempore prayer. This became a much clearer distinction between puritans and non-puritans following the outbreak of the civil war. Set prayer for puritans strangled the Spirit and could only result in false prayer: 'many can read prayers, say prayers, sing prayers, many can conceive or utter prayers, who yet cannot pray'.¹²² Nonetheless, even when the Spirit was free to work through the individual, prayer should not be easy or comfortable. John Arrowsmith argued that while belief led to faith and faith led to devotion, it was only 'wrestling in prayer' that could lead to peace with God.¹²³

Those of more Arminian persuasions, such as Richard Watson, mocked the puritan emphasis of the Spirit as a guide for prayer. Indeed, he felt that this abuse of the Spirit only resulted in uncharitable prayers.¹²⁴ For those whose religious tendencies were closer to Watson's than Marshall's, the most importance spiritual requirement for prayer was a heart truly set upon reform and being closer to God. As Chillingworth expounded, 'He that desires not what he prayes for, prayes with tongue onely, and not with his heart; indeed does not pray to God, but play and dally with him.'¹²⁵ Similarly, Stampe warned 'mistake not; This hand of mercy is not held out to every idle squandering thought, very

¹¹⁹ Browning, *Concerning Publike Prayer* (STC 3919), sig. L3v.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sigs. F4v-G1r.

¹²² Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sig. G3r.

¹²³ Arrowsmith, *The Covenant* (Wing A3773), sig. E2r.

¹²⁴ Watson, *Schisme* (Wing W1095)

¹²⁵ Chillingworth, *A Sermon preached...in Oxford* (Wing C3894), sig. B1r.

extemporary, indigested prayer: but confin'd to prayers qualified with faith; thoughts regulated by obedience; fasting governed by sincerity.'¹²⁶ For while 'God will not heare the prayers of wicked men, yet 'tis likely enough he will heare their curses.'¹²⁷ Chalfont also emphasised that God 'will heare the prayer of the humble'.¹²⁸ False prayer could be dangerous.

For royalists, the danger of false prayer was intensified if done in the context of public (rather than private prayer):

And this were ill enough were it in private, but we abuse God Almighty also with our publike and solemne formailities, we make the Church a Stage ... there we make a profession on every day of confessing our sinnes with humble, lowly, and obedient hearts, and yet when we have talked after this manner, 20. 30. 40 yeeres together, our hearts for the most part continue to be proud ... without lives and actions, we provoke the Almighty.¹²⁹

The danger of false or poor prayers confirmed for many the necessity of set prayers for public prayer. Indeed, some even felt that all intercessions with the Lord should be within the safer confines of set prayer. For Browning, while both mouth and heart were necessary in prayer, 'the heart is the leading part, the mouth must and shall come after'.¹³⁰ He felt that if the heart 'be wholly busied about the words, and the ordering of them', as occurred in *ex tempore* prayer, 'then must the heart be, as it were, all and only, mouth: and that attention due in other kinds must be the more broken.'¹³¹ Prayers used in public 'should be set, that they be publicly known'.¹³² They should also 'be short and brief'. Browning argued against the puritan supposition that, because God promised his Spirit to assist the Church, only *ex tempore* prayer was justified. For Browning the presence of the Spirit did not mean that 'they should not be carefull what to speake'. Furthermore, set prayer was necessary so that the Church spoke with

¹²⁶ Stampe, *A Sermon preached before His Majestie* (Wing S5194), sig. C2r-v.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. D4r.

¹²⁸ Richard Chalfont, *A Sermon preached at the Publique Fast the tenth day of May 1644 at St. Maries Oxford, before the Memembers of the Honourable House of Commons there assembled* (Oxford, 1644, Wing C1793), sig. F1r.

¹²⁹ Chillingworth, *A Sermon preached...in Oxford* (Wing C3894), sig. B1r.

¹³⁰ Browning, *Concerning Publike Prayer* (STC 3919), sig. K2v.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, sig. L1r.

¹³² *Ibid.*, sig. L1v.

one mouth.¹³³ Set prayer not only avoided ‘the danger of the mouths rashness’ but also acknowledged that he who ‘prayeth with others, must have respect to others, with whom he prayeth: publike use and order is not directed, but by commonly knowne sounds.’¹³⁴ He also utilised the puritan focus on necessary preparation for prayer (which he agreed with in and of itself) in his attack, asking how a congregation could meditate and prepare for a prayer when they did not know its contents?¹³⁵ As a final jibe, Browning noted that set prayer was good enough for Jesus himself who ‘laid the first stone in the building; viz. the Lords Prayer’.¹³⁶ What was good enough for Jesus ought to be good enough for everyone.

The distinction between authorised fast days and authorised additional prayers was even made by Charles I himself whilst captive in Holmby on the parliamentary monthly fast day of February 1647. As part of the campaign to pressure the king into accepting the Directory and abandoning of the Book of Common Prayer, the Commissioners petitioned the king to keep the Wednesday fast ‘as being a thing consented to by himself, or past by Act of Parliament; and for the distressed Kingdome of Ireland.’ This was a three-fold act of persuasion with sound arguments. Charles appears to have agreed to fast, and therefore the logic of the arguments presented to him, ‘but hee would not joyn in the prayers, because they were not by him consented unto.’¹³⁷ On one level this exchange with the commissioners, if accurately described by this pamphlet, demonstrates Charles’ skill in slipping out of obligations he was unwilling to keep. It is hard to imagine anyone believed any benefit could come from a man observing a fast but refusing to pray, for how else would one petition to God except through prayer? Of course, Charles himself very rarely authorised prayers, he devolved such responsibilities to his bishops. However, this pamphlet does distinguish between prayers authorised by Charles via the traditional structure of the Church of England with its episcopate, and those that were not. Such a distinction must have been recognisable to the intended readership whether they believed such a

¹³³ Ibid., sig. L2r-v.

¹³⁴ Ibid., sig. L3v.

¹³⁵ Ibid., sig. L4r.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ *A Perfect Relation of Severall Remarkable Passages, Which Passed Betwixt the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, and the Commissioners, the Last Fast Day at Holmby, About the Directory and Forme of Prayer* (London, 1647; Wing P1507)

distinction to be reasonable or not. This distinction between set, authorised prayers and other types of prayer was clearly part of early modern mentality.

Nonetheless, one point upon which all preachers agreed was that prayer in and of itself was not enough: ‘though prayer be the great means, yet prayer is not all the means’, thundered Marshall before suggesting that hearers join the parliamentarian army or supply it monetarily.¹³⁸ Similarly, Chillingworth impressed upon his audience that ‘to bee thankfull to God is not to say, God be praised, or, God be thanked, but to remember what hee desires, and execute [it]’.¹³⁹ Despite thanksgivings being more uplifting occasions, they too demanded reform.

The concept of prayer as a petition for mercy was the foundation for nationwide prayer days, but the degree to which it could be expected to do so was a matter of debate and shifted according to the political context. For some puritans, true prayer could only result in mercy, ‘when prayer doth ... ascend, mercies must descend.’¹⁴⁰ However, other preachers, such the royalist puritan William Stampe, emphasised not only the power of prayer, but the danger of waiting too long to use it, particularly when the parliamentarian rebels were not immediately crushed in 1642. Like Marshall, Stampe noted the immediacy of God’s response to prayer: ‘wee can no sooner present a prayer, but God immediately meets it with his eare, and whilst the prayer is even entring into his eares, he meets and embraceth with his hand of mercy.’¹⁴¹ Yet, likening God’s mercies to royal proclamations, Stampe highlighted that they are subject to a time limit: ‘as those Proclamations are seldome without the Proviso of a limited time: so Gods mercies have their dates upon them; which if once expired, they are no longer mercies, but the heavy doomes of wrath and Judgement.’¹⁴² Thus, if a nation waited too long to pray for mercy it could even increase God’s punishments upon his people.

¹³⁸ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sigs. G3r, H2r-v.

¹³⁹ Chillingworth, *A Sermon preached...in Oxford* (Wing C3894), sig. A1v.

¹⁴⁰ Marshall, *Meroz Cursed* (Wing M764), sig. G2r.

¹⁴¹ Stampe, *A Sermon Preached before His Maiestie* (Wing S5194), sig. A2v-A3r.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, sig. A3r.

Despite coming from two puritan preachers, this distinction between parliamentary and royalist attitudes to prayer helps to explain the royalist preference for additional prayers (prayers which were inserted into regular church services using the litany). Royalists were keen to prevent delays to nationwide prayer; additional prayers required less organisation - the congregation did not need to be called to church as they were already present. Only very special occasions were worth the risk of delay in order to hold a separate royalist prayer day. For parliamentarians this was less of a concern; what was more important was that enough time was made for due reverence and worship. Indeed, those puritans who fled to New England rather than continue to live within the constraints of the Church of England often cited short prayers as a cause.¹⁴³ Puritans also believed that ‘strange and extraordinary judgements’ required not only prayer but prayer ‘in an extraordinary manner’ for ‘ordinary prayer would not serve the tune’.¹⁴⁴ This led to a preference for fasting to aid prayer and increase its status as ‘extraordinary’. As seen above, while many non-puritans also believed that fasting acted as an aid to prayer, it was not seen as necessary to quite the same extent. Extraordinary prayers also implied a special status of prayer to which due time must be given – i.e. it could not be ‘squeezed in’ to a regular ‘ordinary’ church service for this would remove its special status. Furthermore, when puritans felt that a judgement was not only ‘strange’ or ‘extraordinary’ but also ‘publike and generall’, the only possible solution was to set aside a whole day of nationwide prayer; for ‘in publike and generall calamities... publike and generall prayers should be sued for them.’¹⁴⁵

The distinction between royalist and parliamentary attitudes to fasting was linked to their distinction as to the ‘status’ of prayers. For royalists, who in general were unwilling to demote any prayer to the status of ‘ordinary’, fasting

¹⁴³ ‘Dr. Lord of Norwich always made a prayer which was one hour long; and an early Dutch traveller who visited New England asserted that he had heard there on Fast Day a prayer which was two hours long. These long prayers were universal and most highly esteemed – a “poor gift in prayer” being a most deplored and even despised clerical short-coming. Had not the Puritans left the Church of England to escape “stinted prayers”? ... everywhere in the Puritan Church, precatory eloquence as evinced in long prayers was felt to be the greatest glory of the minister, and the highest tribute to God.’ Alice Morse Earle, *Sabbath in Puritan New England* (Teddington, 2007), p. 42.

¹⁴⁴ Hildersham, *Doctrine* (STC 13459), sig. E3r.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

was a means of focusing the mind to the task at hand – true prayer. In this way, fasting was a methodology of prayer, and nationwide fast days were a means of ensuring true prayer occurred across the nation. Henry Ferne highlighted that humiliation days lead to earnest desires which lead to successful prayers: ‘There [is] inter-course still to be had with Heaven, a passage still for our prayers if sent up with earnest desires, of which this dayes humiliation is the enforcement.’¹⁴⁶

For Ferne, fasting was when:

you testifie against your soules, that you are displeased with your selves for dividing from God, and starting so often from Him to the pleasures of sinne: and therefore you abstaine now and divide your selves even from a lawfull use of every thing that may give you ease and pleasure ... acknowledging thereby your selves unworthy of the comfort of any of Gods creatures ... By presenting your selves before the Lord in this posture of Humiliation, you professe you have entertained better purposes and resolutions towards God for the future.¹⁴⁷

Puritans would have agreed with Ferne as to the purpose of fasting as an aid to prayer. Hildersham held that abstinence was necessary ‘1. To helpe forward the inward humiliation of the heart. 2. To helpe forward the fervency of the heart in prayer. 3. To professe, and make outward protestation both of our submission to God, and of our repentance and desire to bee reconciled unto him.’¹⁴⁸ However, as with prayer, for puritans fasting too could be distinguished in terms of degrees of fasting – the more severe the fast, the greater its power. Thus ‘the outward signes and helps to humiliation must bee increased, according to the increase, and urgency of the cause thereof’.¹⁴⁹ A further distinction lies between royalist and parliamentarians as to the reason why the Almighty did not immediately respond to a fast. For parliamentarians ‘sundry abuses ... are the chiefe causes of the ill successe of our Fasts’.¹⁵⁰ Whereas, royalists ascribed less power to the penitents holding that God may be waiting for the right time to act and they

¹⁴⁶ Henry Ferne, *A sermon preached at the publique fast the twelfth day of April. At St. Maries Oxford, before the Members of the Honourable House of Commons there assembled* (Oxford, 1644; Wing F805), sig. C3r.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, C4r.

¹⁴⁸ Hildersham, *Doctrine* (STC 13459), sig. B2r.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

could not know when that would be.¹⁵¹ While abuse of a fast day was dangerous in that it may provoke God to further judgement, the absence of an immediate response should not be automatically taken to mean that it had been a poor fast. Indeed, to assume that God should immediately respond to the actions of man was incredibly presumptuous and irreligious.

For some, there was a growing sense of distaste that parliament were marking as 'special' every discomfort or victory. In a sense, this cheapened special days of prayer by increasing their regularity. Royalists were not alone in this belief; some non-conformists on the parliamentarian side also held this view. Speaking of the prayer days after 1649, Richard Baxter's contemptuous attitude to forced prayer is clear and is presumably a view he held during the war:

At the same time the Rump (or Commonwealth) who so much abhorred Persecution, and were for Liberty of Conscience, made an Order that all Ministers should keep *their* days of Humiliation, to fast and pray for their Success in *Scotland*: and that we should keep their Days of Thanksgiving for their Victories; and this upon pain of Sequestration: so that we all expected to be turned out: but they did not execute it upon any save one in our parts. For my part, instead of praying and preaching for them, when any of the Committee or Soldiers were my hearers, I laboured to help them to understand, what a Crime it was to force men to pray for the Success of those that were violating their Covenant and Loyalty, and going in such a Cause to kill their Brethren: And what it was to force Men to give God thanks for all their Bloodshed, and to make God's Ministers and Ordinances vile, and serviceable to such Crimes, by forcing Men to run to God on such Errands of Blood and Ruine.¹⁵²

The concept of prayer days as running errands to God removes their special status. It also gives the sense that Baxter believed their regularity had made them mundane. While royalists would not have agreed with Baxter's desire to uphold the Covenant with their Scottish Brethren, the idea that prayer days could be over-used is likely to have cut across political divisions.

¹⁵¹ Watson, *Schisme* (Wing W1095).

¹⁵² Matthew Sylvester, (ed.), *Reliquiae Baxterianae: Or Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of The most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times: Faithfully Publish'd from his own Original Manuscript* (London, 1696), p. 66.

The end of the civil war marked by the death of the king was a logical point to end the monthly fasts. With Charles' death, it seems royalist monthly fasts also ended; perhaps the proclamation expired with the king. However, other royalist occasions continued at home and abroad.¹⁵³ Yet, for parliamentarians, there was little point in rivalling a royalist occasion that no longer existed. Similarly, one of parliament's most powerful justifications for the Wednesday fast (and one it highlighted frequently) was that the Wednesday fast had the king's assent and was passed by both the crown and parliament – this was no longer relevant. Whether officially recognised as such or not, after Charles' proclamation of 1643 that moved the monthly fast to the second Friday of each month, the Wednesday fast was synonymous with the parliamentary cause in the civil war against the king. After the regicide, it was without this purpose for the war had been won. Though nominally a monthly fast for Ireland, it is debateable for how long Ireland remained a primary concern in the observation of monthly fast days. That the monthly fasts did not survive one final month (to celebrate Cromwell's defeat of the Irish rebels) is certainly testament to the idea that, by 1649, Ireland was not high on the agenda.¹⁵⁴

Royalists also had other options available to display their loyalty and petition for divine aid. Many of these were ritualistic, such as drinking to the king's health, while others aimed at subverting parliamentary occasions. The drinking of healths was a multilayered action, part of which invoked divine providence to protect the king as well as demonstrating loyalty. This was a frequent means by which royalists found themselves before the Quarter session courts. For example, on 1 October 1650 the Quarter sessions at Bridgewater saw Henry Dibble and Michael Burrowe 'for drinking a health to the sonn of the late Kinge by the name of Charles the second.'¹⁵⁵ Indeed, as Angela McShane identified, the bond between the drinking of healths and loyalty to monarchy became so strong that

¹⁵³ For example, a fast was held at the Hague on 9 June 1649, 'This day we haue kept solemn by a publick Fast & Divine Service, for the good success of his Ma^{ties} voyage w^{ch} being done, the Amb^{rs} vpon the place begin to take leave.' BL, Egerton 2533, fo. 493v.

¹⁵⁴ Though outside the remit of this thesis, it would be interesting to analyse a series of parliamentary and royalist fast sermons to determine at what point Ireland was no longer seen as a key purpose of these occasions.

¹⁵⁵ E.H. Bates, (ed.), *Quarter Sessions Records for County of Somerset (1646-1660)*, vol. 28 (London, 1912), p. 135 see also pp. 299, 347, 371.

by the 1680s it was politically dangerous to refuse an alcoholic beverage laced with politics.¹⁵⁶

Subversion of the other side's divine petitions was a logical tactical approach in a society that held firm to belief in providence. Royalists appear to have been particularly adept at mocking the parliamentary fasts even after the regicide. Holwell parish in Blackmore Vale, Somerset took part in a merry and riotous feast on a public fast day in 1653 accompanied by games of skittles – all organised by one of their churchwardens.¹⁵⁷ The contempt of the godly regime's public fast was underlined further by the voice of one participant who associated the fast with the anti-Christ and Catholicism: 'the devil take all the Pope's fasting'.¹⁵⁸ Thus, despite a decade of parliamentary authority to reclaim and purify fasting, its Catholic heritage still made it an easy target.

V

In conclusion, four points deserve emphasis. First, in response to the conundrum of a rise of 'godly' prayer days in the 1640s but a reduction in occasions in the 1650s under godly government, the civil war and not puritanism provides the most convincing solution. Fundamentally, the frequency of prayer days in this period demonstrates a period of intense national anxiety far more than it represents a puritan power in government. Occasional, nationwide days of prayer were a significant part of English culture and naturally increased in times of crisis. A civil war would cause intensity in the frequency of these occasions, regardless of the victor. Therefore, the peaks in 1645 and 1648 were caused primarily by the experience of civil war itself and not puritan parliamentarians seeking to shape a godly nation. A point underlined by the fact that it was the number of thanksgivings for military victories, which caused the increase in the number of occasions - not fast days. While the presence of a greater number of godly individuals in government as parliament gained power may have caused

¹⁵⁶ Angela McShane, "'No Kings Rule the World but through Love and Good Drinking': Political and Material Cultures of Drinking in 17th Century England", paper delivered to the History seminar of Northumbria University on 16 March 2011. My thanks go to the speaker for sending me a copy of her paper.

¹⁵⁷ SRO CQ 3/1/86 (2) (Sessions Rolls, 1653), fo. 155 as quoted by Underdown, *Revel*, p. 264.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

some increase in the frequency of the occasions, the effect was not as dramatic as it might first appear and may be in the region of one or two extra occasions a year. Thus, the implication that a godly regime (due to its increased religiosity, particularly once the Independents were in their ascendancy) set out to humble its people through a rapid increase in occasions from 1645 is also unsustainable, particularly since the vast majority of the additional occasions were thanksgivings.

Second, close examination of the history and development of nationwide days of prayer over the *longue durée* reveals their traditional conservatism and association with monarchy, rather than showing them to be synonymous with puritanism. Royalists clearly believed that national prayers and prayer days were of great significance and drew upon a long tradition of English nationwide prayer. Scholarship's widespread neglect of this nature of nationwide prayer days is even more surprising given the obvious methodological approach of most in noting that monarchs traditionally retained the power to authorise the occasions. From this point of view, innovations to prayer days (especially orders) between 1640 and 1660 appear more likely to be the result of reactions to immediate circumstances rather than any puritan scheme of development, as will be demonstrated further in the following chapter.

Third, despite a long tradition, nationwide prayer had a flexible nature. This is most clearly seen in the problems of simply attempting to count the number of days of nationwide prayer in this period and in identifying the different types of occasions. This malleability was utilised by both royalists and parliamentarians as their approaches to nationwide prayer evolved shaped by their differing interpretations of providence, prayer and fasting. Royalists tended to be more wary of interpretations of providence and reluctant to pronounce a single possible truth. This was entwined with their unwavering belief in authority, particularly to the king as governor of the Church of England. The individual must put obedience and avoiding schism before his own interpretations, for he did not have the authority to interpret the meaning of providence. Set prayers were a natural extension of this desire for conformity and obedience. A methodology of set prayer also helped to prevent false prayer, which would be

all the more dangerous if done in public. The uncertainty involved in royalist interpretations of providence meant that preventing delays in public responses was essential – again set prayers which were added to regular church services were symptomatic of this view. Uncertainty and humility also governed royalist responses to any delay or failure to receive divine aid following a petition. One simply could not know when or if God would respond; indeed, to assume that he would displayed a sinful degree of presumption and self-importance.

On the other hand, parliamentarians were more confident over interpretations of providence. This confidence also meant that greater demonstrations were necessary in response to particular events as they were quickly identified as acts of providence. With events identified as both extraordinary and general (in the sense that they effected the whole nation) the response must be both extraordinary and across the nation. This combined with a puritan view of ‘levels’ of prayer and fasting, making parliamentary occasions stricter in terms of observance (a more severe fast was more potent) and occurring on days set aside for the sole purpose of nationwide prayer. Time was also very significant to parliamentarians but in the sense of ensuring that sufficient time was available for due reverence to be given and for potentially very lengthy *ex tempore* prayers.

Finally, while distinctions can be made for nationwide prayers between 1640 and 1660 in terms of differing priorities between the puritan-style of parliamentary prayer days and those of the more moderate royalists, these should not be overstated. For when set in a wider context, it is clear that the two sides (and the two ends of the religious spectrum they broadly represented) held far more values and beliefs in common than differences in terms of national fast and thanksgiving days. Indeed, despite the intensity and changes of the 1640s and 1650s, prayer days were inherently more traditional than innovative. While nuances can be identified between parliamentary and royalist approaches to nationwide prayer, these grew out of differing interpretations and developments of the foundations of this concept – fasting, providence and prayer. This suggests that these distinctions, while born of religious debates and discussions from the birth of protestantism, only became recognisable because the political divisions

of civil war demanded practical almost immediate decisions for ordering nationwide prayer (though they frequently ensured flexibility). It is to these processes of ordering nationwide prayer days that we now turn.

Chapter Two: Ordering

How nationwide prayer days were ordered is crucial to understanding their significance because the ordering process reflected the balance of power and authority in government at specific points in time. When plague struck England in June and November 1640 there were two established ways of ordering a nationwide fast in response and, despite political tensions, both demonstrated the supreme authority of the Crown. The first, as exemplified by the national fast for plague on 8 July 1640, was characteristic of the traditional ordering process pioneered in the early sixteenth century.¹ On 31 May while sitting with his Privy Council the king ordered a draft proclamation for a general fast to be prepared by the Solicitor General.² In ordering a national fast, Charles was acting in part on the advice of his counsellors. His proclamation authorising the fast issued on 7 June highlighted the role of the episcopate, whose direction he followed when he instructed them to compose, print and distribute forms of prayer ‘for the more orderly solemnizing’ of the occasion.³ It is also highly likely that secular members of the Privy Council present at the meeting on 31 May (such as Lord Goring, the Earls of Salisbury and Dorset, and Secretary Windebank) advised the

¹ There is a suggestion in Larkin that the ordering of this occasion may have been initiated by the Commons request for a general fast in April, see L&H, vol. II, p. 714 footnote 1. Note the typing error in this footnote, ‘1 May’ should read ‘1 July’, the original reads ‘for a publique & gen[er]all fast to be held the first of July next’, see SP 16/455/96. However, there is no evidence that the fasts requested by parliament (one parliamentary and one general), whose purpose was for a blessing on parliament, were in any way connected to this occasion. Indeed, neither the parliamentary fast (scheduled for 2 May 1640) nor the general fast (for which a date was not established, the parliamentary fast having not occurred) were held, contrary to the belief of Trevor-Roper, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament’, in *idem., Religion, the Reformation and social change, and other essays* (London, 1984), p. 297. There is no evidence in the parliamentary journals that business was suspended on 2 May, and by 1640 a record of the suspension of work in the journal of suspending work for fasts was firmly established in both Houses. The view that parliament did not observe the May 1640 fast is also held by Wilson, see John Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), p. 36 footnote 62. Furthermore, when the Commons reconvened in November one of their first acts was to have a committee ‘view the Orders of the last Parliament, touching a Fast; and accordingly to prepare a Report’, suggesting that the previous orders were not fulfilled. This committee then proposed a general fast for a blessing on parliament, *CJ* 6-7/11/1640. For a more complete view of the authorising of the unobserved fasts for the Short Parliament in April 1640, see also *CJ* 18/4/1640, 20-24/4/1640 and *LJ* 21-23/4/1640. The most that may be inferred from the sources is that Charles was inspired to hold a general fast by the parliamentary petition.

² PC 2/52/519. It is clear that the date of the occasion was changed to 8 July perhaps in order to allow time for the composition, printing and distribution of the proclamation and form of prayer. The printed proclamation shows the correct date of 8 July. See *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Solemnized Thorowout This Realm of England* (London, 1640; STC 9159).

³ *Proclamation* (STC 9159), observed 8/7/1640.

king or gestured their agreement.⁴ This occasion typifies the traditional ordering procedure, ... being founded solely on royal authority (as it was authorised by royal proclamation alone), but with recognition of the valued advice from counsellors aiding the monarch's 'Princely consideration'.⁵

By 1640 another avenue of advising the monarch on nationwide prayer, parliamentary petitioning, had been added to the traditional ordering process.⁶ From 1625, parliament established itself as an institution worthy of this honour.⁷ The ordering of the fast for plague in the winter of 1640 was typical of this newer approach. Following defeat by the Scots at Newburn, Charles summoned parliament (the 'Long Parliament'). The first act of the Commons on the first full day of sitting after the opening ceremonies (6 November) was to start seeking the Lords' support for a fast, and a committee was charged with this task.⁸ The following day, Sir Thomas Rowe presented their report to the Commons. This suggested two fasts for 'so holy a Preparation to the important Affairs of both Houses of Parliament', one to be observed by parliament itself 'as a great Example' and a second 'general Fast through the whole Kingdom' (which was also common for occasions proposed by parliament).⁹

⁴ For a complete list of those present at the Privy Council meeting that day see PC 2/5/519.

⁵ *Proclamation* (STC 9159), 8/7/1640.

⁶ Indeed some scholars, such as Larkin, hold that the fast for plague in July 1640 was prompted by discussions and requests to the king for a general fast for a successful parliamentary session in April 1640, though given the distinction in purpose I find this unconvincing. See L&H, vol. II, p. 714 see also *CJ* 18/4/1640, 20-24/4/1640, and *LJ* 21-23/4/1640.

⁷ Indeed in his proclamation for prayers and fasting for plague in July 1625 Charles recognised 'the humble petition of the Lords Spirituall and Temporall, and Commons in the present Parliament assembled' as a key influence in his decision to order nationwide prayer. See *By the King. A Proclamation for a publike, generall, and solemne Fast* (London, 1625; STC 8787) observed from 20/7/1625. It is also clear that in 1625 MPs in the House of Commons recognised the limits of their authority over national fasts, and even parliamentary fasts. Debates on 21 June 1625 focused on whether the Commons could only order a fast for their own House (which currently they could do on their own authority) or 'risk' requesting a general fast from the King via the Lords and potentially losing the right to order their own parliamentary fasts. Sir Francis Goodwyn argued that 'insisting upon the general may lose the particular', *CJ* 21/6/1625. The following day Sir Edward Coke noted the precedent 'that 17o Ed. III. the Commons petitioned the King, to have Prayers generally made of Thanksgiving', *CJ* 22/6/1625. For further details on the political significance of this shift in the mid-1620s see the forthcoming article by Natalie Mears and Stephen Taylor.

⁸ *CJ* 6/11/1640

⁹ *CJ* 7/11/1640. It must be noted that the Commons suggested two fasts but the Lords later suggested that London be included in the first fast. Larkin's footnote on this can be misinterpreted. See L&H, vol. II, p. 735 footnote 1.

This motion was presented to the Lords on 9 November, who suggested that the initial fast should also be observed by the city of London as well as parliament, but who were willing to support the motion and convey it to the king.¹⁰ The king's response was positive, 'His Majesty likes it very well, and refers the appointing of the Day and other Particulars to the Consideration of both Houses, upon a Conference.'¹¹ A conference of both Houses followed immediately, at which the Lords suggested the dates for observing the fasts, 17 November 'for both Houses and the City of London' and 8 December 'for the public Fast through the Kingdom.'¹² The Commons agreed, though sought clarification of the Lords' meaning of 'the City' hoping 'that London, and all the Suburbs, and adjacent Places, mentioned in the printed Bills of Sickness, may keep the Fast likewise that Day.'¹³ Once this had been agreed, the Lords requested 'that a Proclamation may be speedily published, to mention both the Days appointed for the keeping of the Fast'.¹⁴ Charles' proclamation 'for a general Fast to be kept thorowout the Realm of England' was issued just two days later and bishops composed and distributed a form of prayer.¹⁵

¹⁰ *CJ* 7/11/1640, 9/11/1640. It must be noted that the Lords Journal does not record this and implies that the decision for the first fast to be observed by parliament and London originated in the Commons. However, the record of this matter was clearly only summarised in the journal: 'A Message from the House of Commons, by Sir Thomas Roe, accompanied by divers others of the House, to this Effect, and after this Manner'. See *LJ* 9/11/1640. However, Sir Thomas Rowe reported, 'According to the Command of this House, I have attended the Lords, and delivered the Message. It pleased by Lord Keeper to make Distinction of the Two Parts, that his Majesty should be moved by both Houses, first, for a Fast for both Houses, and the City, and next, for a general Fast through the whole Kingdom.' *CJ* 9/11/1640. While it is possible that the Lords were suggesting that the King should be petitioned separately for the parliamentary fast and then the general fast, this is the first mention of the city observing the first fast, making it more likely that the Lords' alteration concerned who was to observe when, rather than when to ask the King for which fast.

¹¹ *LJ* 9/11/1640. It was probably at this point at Charles' request that the primary focus of the fast shifted from being for a successful parliament to 'for the removing of Plague, and other Judgements of God', though it may have come from bishops such as Laud, *A Forme of Common Prayer: To Be Used Upon the 17th of November, and the 8th of December: On Which Dayes a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Removing of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God, from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16559). See also *CJ* and *LJ* 9/11/1640 and *By the King. A Proclamation for a generall Fast to be kept thorowout the Realm of England* (London, 1640; STC 9170), observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640.

¹² Sir Thomas Rowe's report of the conference, *CJ* 9/11/1640.

¹³ *CJ* 9/11/1640. When this request was made to the Lords St Margaret's and St Peter's Westminster were excluded, since the Commons usually used St. Margaret's and the Lords the Abbey.

¹⁴ *LJ* 9/11/1640

¹⁵ *Proclamation* (STC 9170) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640; *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640.

It must be emphasised that, rather than a challenge to the royal prerogative, this development of the ordering process remained firmly founded upon the Crown's authority. Parliamentary petitions for nationwide prayer continued to culminate in the issue of a royal proclamation, which authorised the occasion. Petitions usually originated in the Commons (though in theory there was no reason why they should not start in the Lords and then move to the Commons providing that subsequently they returned to the Lords). Once both Houses agreed, selected members of the Lords (as representatives of parliament as a whole) made a request to the king. While the king may then make use of parliament to establish the details of the occasion, for example the choice of date often came from the Lords, its authorisation and the culmination of the ordering process remained firmly tied to the issue of a proclamation. Thus, the established system provided two methods of ordering occasional prayer days as demonstrated in the fasts for plague in 1640: through parliament with the process usually initiating in the Commons before passing to the Lords, or through the Privy Council and the bishops. In both cases, royal authority remained the cornerstone for nationwide prayer days and essential to their authorisation.

Little attention is paid to the ordering process itself in the historiography of these occasions. Yet, some historians view aspects of the parliamentary petition style of ordering as indicative of an attack on monarchical authority. For example, Larkin holds that the choice of date of the initial fast for plague of 17 November 1640 was 'no compliment to the King' as it was Elizabeth's accession day.¹⁶ A few did use the occasion as an opportunity to snub Charles, such as the preacher Mr Stanwick at St. Paul's who used the metaphor of Jerusalem's walls in Nehemiah 1.4 to attack the king's closest advisors:

Upon Tuisday, November 17, when the fast was kept at London for the parliament, &c., I was at St. Paul's church, where one Mr. Stanwicke (or Kanwicke), a chaplain to my lord of Ely, preached on Nehemiah, i. verse 4, who upon just occasion, in opening the story of the Jewish pressures and calamities which caused Nehemiah to fast, &c., did say that the care of the Jewes to have Jerusalem rebuildd in her walles, and the gates set up, was not to mainteine rebellion and keepe out the King's authority, but to defend themselves

¹⁶ L&H, vol. II, p. 735 footnote 2.

against Tobiah, Sanballah, and such great men as under the King (whom they flattered with lies) sought to oppresse them.¹⁷

However, since the choice of date originated in the Lords it seems unlikely that a jibe at the king was the original intention. At this stage, the Lords were keen to mediate with the king (already weakened by the Scots) and the choice of date may have been intended to indicate that the ‘golden age’ of Elizabethan England also suffered from plague but recovered with nationwide prayers.¹⁸ In this light, the choice of date may be interpreted as underlining the firm link between nationwide prayer and royal authority, while also emphasising the role of parliament as mediators of successful government. Indeed, the only true innovation of the November and December fasts for plague (the introduction of a prayer for parliament similar to the traditional prayers for the royal family and episcopate), the ‘parliamentary petition’ style of ordering highlighted the importance of parliament working in harmony with the monarchy.

The most dominant scholars in historiography relating to prayer days of this period, such as Wilson and Trevor-Roper, consider the development of nationwide prayer days ordered via parliamentary petitioning as part of a godly scheme designed to threaten royal authority.¹⁹ Wilson holds that James and Charles failed to appreciate what Elizabeth had grasped – that the conjunction of the ‘potential power of the pulpit’ with an ‘independent Commons ... would constitute a fundamental threat to the authority of the Crown.’²⁰ Furthermore, he argues that a programme of fasts and thanksgivings was designed, nurtured and executed by puritans in the Commons prior to the civil war with the preaching

¹⁷ Mary Anne Everett Green, (ed.), *Diary of John Rous: Incumbent of Santon Downham, Suffolk, from 1625 to 1642*, (London, 1856), p. 103. Indeed, impeachment proceedings against Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford had commenced the same day the proclamation for the fast was issued, 11 November 1640. *CJ* 11/11/1640. Interestingly, Rous thought the fast was primarily for a successful parliament rather than plague.

¹⁸ For example, Elizabethan nationwide prayers for plague were ordered in July 1563 and 1593. See *A fourme to be vsed in common prayer twice a weeke, and also an order of publike fast, to be vsed euery Wednesday in the weeke, during this tyme of mortalitie and other afflictions, wherwith the realme at this present is visited* (London, 1563; STC 16505); *Certaine praiers collected out of a fourme of godly meditations, set forth by her Maiesties authoritie in the great mortalitie, in the fift yeere of her Highnesse raigne, and most necessarie to be vsed at this time in the like present visitation of Gods heauie hand for our manifold sinnes, and commended vnto the ministers and people of London, by the Reuerend Father in God, Iohn Bishop of London, &c. Iuly. 1593* (London, 1593; STC 16524).

¹⁹ See Wilson, *Pulpit* and Trevor-Roper, ‘Fast Sermons’.

²⁰ Wilson, *Pulpit*, p. 57

programme explicitly construing the Commons as ‘a body representative of the commonwealth before God’.²¹ While some preachers clearly did highlight parliament’s role in a godly commonwealth, in the period prior to 1641 this was not at odds with, nor a threat to, traditional royal authority.²²

In this sense, while it is possible to see the ordering process used in the plague fasts in the winter of 1640 as an attack on the personal rule (a period of over-extended royal authority), it is a step too far to consider it an attack on traditional royal authority where the monarch ruled but listened to the counsel of parliament reasonably regularly. While other historians, such as Christopher Hill, have been more cautious than Trevor-Roper in their claims of the political manipulation of the ordering of nationwide prayer days in the period prior to the outbreak of war, current historiography is united in emphasising the significance of royal authority in the traditional ordering process of these occasions before arguing that it was usurped by parliament in November 1640.²³

However, as outlined above, the ordering process used in November 1640 was not new, but dated back to at least 1625. Its only innovation was the introduction of a prayer for parliament, which was printed in the form after the prayers for the royal family and was very similar in tone.²⁴ Clearly, more attention must be paid to the changes in the ordering process between November 1640 and the outbreak of the civil war in order to assess when parliament and then the Commons started to authorise occasions on their own authority. It is also necessary to ascertain the nature of this change – did parliament, and particularly the Commons, usurp this royal prerogative deliberately or was it merely the result of practical difficulties and the outbreak of civil war? How were ordering procedures affected for the king after he fled the capital and for the governments that followed the end of monarchical rule in 1649? In broader terms, what can these changes tell us about the nature of authority in this period?

²¹ Wilson, *Pulpit*, chapter 1 especially pp. 57-58.

²² For example, Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, now assembled in Parliament, At their publike Fast, November 17. 1640* (London, 1640; Wing M776), sigs, B1r-v.

²³ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1993), pp. 79-108, especially 82.

²⁴ *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640.

The politico-religious nature of nationwide prayer days enables an analysis of the shifts in secular and spiritual authority between 1640 and 1660 through an exploration of the ordering of these occasions. Through comparing ordering processes at key points in this period with the established model used in 1640, it is possible to consider how the general political changes and challenges of the civil war, commonwealth, protectorate and restoration affected the ordering of nationwide prayer. Simultaneously, the ordering of prayer days enables an examination of the issues driving these changes, especially in the period 1640-1643. Therefore, this chapter seeks to establish what the most significant changes to the ordering process were and when they occurred.

I

The late summer of 1641 to the autumn of 1643 marks the period of most dramatic alterations to the ordering process. Some prayer days were ordered not by royal proclamation but via parliamentary ordinance and set forms of prayer were abandoned by parliament. Both of these innovations set a precedent for future parliamentarian occasions. Yet, this period is marked not by a united parliament deliberately usurping royal authority, but by escalating tensions between Lords and Commons as well as with the king. Indeed, as will be demonstrated below, those most influential in the innovative use of parliamentary ordinances and the abandonment of set prayer were those most keen to support the king, royal authority and the traditional ordering process, particularly John Williams, bishop of Lincoln. Meanwhile, parliament (and the Commons in particular) sought to follow the established procedure for nationwide prayer.

At this point, it must be noted that it is very difficult to draw clear distinctions between orders and ordinances in this period for it was an area of legal dispute among contemporaries and remained confused even when political conflict became open war.²⁵ When describing the Commons' order in a letter dated

²⁵ Michael Mendle, 'The Great Council of Parliament and the First Ordinances: The Constitutional Theory of the Civil War', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), pp. 144-145, 154.

‘Charringcrosse the 9th of September 1641’ Henry Cogan referred to it as an ordinance: ‘they haue yesterday resolved vpon an Ordinance of Parliam[en]t for the removing of superstition, namely the Altars, the railes about Com[m]union tables, the stepps or degrees in Chancells, the bowing at the name of Jesus, and placing the Com[m]union tables, as they were in Queene Elizabeths tyme’.²⁶ Foster and Mendle agree that in ‘1641 and 1642 much that was done by “ordinances” could in fact have been effected by “orders” – including the ordinance for the thanksgiving.’²⁷ The term ‘order’ in particular appears to have had a very broad range of meaning and ‘ordinance’ appears to have been a subset of this larger group.²⁸ Nevertheless defining ordinances, given contemporaries’ propensity to refer to them as orders, remains problematic:

‘The term “ordinance” in the period 1641-1649 was also used to describe forms of procedure which, it was presumed, did not require royal assent. These forms were of two kinds: “orders” of one house or of both houses, normally issued on their own authority, and “ordinances”, which were in fact legislation, lacking the assent of the King. The last was revolutionary, the first was not. But it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between them, particularly since the same word was used to describe them both.’²⁹

While many orders only held jurisdiction in the House from which they were issued, because they were designed to regulate house proceedings, Foster has noted (along with other types of orders) that ““orders” might also be executive enactments, made by both houses, to deal with an immediate need’.³⁰ An ‘immediate need’ aptly describes the Commons’ attitude to the Laudian innovations which its order sought to abolish. Once identified as the ‘executive enactment type’ of order, orders can be distinguished from ordinances. ‘Ordinances, basically legislative in character, enacted solely by authority of the two houses, were of a different nature from executive enactments’, argued Foster.³¹ However, the key question was ‘whether bicameralism was essential or

²⁶ SP 16/484/20.

²⁷ Elizabeth R. Foster, ‘The House of Lords and Ordinances, 1641-1649’, *The American Journal of Legal History*, 21 (1977), p. 164. See also Mendle, ‘Great Council’. Sir Charles Firth made the same point of the later parliamentary ordinances see *A&O*, vol. III, p. xvii.

²⁸ For discussion of the various forms of the parliamentary order see Foster, ‘Ordinances’, pp. 163-165.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 163.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 164.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 164-165

merely incidental' to the nature of ordinances and, according to Mendle, 'the "essentialist" view did not prevail'.³² Though they were to come very close, before the regicide, parliament did not quite portray itself as a bicameral legislative authority.³³

The process of ordering the national thanksgiving day for the peace treaty with Scotland, observed on 7 September 1641, culminated in being used by a desperate Commons simultaneously to challenge royal authority over the Church (by attacking the episcopate) and the authority of the Lords. As such, it reflects the wider shifts in political power in these few months of complex and competing political divisions in parliament before the king's fatal mistake in attempting to arrest the five members and must be set in a broader context. Conrad Russell demonstrated convincingly the attempt by the Lords at this time to find a solution for a king with quixotic policies, and their hope of a reunion of king, parliament and people. Part of such a settlement would include the removal of key ministers as scapegoats for the king's unviable policies.³⁴ In part, the start of an implementation of such a solution commenced with the removal of Archbishop Laud and the Earl of Strafford at the opening of the Long Parliament, yet further attempts were still needed to curb royal power, particularly over the Church and Laudian innovations. When this was not forthcoming, the position of the Lords as mediators of settlement and able to subjugate the king within reasonable limits began to be questioned, especially given the power of the bishops within the Upper House.³⁵ This was reflected in general attacks on episcopacy, including the Root and Branch petition and their role in nationwide prayer days, as well as innovations in issuing orders of parliamentary houses for religious reformation. In time, parliamentary orders would come to be used to authorise prayer days.³⁶

³² Mendle, 'Great Council', p. 154.

³³ Ibid, p. 158.

³⁴ Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 207-208, 368-369, 426.

³⁵ Examples of bills sent to the Lords from the Commons over the summer of 1641 but which failed to become law include the bill for abolishing idolatry and superstition, the pluralities bill, and the bill for scandalous ministers. For further details and other examples see Ibid, pp. 331, 337-344.

³⁶ See Chris Brooks, *Law, politics and society in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), chapter 8, especially pp. 233-235.

Preparations for ordering the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland began in August 1641. This thanksgiving, held in both England and Scotland, was agreed as part of the Treaty of London and was observed on 7 September 1641. Discussions of when to hold the thanksgiving started in the conference between Lords and Commons for the final conclusion of the treaty and was reported to both Houses on 12 August, which agreed to the suggested date of 7 September.³⁷ It was not until late August that the matter was raised again, suggesting that parliament was anticipating (falsely) the return of the king and his issue of a proclamation authorising the thanksgiving. On 26 August the Commons reminded the Lords that no order for the thanksgiving had actually been issued.³⁸ The Lords suggested the use of a parliamentary ordinance for this purpose and a committee of both Houses met to agree its wording.³⁹ The Lords then ordered the printing of the ordinance (as was customary) on 30 August 1641.⁴⁰

In hindsight, this use of a parliamentary ordinance to authorise a nationwide thanksgiving (only the second ordinance parliament had issued) appears highly significant.⁴¹ For example, Mendle notes ‘this seemingly innocuous ordinance amounted to a parliamentary proclamation’.⁴² Parliamentary ordinances were to become the typical means of ordering parliamentarian prayer days. Yet, considered within its immediate context this ordinance was unremarkable. It was fulfilling precisely the role for which parliamentary ordinances were intended – namely continuing state business in the king’s absence. The language of the ordinance itself confirms this and draws upon royal authority to authorise the occasion: as well as acknowledging parliament’s role, ‘it was, by the King’s most Excellent Majesty, the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament,

³⁷ *LJ* 12-13/8/1641, *CJ* 12-13/8/1641.

³⁸ *CJ* 26/8/1641.

³⁹ *LJ* 26/8/1641, see also *CJ* 26/8/1641.

⁴⁰ *LJ* 30/8/1641. The printed order’s wording differed slightly from that agreed initially. The Commons petitioned for ‘additions’ to the order, which served to bolster the role of the Scottish Commissioners. See SP 16/483/100, *CJ* 27-28/8/1641, 30/8/1641, *LJ* 30/8/1641, *An Ordinance of Parliament for a Day of Publike Thanksgiving for the Peace Concluded between England and Scotland* (London, 1641; Wing E1797), observed 7/9/1641. It was customary for the second House receiving the ordinance to print it, see Foster, ‘Ordinances’, pp. 171-172. Therefore, it was usually the Lords who were responsible for printing.

⁴¹ For the first ordinances issued by parliament, see Mendle, ‘Great Council’, pp. 133-162.

⁴² Mendle, ‘Great Council’, p. 148.

enacted That there should be a public Thanksgiving'.⁴³ Yet ultimately it was a request 'graciously condescended unto by His Majestie'.⁴⁴ When Charles ratified the peace treaty he authorised the associated thanksgiving automatically; parliament were simply providing the details as part of customary practice. Thus far, the ordering of this occasion had followed the established process as closely as was practically possible.

However, once the thanksgiving had been ordered, the Commons used the distribution of the ordinance to attack the episcopate. As stated above, it was customary for the bishops to be responsible for composing and distributing the forms of prayer to be used on prayer days.⁴⁵ Equally, it was common practice for the bishops to distribute the proclamations for prayer days at the same time as the forms. Parish records, such as that of St Andrew, Oddington, demonstrate the parish minister receiving proclamations at the same time as prayers issued by the episcopate, 'It[em] for a prayer for the kinge and a p[ro]clamation or declarat[i]on conc[er]ninge Scotland – 8d'.⁴⁶ It would have been natural for the Bishops to distribute the parliamentary ordinance with a form of prayer for the thanksgiving, but this did not occur. Indeed, the Commons persistently stated that the sheriffs alone should distribute the order, not the bishops and their ecclesiastical distribution network.⁴⁷ The role of bishops in composing and organising the printing and distributing of orders for occasional days of prayer was indirectly, but firmly, denied, despite the additional cost of paying Messengers of the Exchequer thirty pounds to disperse the orders.⁴⁸ Though no explicit reason was given, presumably due to the political tensions of these months, this clearly formed part of the Commons' wider attacks on episcopacy.

⁴³ *Ordinance* (1641, Wing E1797), observed 7/9/1641.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Proclamation* (STC 9159), observed 8/7/1640. While the fast for plague in November 1640 had not mentioned the role of the episcopate in the proclamation as it had for the previous occasion, the issuing of the form of prayer served to highlight their involvement, see *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640.

⁴⁶ Oxfordshire CRO, D.D. PAR Oddington e.3, St Andrew, Oddington, Churchwarden accounts, p. 68. In 1643 St Philip and St Jacob, Bristol still recorded their apparitor delivering 'an order for the Fast' as well as two forms of prayer for the occasion. See Bristol RO, P/ST P & J/ChW/3a, St Philip and St Jacob, Churchwarden accounts, 1643.

⁴⁷ *CJ* 30/08/1641, *LJ* 30/08/1641, see also *CJ* 31/08/1641. The Lords had offered to distribute the order through the Sheriffs and 'all other ways they can', presumably implying through the bishops, but the Commons would not concede. See *CJ* and *LJ* 30/8/1641.

⁴⁸ See *CJ* 31/8/1641 and *LJ* 30/8/1641.

Yet, this attempt by the Commons to sideline the Bishops for political purposes (until they were either free from royal control or even abolished entirely) also caused shifts in religious authority.

Episcopacy was the key constitutional means by which the king could mould the church to his liking and influence parliament. Therefore, it was an obvious area through which to challenge and reduce the authority of a king who had far exceeded the traditional bounds of the Crown's power, ruling without parliament for decades, and losing a war against his own people – the Scots. It has been well documented that the early 1640s saw general attacks on episcopacy by the Commons. In particular, spurred on by the receipt of the Root and Branch petition from London in December 1640, the Commons challenged the place of bishops in secular authorities such as the courts, and their right to vote in the Upper House.⁴⁹ The attack on bishops then extended from secular to more religious and traditional areas of episcopal jurisdiction, including composing and distributing forms of prayer, which demonstrated a bishop's secular jurisdiction over his diocese as well as spiritual authority. Nevertheless, the attack on episcopacy remained closely tied to a desire of a majority in the Commons to reduce royal power, rather than resulting from a persuasive puritan minority keen to abolish traditional church structure. Coupled with the absence of puritan legislation redesigning the structure of the Church of England during these months, it seems the focus (and unifying factor) of the Commons' attack on the bishop's role in prayer day ordering was the royal power of appointing bishops (creating an episcopate perceived as overly-loyal to the Crown) rather than the office itself. However, in attacking the bishops, the Commons were faced with the unintentional outcome of filling the lacunae of spiritual authority. While Commons' attacks on bishops were intense, little consideration was given as to what should happen next, resulting in 'knee jerk' reactions, such as the need to employ Exchequer messengers to deliver prayer day orders.

Having been denied a role as distributor of the prayer day ordinance, John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, launched his own surreptitious attack and

⁴⁹ See Brooks, *Law, politics and society*, chapter 8, especially pp. 233-235.

composed and printed a form of prayer for the thanksgiving.⁵⁰ While in theory this was within the remit of his authority for his jurisdiction, it was clearly intended to highlight the role of the bishops and neither House had commissioned the composition of a form for the occasion. On 6 September the Commons began an aggressive series of attacks against Williams personally: ‘This House doth Declare, That the Bishop of Lincolne had no Power to set forth any Prayer, to be read at the Time of the publick Thanksgiving: and that no Minister ought to be enjoined to read the said Prayer.’⁵¹ As Williams held the office of Dean of Westminster as well as Bishop of Lincoln, in theory this form should have been used in St. Margaret’s church where parliament were due to celebrate the thanksgiving as well as in the Lincoln diocese. His form was a calculated demonstration of his ecclesiastical authority and probably as a result, the Commons ordered the parliamentary celebration of the thanksgiving to be moved to the non-royal peculiar of Lincoln’s Inn and outside of further potential episcopal or royal interference.⁵² The day following the thanksgiving, the Commons demanded to know if the Bishop of Lincoln composed the printed ‘Prayer of Thanksgiving’ and ordered it to be read in his diocese, and whether this had been authorised by the Lords.⁵³ Williams admitted composing the prayer two or three days before the occasion, but stated that he had not instructed its delivery or reading, and denied any involvement by the Lords.⁵⁴

Therefore, by the autumn of 1641 tensions between the Houses combined with the Commons’ desire to reduce the king’s power through attacking the bishops had reached a dramatic climax – a bishop was publicly attacked for writing a prayer, one of the primary purposes of the clergy. The attack on Williams, who antagonised the Commons repeatedly in blocking Root and Branch, organising the Lords’ order that countered the Commons’ order against Laudian innovation

⁵⁰ Indeed, the British Library copy of the form contains the inscription ‘by Williams this was before he was Arch: Bp of York’. See *A Form of Thanksgiving, to Be Used the Seventh of September Thorowout the Diocese of Lincoln, and in the Jurisdiction of Westminster* (London, 1641, Wing C4181A)

⁵¹ *CJ* 06/09/1641.

⁵² *CJ* 6/9/1641. Sir Simonds D’Ewes’s diary entry for the same day places the rejection of Williams’ form and the change in location of the thanksgiving in immediate succession. D’Ewes reports the initial impetus to move as a result of plague outbreaks in Westminster, see D’Ewes entries in *PLP*, vol. 6, pp. 657-658.

⁵³ *CJ* 9/9/1641

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

and composing the thanksgiving form, had three long-term consequences for nationwide prayer days.⁵⁵ First, a precedent had been established of a nationwide prayer day being organised and authorised without the bishops (aside from in their capacity as members of the Upper House). Second, for nationwide occasions ordered via parliament, the necessity of forms of prayer, and by implication set prayer itself, had been abandoned. This would have significant implications for the practicalities of distribution as well as aligning the parliamentarians more closely with puritanism.⁵⁶ Third, since parliament did not have the legal power to instruct the Church of England (for this remained within the remit of the Crown) in continuing its attacks on episcopacy the Commons was creating a vacuum of spiritual authority. Due to the tensions and anger directed at the king as well as large numbers of absences from the Commons at this time, many of those who would have ordinarily defended the bishops and their right to compose and distribute prayers within their diocese did not do so. Finally, a parliamentary ordinance had been used to authorise a prayer day setting a precedent for future parliamentary occasions as well as immediately sparking assertive use of orders from parliamentary houses. While ordinances were to become the most regular means of ordering parliamentarian prayer days during the civil war, on occasion, prayer days were authorised by orders issued by a single House acting in a quasi-executive manner. Thus, though it did not seem highly significant at the the time, in September 1641 two precedents were established in terms of parliament ordering religious action, through ordinances assented to by both Houses and through the order of a single House. The

⁵⁵ See B. Quintrell 'Williams, John' *ODNB*. Williams attempted to stop Root and Branch by proposing a curbing of the King's total control over the appointment of bishops. It seems likely that a large part of Williams' motivation in introducing his bill was in reaction to the far more radical Root and Branch bill that sought to end episcopacy altogether. The Root and Branch bill had been introduced to the Commons in May 1641 but was not defeated until August. By 9 July it had reached a second reading but despite its controversy continued to be referred back to committee rather than being abandoned. Williams have helped to stall Root and Branch in the Commons until the end of the summer session by introducing his bill to reform episcopacy in the Lords on 1 July and getting it to the same stage as Root and Branch (a second reading and being referred to committee). It acted as a warning, were the Commons to pass Root and Branch, the Lords would pass Williams' bill. Ideally, the resulting stalemate would result in episcopacy without any reform. Interestingly, with a small modification, Williams' solution to the problem of the King's hold on episcopal appointments was to surface again when tensions emerged in the Church of England in 1677. Goldie, Mark, 'Danby, the Bishops and the Whigs', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), especially pp. 84-85.

⁵⁶ For the practical implications of parliamentarian distribution of prayer days materials see chapter four.

tensions between Lords and Commons evident in the ordering of the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland erupted just two days after it was observed on 9 September over the Commons' order of 8 September, which sought to remove Laudian innovations from the parishes. While both Houses had co-operated in the issuing of the ordinance for the thanksgiving, the orders they issued on 9 September contradicted each other and undermined the authority of both Houses.

At this time, the religious moderates in the Commons, keen to make a stand against the king, lost patience with the Lords, some of whom they perceived as 'yes-men' of the king, others of whom may have been trying to force a puritan agenda upon them. On 8 September, the Commons had passed an order to abolish Laudian innovations, such as fixed and railed in communion tables at the east end, and requested a conference with the Upper House seeking their support in the hope 'that it might become an ordinance of Parliament'.⁵⁷ They do not appear to have expected to receive the Lords' assent for they had already taken the radical step of ordering their proposal to be printed and published as a Commons' order before their conference with the Lords in an act of desperate frustration given the lack of progress of all their previous attempt to legislate some religious reform:

The Order that was brought in from the Committee the First of Sept., concerning the taking away Innovations, was read: And it was Resolved, upon the Question, That this Order now read, shall be an Order of itself, without any Addition for the present: And that it shall be printed and published. It is farther Ordered, That the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, of every Shire, City, and Borough, do take care to publish this Order, in their several Counties, Cities, and Boroughs.⁵⁸

The Lords not only failed to support the Commons, but without consulting the Commons also countered their order by promptly printing one of their own from

⁵⁷ BL, Harley 164 (D'Ewes diary), fo. 100r. See also *CJ* 8/9/1641.

⁵⁸ *CJ* 8/9/1641. See also Russell, *Fall*, pp. 369-370. Adamson holds an opposing view, J. S. A. Adamson, *The noble revolt : the overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), pp. 356, 669 endnote 79.

January 1641 that enforced the use of the Book of Common Prayer.⁵⁹ That day a majority had formed among the Lords sitting, led by Williams, united in opposing the Commons' attacks on episcopacy and keen to establish their authority and position over the Commons.⁶⁰ Williams also suddenly announced to the Upper House that he needed to make a visitation of his diocese 'to put in practice' the Lords' orders of 16 January and 1 March 1641.⁶¹ He excused himself and ordered the printing of visitation articles in London in preparation for a not-so-quiet retreat into his diocese.⁶² For the Commons, the Lords' insult destroyed any meaningful respect for the Upper House, and Williams in particular.

In reaction to the Lords' order, the Commons decided to print a declaration including the Lords' order 'together with a declaration of ours against the same order'.⁶³ The Commons' actions highlighted their frustration with the Lords and confirms Russell's conclusion that the Commons' 'real quarrel in the summer of 1641 was with the Lords as much as the King [but] they could exert leverage on the King far more easily than they could on the Lords'.⁶⁴ Indeed, in reaction to the Lords' order, some members of the Commons had suggested sending word to

⁵⁹ *Die Sabbati 16. Januarii. 1640. It is this day ordered by the Lords spirituall and temporall in the High Court of Parliament assembled, that the divine service be performed as it is appointed by the acts of Parliament of this realm* (London, 1641; Wing E2807). See *CJ* and *LJ* 9/9/1641. The king was later to support the Lords' order issuing a proclamation that effectively repeated their order. See Russell, *Fall*, p. 437. The Commons' order required 'churchwardens to remove communion tables from the east end, to remove rails, to take away crucifixes, scandalous pictures, and pictures of the Virgin Mary, to abolish bowing (the original wording said 'adoration'), and to call on Vice-Chancellors, Mayors, and JPs to execute this order, and report by 30 October next.' Russell, *Fall*, p. 368.

⁶⁰ Russell, *Fall*, p. 370. Williams' leadership of this group in the Lords is implied by Sir John Culpepper's report of the Lords' action to the Commons, 'Colpeper reports, that the Bishop of Lincolne said, that, upon divers Complaints to that House, of the Disturbances in Divine Service, the Lords made an Order, of the Sixteenth of Jan. 1640'. See *CJ* 9/9/1641.

⁶¹ On 1 March the Lords had made an order for communion tables in churches to remain where they were accustomed to be. See *LJ* 1/3/1641.

⁶² *Articles to Be Enquired of within the Diocese of Lincoln in the Generall and Trienniall Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God, John, by Gods Providence, Lord Bishop of Lincoln, to Be Held in the Yeer of Our Lord God 1641* (London, 1641; Wing C4053). While most bishops were avoiding drawing attention to themselves, Williams set out to on his visitation. For the Commons' attack on Williams for his actions in the visitation and his defence at a conference of both Houses see John Hacket, *Scrinia Reserata: A Memorial Offer'd to the Great Deservings of John Williams, D.D.* (London, 1693), p. 165.

⁶³ D'Ewes as printed in *PLP*, vol. 6, p. 716. See *A Declaration of the Commons in Parliament: made September the 9th 1641* (London, 1641; Wing E2550). Another print run (Wing E2552) was made in London, while a further version (Wing E2561B) was printed in Edinburgh. Thus, the Commons' actions were in part an attempt to appease the anti-episcopal Scots.

⁶⁴ Russell, *Fall*, p. 370.

the king ‘to desire him by proclamation to revoke the Lords’ order’ but D’Ewes pointed out that the Lords ‘may also desire the King to suspend our orders by the same rule of proportion and so we may introduce a precedent of dangerous consequence.’⁶⁵ The Commons was clearly aware that it was over-reaching its authority as much as it held that the Lords were doing likewise.⁶⁶ Both Houses were all too aware that this was a dangerous political game, but, with the king absent as well as weak, the current political battle remained focused within parliament itself. Each House started to make public printed declarations of their disapproval of the other, and particular discontented members strived to disassociate themselves publicly with the action of their own House.⁶⁷ The authority of parliament as a unified whole was compromised and this damage was known in the public arena through printed declarations. In the parishes, for the first time contradictory orders from two different authorities were received and it was highly debatable as to whether either of them had any legal jurisdiction.⁶⁸

Therefore the problem in the summer and autumn of 1641 was not that parliament had taken an executive role, but that they were abusing their authority, overstepping the boundary and acting as a privy council. While parliament was not in the privy council’s territory when it issued the ordinance for the thanksgiving, for it held responsibility for ensuring the ratification and implementation of the treaty with Scotland, this was not the case with the order against innovations.⁶⁹ What was so significant about the Commons’ order on 8 September was that it was promoted as if it were an executive enactment, but it had not gained the support of the Lords or the king. With the Lords’ open opposition and without the king’s support, proponents of the order could not lay

⁶⁵ D’Ewes in *PLP*, vol. 6, p. 717.

⁶⁶ The Commons’ abuse of power was not lost on the Earl of Dover whose Lords’ diary entry noted, ‘whether ye Howse of Commons have power of them selves, to enjoyne ye whole kingdome any thinge wch is not settled by ye lawes’. See the diary entry as quoted in Russell, *Fall*, p. 370.

⁶⁷ Some Lords such as Bedford and Warwick had protested their dissent from the Lords decision to print the 16 January order on 9 September. This protest was then printed and distributed, see *After Debate About the Printing and Publishing of the Orders of the 16th of January Last, Which Followeth in These Words, Viz.* (London, 1641; Wing E2787A). For an example of a declaration by the Commons see *A Declaration* (Wing E2550).

⁶⁸ Russell, *Fall*, p. 371.

⁶⁹ This view contrasts with that of Mendle, who views the thanksgiving ordinance itself as the remit of the Privy Council. See Mendle, ‘Great Council’, especially p. 148.

claim on royal authority by claiming were acting as a ‘council’ to the king.⁷⁰ Nor in 1641 were the Commons yet willing to issue an ordinance without the support of the Lords.⁷¹

Aside from the legislative precedents of the thanksgiving and the Commons’ order that swiftly followed, this episode had significant practical implications. Williams’ actions over the thanksgiving were part of a wider attempt by some who sought to defend episcopacy and negotiate a settlement. Though once a star episcopal reformer, Williams was now fearful of the agreements being made with the anti-episcopal Scots and tried to position himself as one of the brokers of a peaceful settlement between parliament and the king. However, his attempts to block the Commons’ attacks on bishops over the thanksgiving had enraged the Lower House whose attacks became more vehement against the episcopate. The bishops’ disastrous move came on 30 December 1641 with the December petition (masterminded by Williams), which resulted in the impeachment of all twelve bishops who signed it, the end of the episcopate’s role in the ordering process and the end of episcopacy as a functioning bureaucracy structure in government until the Restoration.⁷² The challenge to the authority of bishops over issuing forms of prayer for the thanksgiving had given the Commons greater control. Yet, it was the petition in December that removed any question over the role of the secular authorities in occasional days of prayer. It was no longer even debated. The order for the following nationwide prayer day (the fasts for the distressed state of Ireland) was to be distributed by the knights, citizens, burgesses, and barons who delivered them to the sheriffs, they to the constables and churchwardens, and eventually into the hands of the parish ministers.⁷³ There were simply not enough bishops at liberty to assist.

⁷⁰ For a more general view of parliament as a council to the monarch, see *Ibid.*

⁷¹ However, by February 1642 they were willing to issue an ordinance ‘by the Lords and Commons’ without actually gaining the Lords’ assent. Later the Lords referred to this ordinance, which effectively was a parliamentary form of ship money, as an order. See *Ibid.* p. 155.

⁷² Another example of Williams’ determined effort to defend episcopal authority, this was a protest by twelve bishops stating their prevention from sitting in Parliament by the London crowds. Furthermore, it argued that this absence of bishops invalidated those proceedings, saying in effect, ‘no bishops, no parliament’, David Cressy, *England on edge : crisis and revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford, 2006), p. 392.

⁷³ For its distribution see *CJ* 18/12/1641, 23/12/1641, 24/12/1641. For more details see below.

The next significant phase in ordering occasions in the period 1641 to 1643 was caused by the return of the king to London on 25 November 1641, which initiated a return to normal procedure, but requires a brief outline of the political landscape.⁷⁴ In the wake of the Commons' order, public opinion (especially in the capital) had been awakened to parliament's (and particularly the Commons') abuse of their authority and turned to support of the king.⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, Charles did not recognise the Commons' order as legal; this was not just due to its lack of assent by himself or the Lords, but because he believed all church matters were outside of parliament's jurisdiction.⁷⁶ Furthermore, in the short term, he hoped to utilise the disagreement between the two Houses to his advantage.⁷⁷ In part, and in an attempt to regain popular support, the Commons produced the Grand Remonstrance on 8 November, which was an attack on the Lords as much as the king and effectively claimed that all that England had suffered since 1625 was part of a conspiracy 'to subvert the religion of England'.⁷⁸ At this point, 'with the Remonstrance completed, and the talk of the town', the king returned to London.⁷⁹ Russell highlights that the six weeks between Charles' return and his departure on 10 January 1642 were the only time between the king's departure into Scotland on 10 August 1641 and the raising of the royal standard at Nottingham on 22 August 1642 that the king and parliament were in the same vicinity.⁸⁰ The Houses remained in conflict with one another as

⁷⁴ Charles' affairs in Scotland had finally come to an end in November 1641, but with the rebellion that had broken out in Ireland on 22-23 October he was forced to continue negotiating with them. The King's actions in Scotland, which are highly likely to have included being involved in a plot to murder Hamilton and Argyll in order to aid providing the basis of an alternative government, had hardly endeared him to the Scots. On hearing of the Irish rebellion Charles decided to play golf, but as time passed he came to realise that he would now need the aid of the Scots to suppress the trouble in Ireland and wrote from Berwick to ask for it on 18 November. Parliament had realised the necessity of Scottish help too and on their own authority wrote to ask for it. Both letters arrived in Edinburgh at the same time. See Russell, *Fall*, chapter 8.

⁷⁵ Russell, *Fall*, pp. 402-404.

⁷⁶ Charles held that the Commons 'in truth hath no Authoritie to make any Orders in busines of that nature [pertaining to the Church]... they meant the whole managery of the Kingdome, and the Legislative power should be undertaken by the house of Commons, without the consent either of Us, or Our Nobilitie' *A Exact Collection of all Remonstrances* (London, 1643; Wing E1533), p. 526.

⁷⁷ See *Remonstrances* (1643, Wing E1533), p. 526. Russell, *Fall*, p. 407.

⁷⁸ Russell, *Fall*, pp. 424-427. Interestingly, here Russell also notes one of the Remonstrance's original clauses attacked the Book of Common Prayer. However, at the next committee hearing it was held that the Book of Common Prayer should not be condemn and that set prayer should be upheld. Eventually all reference to the prayer book was dropped on 22 November.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 429.

⁸⁰ Russell, *Fall*, p. 400.

well as with the king throughout November and December with the added pressure of London crowds building outside of parliament who antagonised the Lords in particular. It was essential to raise forces to put down the rebellion in Ireland, yet the majority in the Commons were unwilling to place them in the hands of the king. By the last week of December the Lords had split into those who believed government was no longer safe under Charles' direction and those who would become royalists. In this context, Williams' presentation of the Bishops' petition on 30 December was a desperate hope for a miracle. On 4 January, Charles attempted to arrest five members, marching into the Commons with around eight armed men. The following day he issued a proclamation for their apprehension. The indignation within and without parliament that this provoked is well known.⁸¹ However, from Charles' point of view one of the most serious consequences of his failure to arrest the five members was that, in horror at his action, the remaining members of parliament unified themselves.⁸²

Against this background, the ordering of a fast for the Irish rebellion was a rare point upon which the Commons, Lords and king could agree and it followed the traditional ordering process. Initiated in the Commons on 13 December and referred to committee, the Commons asked the Lords for their support for a fast on 14 December.⁸³ Their proposal gained the support of the Lords who decided on the dates of observance on 17 December (for both Houses and London on 22 December, for Westminster on 23 December and 20 January elsewhere in England and Wales).⁸⁴ On 18 December, the Lords petitioned and gained the assent of the king, who did not attempt to order his bishops to compose a special form of prayer for the occasion.⁸⁵ The Houses observed the fast on 22 December, and two days later the Commons petitioned the Lords again.⁸⁶ This time they sought to persuade the king to agree to a monthly fast for both Houses and the whole kingdom while the troubles in Ireland continued.⁸⁷ The Lords agreed and

⁸¹ For a detailed account, see Russell, *Fall*, chapter 11.

⁸² The bishops had already physically if not constitutionally left the Lords.

⁸³ *CJ* 13/12/1641, *LJ* 14/12/1641.

⁸⁴ *LJ* 17/12/1641.

⁸⁵ *LJ* 18/12/1641.

⁸⁶ The Lords appear to have processed to the Abbey of Westminster on the morning of the fast since directions were given for the Lords to meet at the House and proceed to the Abbey together. See *LJ* 21/12/1641.

⁸⁷ *CJ* 24/12/1641.

gained the king's assent on 30 December.⁸⁸ This did not require great parliamentary persuasion. After the failed attempt to arrest the five members, Charles feared for the lives of himself and his family, especially his queen. As one of his final acts before fleeing London, while desperate to ensure Henrietta Maria's escape, Charles readily assented to the fasts.⁸⁹ At the time, they must have seemed adiaphorous to the king. On 3 January, Charles requested that the proclamation be prepared, which authorised the fast already organised for 20 January as well as the monthly fast.⁹⁰ The proclamation was issued on 8 January, two days before the king fled the capital.⁹¹

Though over-stated by some scholars, such as Hugh Trevor-Roper, examination of orders surrounding the monthly fasts demonstrates the expanding authority of the Commons.⁹² This new authority was not part of a deliberate, pre-meditated plan to break the traditional processes of government and state authority by the Commons, or even the circle surrounding Pym. It demonstrated the Commons' filling of the vacuum left by the absent bishops. Presumably in part because they were already founded upon a royal proclamation, the Commons felt able to intervene with instructions for prayers for monthly fast days without referring to the Lords. For the third monthly fast on 27 April 1642 ministers were called upon to give thanks to God for the good success in the Province of Munster. The order was given from the Commons, but without reference to the Lords.⁹³ Similarly, the Commons alone ordered a blessing on the forces raised by parliament for the monthly fast on 28 September 1642.⁹⁴ Yet, since it was an alteration to established legislation, it was both Houses who ordered that the monthly fast on 26 November 1642 not be observed by able-bodied persons in London, Westminster, or the surrounding areas in order to continue the urgent

⁸⁸ *LJ* 28/12/1641, 30/12/1641.

⁸⁹ The Queen fled England altogether on 4 February 1641.

⁹⁰ At this point it appear to have been clarified that the monthly fast would start from February, rather than on the last Wednesday of January, see Edward Nicholas' corrections to SP 16/488/3, the warrant to the Attorney General to prepare the proclamation.

⁹¹ *By the King. A Proclamation for a general fast throwout this Realm of England* (London, 1641; Wing C2582), authorising the monthly fast for the last Wednesday of each month.

⁹² For more detailed discussion, see the introduction and chapter one.

⁹³ *CJ* 27/9/1642 – Note that there is no corresponding reference to this in the Lords Journal.

⁹⁴ *CJ* 27/9/1642.

construction work on the defences of London.⁹⁵ Indeed, as far as possible, the Commons sought to follow established government procedure. For example, the Commons even petitioned the Lords to seek a proclamation from the king to stir up the people to contribute at the fasts for the relief of the Irish in March 1642.⁹⁶ For their part, the Lords celebrated the second monthly fast on 30 March 1642 at Whitehall, demonstrating their position as natural settlers of the nation, the mediators between king and Commons.

Following the attempted arrest of the five members and the king's departure, the relationship between Lords and Commons markedly improved (particularly once the royalist Lords began their exodus from the Upper House in February). The Houses were united on matters that sought to reduce the king's power, though they remained religiously diverse and the Lords were not likely to support puritan agendas.⁹⁷ In ordering nationwide prayer days, the Houses worked together following the procedure established with the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland though outside of establishing new occasions the Commons' authority over the occasions was growing. Nevertheless, with the Lords in charge of the Army until the Self-Denying Ordinance passed on 3 April 1645, power largely remained in the Upper House.

II

The success of forces at Winchester gave grounds for the first parliamentary occasional day of prayer within London and its surrounding areas ordered solely on parliamentary authority on 18 December 1642.⁹⁸ Following the encouragement of the Lord General, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, the Lords ordered the thanksgiving to be observed in London, Westminster, their Liberties

⁹⁵ See *CJ* and *LJ* 25/10/1642. In October 1642 the Commons felt their authority had grown sufficiently to order a local thanksgiving for Lancashire without consulting the Lords. For the order for the thanksgiving in Lancashire see *CJ* 11/10/1642. Although it is worth noting that there had already been thanksgivings held in Lancaster earlier the same month on the second and the sixth, see Ernest Broxap, *The Great Civil War in Lancashire, 1642-1651* (Manchester, 1973) pp. 50-51. As this order came after the event, it probably authorised it, rather than the event occurring twice.

⁹⁶ *CJ* 1/3/1642.

⁹⁷ Russell notes that 'the strength of true godliness in the Lords was very small', Russell, *Fall*, p. 473.

⁹⁸ See *CJ* and *LJ* 16/12/1642 for the orders.

and Parts and the borough of Southwark, so it ran parallel with Essex's thanksgiving in Windsor. The Lords also stipulated that in the mean time the 'usual Expressions of Joy, by ringing of Bells' should take place.⁹⁹

The Lords were following a familiar protocol: a great victory by the army had long been followed by a thanksgiving. Yet, significant precedents were set.¹⁰⁰ The most obvious being that this thanksgiving was for a victory against the king ordered by a parliament which recognised itself as the head of state, though at this stage most saw this as a temporary position until the king could be curbed. Second, there was an acceptance by parliament that the Lord General of their army had the authority not only to order a local thanksgiving solely on his own authority, but also to suggest that parliament do the same. Within the message from the Lord General read to the Lords it stated, 'the Lord General intends to give Public Thanks to God at Windsor, the next Lord's-day, for this great Success, without Loss of Blood; and his Lordship desires that their Lordships would please to give Order that Public Thanks may be likewise given the same Day in London and Westm[inster].'¹⁰¹ This implied that a man representing the leading parliamentary authority over a certain area had the power to order occasional prayer days, in much the same way as a bishop could within his diocese.¹⁰² In representing the power of the parliamentary state for that particular area, he had jurisdiction not only over secular issues but also ecclesiastical matters as well.¹⁰³ Yet, despite these innovations in authorisation, in many ways the day was traditional. The head of the army reported to the peerage in the Lords before reporting to the Commons, recognising them as his equals in status and authority. Essex's request was agreed to by both the Lords and the Commons and the orders were issued on the Houses' joint authority. The traditional method

⁹⁹ LJ 16/12/1642.

¹⁰⁰ For example, thanksgivings under Elizabeth were ordered for the successful defeat of the Armada, see WKC, pp. 469-470 and *A Psalm and Collect of thanksgiving, not vnmeet for this present time: to be said or sung in Churches* (London, 1588; STC 16520). See also David Cressy, *Bonfires & Bells: national memory and the protestant calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Stroud, 2004), chapter 7.

¹⁰¹ LJ 16/12/1642.

¹⁰² However, this was to some degree a matter of interpretation. Some bishops and Archbishops, such as Matthew Parker, did not feel they could order occasions, even if only within their own diocese, without royal consent. Laud had certainly discouraged bishops from doing so. For further discussion, see chapter one and the conclusion.

¹⁰³ Another key example of this occurs with the thanksgiving within the Eastern Association ordered by the Earl of Manchester in April 1644.

of demonstrating victory, ringing the parish church's bells, was ordered and the Lord Mayor continued to play a key role in organising the celebrations in London.¹⁰⁴

The following month, at Lord Ferdinando Fairfax's suggestion, a national thanksgiving for the success of the forces in Yorkshire was observed across England on 5 February 1643.¹⁰⁵ It marked the first nationwide occasional day of prayer without the king's consent. With this thanksgiving, parliament as head of state demonstrated its authority over the whole country, rather than simply using the capital as a symbol for the state. However, to some extent, Fairfax remained in the limelight. Along with his army, Fairfax celebrated the thanksgiving at Selby and heard a sermon by John Shaw. The printed version demonstrated that Shaw regarded the day, at least in Selby, as ordered by Fairfax himself, with no mention of parliament's role.¹⁰⁶

A further innovation for parliamentary prayer days was established in February 1643 - the use of letters of victory within prayer day services.¹⁰⁷ Fairfax's letters relating his victory were ordered by parliament to be printed and read at the thanksgiving. The reading of narratives, particularly accounts of victory, on occasional prayer days became a regular feature of the occasions from this point. Thus, rather than ordering a form of service, which would have been highly problematic for a lay institution, parliament often chose to order the reading of a prose account, which was a piece of secular writing (albeit one that might contain religious language and ideas).¹⁰⁸ While, in ecclesiastical terms, they provided the cause for acknowledging divine favour or wrath in order to

¹⁰⁴ For more on this long-standing tradition see Cressy, *Bonfires*.

¹⁰⁵ *CJ* and *LJ* 30/1/1643.

¹⁰⁶ See John Shaw, *Two Clean Birds, or, the Cleansing of the Leper. As It Was Unfolded in a Sermon, Preached before the Right Honourable, Ferdinando Lord Fairfax, Generall of the Northern Forces, and the Most of His Army, on the Fifth Day of February, 1642 (Being the Lords Day, and by His Honour Appointed to Bee Kept as a Fast, Upon Speciall Occasion) at Selbie, in the West Riding of the County of Yorke* (York, 1644; Wing S3031).

¹⁰⁷ Printing letters of victory was not an innovation in and of itself, for example, Essex's letters relating his victory at Winchester were ordered to be printed, see *CJ* and *LJ* 16/12/1642. Yet these items of propaganda were not ordered to be incorporated into prayer day services until February 1643.

¹⁰⁸ Further discussion of parliamentary prayer day services and narratives of victory is found in chapter three. For further discussion of parliament's difficult position as a lay and secular institution but which also had authority over the nation's worship is found in the conclusion.

encourage the people to respond accordingly, these narratives were also designed to act as a stimulus to the people who heard them. They sought to inspire hearers to atone more keenly for the sins of the nation after a defeat, or to raise their spirits by confirming that God was a parliamentarian at heart for they had been victorious and encourage continued godly behaviour. Thanksgivings for parliamentarian victories focused on the idea that they were the result of divine favour. Yet, in order for God's aid to continue, the people must continue to repent of their sins and lead godly lives.

III

When Charles left the capital, his government had to adapt to the *ad hoc* style of a travelling bureaucracy without a stronghold in London. While Charles' administrators would have been used to adapting to Charles' needs when on progress, that system was founded on stability in and control of the capital. From the point of view ordering prayer days, the royalist administration also had to adapt to the absence of a fully-functioning episcopacy. In one sense, Charles easily negotiated these issues in the period from his abandonment of the capital in January 1642 and the summer of 1643, for he does not appear to have ordered any nationwide prayer days.¹⁰⁹ As identified in list 1 in the appendix, local records show what appears to be a royalist national thanksgiving for Worcester and Chewton Mendip on 23 June 1643.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, no material survives on the ordering of this occasion and there is very little on the ordering of occasions

¹⁰⁹ However, some special prayers for use in regular church services were issued. The King's printer at Shrewsbury re-printed *A prayer of thanksgiving for His Majesties late Victory over the Rebels* on 8 December 1642, *A thanksgiving for his Majesties late Victory over the Rebels in the North* on 12 July 1643 and *A Collection of Prayers and Thanksgivings, used in His Majesties Chappel* on 4 August 1643. No copies of these reprints survive, but the royal printer produced his own printed list of his publications at York and Shrewsbury for the period 1642-1643. See National Library of Scotland 1.243(20). This is reproduced as a facsimile in William K. Sessions, *A World of Mischief: The King's Printer, in York in 1642 and in Shrewsbury 1642-1643: With an Analysis of All His Printed Works, Together with Illustrations and Data of Those Which Are Extant* (York, 1981), section 4. The prayers reprinted on 12 July and 4 August 1643 may be connected with the royalist victories at Landsdown Hill (8 July) and Bristol (3 August) for which churchwarden accounts reveal ringing for royalist victory, see list 2 in appendix 1.

¹¹⁰ The occasion was celebrated in the parishes of St John the Baptist and St Mary on the Hill, Chester see Cheshire CRO, P51/12/1, St John the Baptist Churchwardens' accounts and Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, both unpaginated. It is also likely to have been observed in the parish St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate in York, Borthwick Institute, PR Y MG/19, St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate, p. 239.

authorised by the king once he left the capital. The Oxford parliament was only in session during the ordering of two royalist occasions identified and does not appear to have played much of a role in ordering occasions (though it did observe the royalist monthly fasts and order the printing of sermons heard by the Commons in much the same way as its London cousin).¹¹¹ However, we can reconstruct some sense of the royalist ordering process by comparing the traditional ordering process without parliament, as used in July 1640, with what can be gleaned about royalist nationwide prayer days.

By October 1643 the king could no longer ignore parliament's usurpation of the monthly fast days authorised in his name and so issued a second proclamation 'for a Generall Fast to be held throughout this Kingdome on the second Friday in every Moneth' on 5 October, 1643.¹¹² Charles stated in the proclamation, 'We have caused devout formes of Prayers to be Composed and Printed, and intend to disperse them into all the parts of this Our Kingdome, and do Command that they be used in all Churches and Chappels at these solemne and publique Meetings.'¹¹³ In contrast to early proclamations, and no doubt due to the denial of the necessity of forms by parliament as well as the outbreak of war (rather than to avoid confusion), the purpose of a form of prayer was stated as providing unity. The form ensured that 'with one Heart and one Voyce We may performe so Religious an Exercise.'¹¹⁴

The decision to establish a royalist monthly fast may have come from Charles himself, or else one of his counsellors. Charles would then have requested that a draft proclamation be drawn up and Sir Edward Nicholas seems the most likely

¹¹¹ The Oxford Parliament did not meet until 22 January 1644 and was adjourned on 16 April until 8 October 1644. Once reassembled, it was again adjourned on 10 March 1645 (following calls for peace that irritated the king). Thus, it was only in session for the royalist thanksgiving for Newark (24/3/1644?) and the fast day for the Newport treaty (5/2/1645). See Appendix, list 1. The Oxford Commons ordered the printing of Henry Ferne's sermon on 12 April 1644, see the printed version of the order in Henry Ferne, *A sermon preached at the publique fast the twelfth day of April. At St. Maries Oxford, before the Members of the Honourable House of Commons there assembled* (Oxford, 1644; Wing F805), sig. A2v.

¹¹² See *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth*, (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2584). There is no record of discussion of this issue in PC 2/53, but the Council notes are irregular and frequently very brief in this volume.

¹¹³ *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth*, (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2583).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

candidate to do this due to his experience and proximity to the king.¹¹⁵ Since Brian Duppa, Bishop of Winchester, spent much of the civil war with the king or his children (acting as royal tutor) and had composed royalist special prayers in 1642 and 1643, he was probably commissioned to compose the form and willingly assented.¹¹⁶ Where the royalists needed to be innovative was in the distribution of the proclamation and form, particularly the latter, because Duppa (and the rest of the episcopate) no longer had a functioning ecclesiastical network to disseminate them.¹¹⁷ As stated in the proclamation, Charles now assumed this responsibility. Thus, as the Commons had started to fill the lacunae left by the episcopacy, so Charles diverted their distributing functions. For royalists, the episcopacy's role in nationwide prayer had not been abandoned, but streamlined.

This royalist adaptation of the traditional ordering process in October 1643 was to be used again when Charles authorised the nationwide royalist fast day for the Treaty of Uxbridge on 5 February 1645.¹¹⁸ While this fast is the only other royalist nationwide prayer day for which both a proclamation and a form of prayer are extant, it is likely that other occasions were ordered and followed this model. For example, it seems likely that 24 March 1644 was proclaimed as a thanksgiving for victory in Newark as many parishes recorded ringing that day for the victory and a prayer was issued.¹¹⁹ These occasions, along with Charles' decision to move, rather than abolish the monthly fast, are testament to the king's

¹¹⁵ Nicholas had moved his family to reside in the royalist capital, see S.A. Baron, 'Nicholas, Sir Edward', *ODNB*. Sir Edward Hyde may have been responsible for drafts of proclamations in the spring and summer of 1642, sending them in secret from the capital, see Sessions, *The King's Printer at York, at Shrewsbury*, p. 5. However, Paul Seaward notes that Hyde travelled with the King through Shropshire, Paul Seaward, 'Hyde, Edward', *ODNB*. Therefore, perhaps Hyde was on hand at the royal printer's shop in Shrewsbury.

¹¹⁶ Duppa is generally acknowledged as the anonymous author of *A Collection of Prayers and Thanksgivings, vsed in His Majesties Chappell and in His Armies* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4094A, C4094B, C4094C); *A Prayer of Thanksgiving for His Majesties late Victory over the Rebels* (origin unknown, Thomason inscribed date of 1643; Wing D2664); *Private Forms of Prayer for These Sad Times* (Oxford, 1645; Wing D2665); *Two Prayers* (Oxford, 1644; Wing D2667).

¹¹⁷ Royalist distribution will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

¹¹⁸ The proclamation was issued on 27 January 1645, see *By the King. A Proclamation for a Solemn Fast on Wenesday the Fifth of February Next, Upon Occasion of the Present Treaty for Peace* (London, 1645; Wing C2585); *A Forme of Common-Prayer, To be used upon the Solemne Fast, appointed by His Majesties Proclamtion upon the Fifth of February, being VVednesday* (Oxford, 1644; Wing C4112).

¹¹⁹ The prayer issued for the victory at Newark, and attributed to Duppa, is found in *Private Forms* (Wing D2665). For the parishes that rang bells on 24 March 1644 see the table in appendix 1.

support and belief in the concept of nationwide prayer days.

In his proclamation establishing the royalist monthly fast, Charles stated that he had consented willingly to the original monthly fast and believed there was still ‘great cause’ in 1643 to continue a monthly fast ‘to expresse Our own Humiliation, and the Humiliation of Our People, for Our own sinnes and the sinnes of this Nation’.¹²⁰ Given the great abuse of the day and that ‘such a Hypocriticall Fast’ dishonoured God and slandered true religion, the king commanded the Wednesday monthly fast ‘be no longer continued and countenanced by Our Authority’.¹²¹ Given Charles’ character, it seems probable that he believed that most ministers would abandon the monthly fast usurped by parliament once he withdrew his authority. He also presumed that the proclamation would be quickly and effectively distributed. Thus, he hoped the rebels’ misuse of the fast days would end, returning monthly fasts to royalist control and unity to public occasional worship. Perhaps he even believed parliament would not hear a fast without his royal consent. He was mistaken on all counts. Unsurprisingly, the proclamation had no effect on parliament and there does not appear to have been any debate as to whether to continue the Wednesday monthly fast. Thus from November 1643 both sides held their own monthly fast days in competition with one another.

IV

For some months, both sides continued their newly adapted version of the traditional ordering process for nationwide days of prayer. Charles authorised royalist occasions (utilising counsellors and Bishop Duppa), while parliament’s authorisation process usually ensured proposals passed through both Houses (usually from the Commons to the Lords). However, following the second battle of Newbury on 27 October 1644, the shift in power within parliament itself from

¹²⁰ See *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast... on the Second Friday in Every Moneth*, (Wing C2583). The diversion of money from some fast collections for the upkeep of Parliamentary forces was certainly true by the following year. The monthly fast collection of September 1644, particularly the money collected within the Lines of Communication, along with any funds left over from the previous collection, was to be ‘employed for the Relief of those Foot of my Lord General’s Army’, *CJ* 19/9/1644.

¹²¹ *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast... on the Second Friday in Every Moneth*, (Wing C2583).

Lords to Commons became even more evident. In the wake of parliament's defeat, the feud between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell became a feud between the Houses, with the Commons attacking Manchester and the Lords accusing Cromwell of hating the Scots, sabotaging peace efforts and seeking social and religious revolution that would end the nobility.¹²² Once again, tension between the Houses spilled into public debate via print, damaging parliament's authority and parliamentary credibility.¹²³ The Commons quickly passed the self-denying ordinance, which called for all members of parliament to resign their military commands and civil offices. While this appeared fair to members of both Houses, it really attacked members of the Lords. For Commons' MPs could resign their seats if they wished to continue to hold their position in the Army, while peers had no such choice. Unsurprisingly, the ordinance stalled in the Lords.¹²⁴ With the failure of the peace talks at Uxbridge in February 1645, the Lords' role as mediators became even less significant and the Upper House as a whole began to lose power. The formation of the New Model Army forged ahead and the Lords could do very little to stop it. On 3 April they approved a modified version of the self-denying ordinance, which barred MPs from military command, but crucially did not prevent reappointment.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, in real terms, power now lay with the Commons and the army.

The diminishing role of the Lords was reflected in the ordering of parliamentary occasional prayer days that followed in 1645 before reaching a climax in September 1646. The Lords Journal on 27 August 1645 recorded only four members of the House attending on the fast day. This was not a rebellion against the occasion but typical in a period where attendance of the Lords ranged between five and seven. Following the victory at Naseby, Sir Thomas Fairfax sent his account of the battle to the Commons rather than the Lords as was

¹²² Ian Gentles, *The English Revolution and the Wars in the Three Kingdoms 1638-1652* (Harlow, 2007), p. 246.

¹²³ *Mercurius Britannicus*, issue 60, p. 474. See also *Mercurius Britannicus*, issue 59, pp. 482-3, issue 65, p. 514, and issue 77, p. 712. See also Jason Peacey, 'The struggle for *Mercurius Britannicus*: factional politics and the parliamentary press, 1643-6', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68 (2005), especially pp. 527-8 and idem., *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 151.

¹²⁴ Gentles, *Three Kingdoms*, p. 247.

¹²⁵ See Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 10-25 and idem., *Three Kingdoms*, pp. 251-253.

customary. Instead, he sent a messenger to the Lords to request ‘an Extraordinary Day of Thanksgiving’ which the Lords ordered for the nation within the areas ‘under the Power of Parliament.’¹²⁶ While the Commons debated the more important details of the battle, the Lords were simply used to organise the celebrations. They chose to conclude them with a dinner at Grocers' Hall, having been invited by the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen, which being ‘far off from the Church’ led to the ministers being informed that the sermons must be over by noon.¹²⁷

A year later, following the victory over Oxford, the Lords were of little consequence to the power of the Commons when ordering a national day of prayer. The Commons followed the now regular procedure of asking the Lords for their concurrence for a thanksgiving on 3 July 1646. The Lords were hesitant. Evidently, the surrender of the royalist capital had brought into sharper focus the question of how the nation should be governed after the war. Was bringing the king to his knees a cause for celebration? The Commons petitioned the Lords again on the 9 July. At which point the Lords read the order and debated whether they should pass it simply because it came to them from the Commons. Uncharacteristically for the Lords, and thereby demonstrating their anxiety over the occasion, they denied the Commons their concurrence by simply not debating the issue again until after the thanksgiving had taken place.¹²⁸ This was certainly not expected by the Commons who had already appointed their preachers and by now it was too late to organise national distribution of the orders for the original date of 14 July.¹²⁹ However, the Commons were unconcerned. Ignoring the Lords rejection and without debate, on 11 July they stated that the national day of thanksgiving for Oxford was to be held on 21 July.¹³⁰

Thus, after July 1646 the Lords had no authority over occasional days of prayer; they simply existed to do the Commons’ bidding. However, the Commons’ break

¹²⁶ *LJ* 16/6/1645.

¹²⁷ *LJ* 18/6/1645. The Commons were also invited, *CJ* 17/6/1645.

¹²⁸ *LJ* 9/7/1646. The Upper House did adjourn with the Commons until after the thanksgiving from 11 to 15 July and therefore may have ultimately celebrated the occasion, *CJ* and *LJ* 11-15/7/1646.

¹²⁹ *CJ* 3/7/1646.

¹³⁰ *CJ* 11/7/1646.

from the Lords over the thanksgiving for Oxford did not end the established procedure; it simply rendered the Lords' part in it meaningless. The Lords' concurrence for prayer days was still sought by the Commons, but it was irrelevant whether they received it or not. For their part, the Lords now had no reason to reject the Commons' proposals as their objections were simply ignored. They were a broken House set to rubber-stamp all proposals from the 'Lower' House. Attendance in the Lords remained exceptionally low and the monthly fast of January 1649 was the last at which the House of Lords was represented before its abolition.¹³¹

Just as the end of the Lords' authority over prayer days was demonstrated by the thanksgiving for Oxford, so the temporary emergence of political-Presbyterian dominance in parliament was played out in the ordering of days of prayer.¹³² The early months of 1647 saw an emphasis on a single national church, a reduction in frequency and a movement back towards the pre-civil war process. Not to be confused with 'genuine Presbyterians', this group, a descendent of part of the 'peace-party', approved of parliament's filling of the spiritual lacunae left by the end of episcopacy; whereas those of political-Independent leanings sought to replace parliament's role in the church with the congregation.¹³³ Ian Gentles, among others, believes that this brief political-Presbyterian ascendancy was due to 'general war-weariness and dismay at the growth of religious sectarianism'.¹³⁴ The concern over religious non-conformity resulted in a day of humiliation on 10 March 1647 in response to the spreading of errors, heresies and blasphemies.¹³⁵

¹³¹ *LJ* 27/1/1647 records only Manchester, Kent, Warwick and Mulgrave sitting. Mr Marshall and Mr Lee were asked to preach for the Lords' last monthly fast on 31 January 1649.

¹³² While the Independents largely dominated the Long Parliament between 1645 and 1648, the Political-Presbyterians had a brief ascendancy in early 1647 (until they ran rough-shod over the Army's reasonable demands). They also held returned to prominence in parliament between 26 July and 6 August 1647, following the bursting in of a pro-Presbyterian mob that forced many Independents to flee. The Army restored the ejected Independents when it marched into London on 6 August. See Gentles, *Three Kingdoms*, pp. 305-306.

¹³³ The division between 'genuine Presbyterians and Independents', as Russell terms them, was over 'how to run a Puritan church': essentially whether to follow the Scottish or New England model of church government. Whereas the division between political-Presbyterians and political-Independents was largely over whether it was 'vital that the country should remain in one national church'. See Conrad Russell, *The Crisis of Parliaments* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 348-350.

¹³⁴ Gentles, *Three Kingdoms*, p. 305.

¹³⁵ See *CJ* 27/1/1647, 4/2/1647, *LJ* 4/2/1647, 16/2/1647 and *An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament. Concerning the growth and spreading of errors, heresies, and blasphemies. Setting a part a day of publike humiliation, to seeke Gods assistance for the suppressing and preventing the same* (London, 1647; Wing E1824).

The importance of this concern is further highlighted when one considers that this was the only occasional prayer day ordered by the political-Presbyterians before the army reasserted its political power and authority in June 1647 by capturing the king.¹³⁶ Given their desire to make peace,, these men sought a return to stability and with this came a reduction in the number of prayer days and a desire to move towards the traditional ordering procedure.

The ordering procedure for the fast day on 10 March 1647 sought to emulate the traditional ordering process more closely. The Lords took over the role, previously taken by the bishops, of composing material for use during the service: a confession.¹³⁷ While this was not a true imitation of the pre-civil war parliamentary petitioning model, because the Lords still asked the Commons for their agreement to prayer day material produced, the political-Presbyterian MPs sought to recognise the significance of the role of the Upper House as the traditional guardian of spiritual authority, even though its episcopal members were absent. In the absence of a functioning crown or episcopacy, the Lords were the only remaining link to the traditional spiritual authority used in the pre-civil war process. With the Upper House composing a quasi-form of prayer, Political-Presbyterians moved as close as possible in practical terms to the traditional procedures.¹³⁸ Though their influence was brief, the use of the traditional ordering models as a sign of stability would reemerge following the shock of the regicide.

Following the king's capture, growing influence of the Independents and the army increased the number of thanksgivings for victory once again from August

¹³⁶ Gentles, *Three Kingdoms*, pp. 312-313.

¹³⁷ *LJ* 16/2/1647, 'A Message was sent to the House of Commons, by Dr. Aylett and Dr. Heath: To deliver to them the Residue of the Confession of Faith, with this Sense, "That the Lords sent Part of the Confession of Faith long since to the House of Commons, and have now passed this; to both which the Lords desire their speedy Concurrence, in regard of the Fast appointed by both Houses for Heresies and Schisms, which is to be on the Tenth of March next, and would seem strange if before that Time a Confession of Faith agreed to by both Houses be not published to the Kingdom.'" The content of official prayer day materials, such as the confession is discussed in the following chapter.

¹³⁸ This was not a true form of prayer, as it did not provide a structure for the church services. However, it did contain words ordered to be used within prayer day services. In doing so, it partially filled the role of a traditional form. Therefore, the term 'quasi-form' is utilised in this thesis to describe official printed materials ordered to be used in church services, but which did not constitute an order of service.

1647.¹³⁹ The following year, with Cromwell's victory against the Scots in August 1648, the confidence of parliament was such that it felt able to order a national prayer day 'throughout the whole Kingdom' rather than simply within those areas under parliamentary control.¹⁴⁰ The following month, both parliamentarian and royalist authorities ordered fast days for the treaty negotiations at Newport following their now-established procedures.¹⁴¹ The army was highly suspicious of these negotiations and, with Charles trying to escape in private, their fears were well founded.¹⁴² Following the Commons' refusal to debate the Remonstrances of the Army (a 'new projected constitution for England') on 20 November, the army took action.¹⁴³ On 6 December 1648, Colonel Pride and his soldiers denied around ninety MPs entry to parliament; a further forty-one were arrested.¹⁴⁴ The remaining MPs became the rump that tried the king. The trial and execution of the king in the winter of 1648-9 understandably led to more cautious action in terms of ordering prayer days. Though the monthly fast was observed the day after the execution of the king, the monthly fast were quickly abolished by parliamentary act on 23 April 1649 and no further occasional days of prayer were authorised until April 1649.¹⁴⁵

V

With the rise of the Commonwealth, came the Council of State, which was both radical and conservative.¹⁴⁶ Though it finally abolished the House of Lords and established formally the supremacy of the House of Commons (now parliament's

¹³⁹ This increase in occasions started with the thanksgiving for victories in Ireland held on 31 August 1647, see *LJ* 20/8/1647.

¹⁴⁰ See *LJ* 23/8/1648.

¹⁴¹ The parliamentarian occasion was observed within London only on 12 September, see *LJ* 4/9/1648, while the King ordered one for 15 September. No royalist order survives, but the form remains, see *A Forme Of Prayer Used At Newport In the Isle of Wight* (London, 1648; Wing C4165). It seems likely that the royalist occasion was intended to be national, but there is insufficient evidence to prove it.

¹⁴² Russell, *Crisis*, p. 382.

¹⁴³ Gentles, *Three Kingdoms*, p. 356. The Presbyterians' were once again held the majority in parliament at this point.

¹⁴⁴ See David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1971), chapter 6.

¹⁴⁵ *CJ* 30/12/1648, 23/4/1649.

¹⁴⁶ Sean Kelsey, 'The Foundation of the Council of State', in Chris Kyle and Jason Peacey (eds), *Parliament at Work: Parliamentary Committees, Political Power and Public Access in Early Modern England* (Suffolk, 2002), p. 145. See also Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a republic: the political culture of the English commonwealth, 1649-1653* (Manchester, 1997).

sole chamber), it was equally 'a defence against the radical potential of the revolution'.¹⁴⁷ The abolition of the Lords had not been a foregone conclusion of the Regicide, and the formation of the Council 'effectively usurped the sovereignty of the People' ensuring the continuation of a form of unrepresentative government.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Cromwell himself opposed the dismantling of the Upper House, but some peers, such as the earl of Denbigh, willingly traded the loss of their place in the Lords for a seat on this new executive body.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the men in office were a key point of continuity and the main reason for the considerable co-operation between parliament and the Council of State. So much trust and collaboration between the two institutions was due to the fact that almost all the Council's members were also MPs.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, when matters were referred to the Council, 'MPs were effectively transferring that business onto the floor of a more efficient, less public forum of themselves.'¹⁵¹

The Council of State was based upon the traditional privy council and gained many of the traditional duties and privileges of the crown, including meeting at Whitehall. In this way, the Council of State reclaimed as much as possible of traditional government after the Regicide through incorporating the administrative functions of the crown and privy council. However, it did not obtain great power. As with the Lords, the Council remained subordinate to the Commons, because it depended on parliament for its continuation.¹⁵² Blair Worden has noted that 'the subordination of executive to legislative was ... heavily stressed'.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, the Rump delegated the execution of business related to foreign policy, trade, defence and the army to the Council. The Council was also 'permitted it to "advise and consult of any thing concerning the good of this Commonwealth"', including nationwide days of prayer.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ Kelsey, 'Foundation', p. 131.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 145.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 137, 145.

¹⁵⁰ This point was first made by G. E. Aylmer, *The State's Servants: the civil service of the English Republic, 1649-1660* (London, 1973), p. 21.

¹⁵¹ Kelsey, 'Foundation', p. 144.

¹⁵² Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 182.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Therefore, with the Interregnum, came procedural changes to ordering occasional days of prayer. The role of the Lords in organizing the finer details of occasions once they had been ordered, was transferred to the Council of State, who thus became responsible for the distribution of state orders from the summer of 1649. As with parliamentary occasions in the civil war, usually fast days and thanksgivings were considered and planned by committees before being passed to the Commons for authorization.¹⁵⁵ Equally, this committee was responsible for justifying the day of prayer and any changes made to it, such as any alteration in date.¹⁵⁶ While the use of committees seems to have increased in this period, they remained unessential. If the occasion was at short notice or if the purpose of the occasion was extremely clear (such as the blessing on the forces going into Ireland), the Commons dispensed with a committee and simply ordered the occasion.

However, the most significant change in this period was an alteration in terminology, because nationwide prayer days were now authorised by acts of parliament. While it may be argued that in practical terms this had very little effect, legislatively it demonstrated the assumption of the crown's power by the Commons. Furthermore, in producing acts for prayer days, parliament underlined its permanence. When the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland had been authorised by parliamentary ordinance in September 1641, parliament had only made temporary use of the crown's power; following the regicide the crown had been assimilated into the Commons. The use of acts also indicated stability, given their superior legal standing to the frequent parliamentary orders that had become synonymous with the turmoil of war. Yet aside from this albeit highly significant alteration in terms, the increased use of committees and some changes to the means of distributing orders, the period between 1649 and 1653 saw a great deal of continuity, particularly in the purpose of the events with occasions called for ingratitude and lack of charity (19 April 1649), God's blessing on

¹⁵⁵ *CJ* 9/7/1650.

¹⁵⁶ *CJ* 28/2/1649.

parliament and their forces (28 February 1650) and victory in Ulster (26 July 1650).¹⁵⁷

John Morrill has described the regimes of the 1650s as a ‘rush to restoration’ in national and local government ‘to prevent the loss of traditional liberties either to a vengeful king or to social visionaries’.¹⁵⁸ Following the overthrow of the Rump on 20 April 1653, there was a reduction in the ordering of prayer days reflecting the desire for stability. Events that, under prior parliamentary regimes, would have resulted in nationwide prayer did not do so. For example, the surrender of Lough Oughter castle on 27 April (the final Irish stronghold) did not result in a nationwide thanksgiving day across England. The traditional prioritisation of the types of events that required the prayers of the whole nation appears to have returned at this point. This desire to return to stability characterized even the behaviour of the Nominated Assembly (Barebones Parliament) which, despite its radical nature, ordered only one nationwide thanksgiving between its first sitting on 4 July 1653 and the establishment of the Protectorate on 16 December 1653 (though it did hold long sessions of prayer for its own members). The thanksgiving for military victory over the Dutch, a very traditional purpose for thanksgiving, was held on 25 August 1653.¹⁵⁹ Equally, as with other occasions ordered since the regicide, the thanksgiving had followed the established process of passing from parliament (where it had been authorised on 12 August) to the Council of State on 17 August, the latter of which was responsible for publication and distribution of orders: ‘These are to will & require you to receive

¹⁵⁷ *An Act of the Commons of England Assembled in Parliament, For the keeping a day of Humiliation upon Thursday the 19 day of April, 1649* (1649, Wing E2505); *An Act Appointing Thursday the last Day of February, 1649 for A Solemn day of Humiliation, Fasting & Prayer* (London, 1650; Wing E981); *An Act for the setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Friday the twenty sixth of this instant July together with a declaration and narrative, expressing the grounds and reasons thereof* (London, 1650; Wing E1123aA).

¹⁵⁸ John Morrill, ‘Introduction’, in idem. (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (London, 1990), p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ *A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, for a Time of Publique Thanksgiving, Upon the Five and Twentieth of This Instant August, for the Great Victory Lately Vouchsafed to Their Fleet at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E1510). The Nominated Assembly did hold a day of prayer for a blessing on parliament on 11 July 1653, see *CJ 11/7/1653*, and the nation was invited to prayer for this purpose via a distributed declaration. This declaration was not ordered to be printed until 12 July so interestingly, the people were to decide for themselves when to pray for a blessing on Parliament’s proceedings, see *A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England* (London, 1653; Wing E1508). In this sense, the occasion cannot be considered a nationwide prayer day.

herew[i]th the Declarations of Parl[iamen]t: for a day of publiq[u]e
Thanksgiveing, w[hi]ch you are to cause to be published in the severall parishes
w[i]thin yo[ur] jurisdic[i]on that notice may be taken thereof'.¹⁶⁰

VI

The clear hand of Cromwell himself in the authorization of occasional days of prayer pre-dates the Protectorate to June 1653 after the overthrow of the Rump in April and prior to the establishment of the Nominated Assembly. The General and the Council of State ordered a further thanksgiving for victory over the Dutch for 23 June 1653, but it was markedly different in tone from previous orders issued by or through the Council of State. Though still titled 'A Declaration', the thanksgiving was not ordered but rather recommended to the people through the words of Isaiah, arguably Cromwell's favourite book of scripture.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the 'Exhortation' concluded with the words of David taken from psalms 107 and 118: 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever'.¹⁶² A small line at the bottom of the declaration detailed when the General and Council of State were to meet with the Council of Officers including the caveat of 'if the Lord permit'. This more gentle approach in recommending occasional prayers reflected a firm belief that forced prayers were either of no use to God, or actually dishonoured him.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ SP 25/43/1, the reverse of this recognises it as a 'war[ran]t for a day of Thanksgiveing'. See *A Declaration* (Wing E1510), for the parliamentary declaration of the thanksgiving.

¹⁶¹ *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State To incite all the good People of these Nations to thankfullness and holy rejoycing in the Lord, for the late great Victory at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E775aA). The Government 'thought fit to commend this high and Heavenly Exercise and Privilege, to all those, who are faithful in these Lands in the words of the Prophet Isaiah'. There then follows an extract of Isaiah 12.4-12. On 5 March 2008 John Morrill present a very convincing paper in Durham on Oliver Cromwell in which he noted the large number of occasions upon which Cromwell quoted Isaiah. This number far exceeded any other source from which he referenced, John Morrill. "How did Oliver Cromwell think?".

¹⁶² *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State... for the late great Victory at Sea* (Wing E775aA).

¹⁶³ In many ways this is an extension of the belief that set forms of prayer were too restrictive, 'To more radical Protestants... any notion of set forms of public prayer smacked too much of incantation rather than of intercession.' Judith Maltby, 'Suffering and surviving: the civil wars, the Commonwealth and the formation of "Anglicanism"' in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 160. For further discussion of this see chapter one above. If the parroting of a set form was offensive, simply turning up to Church because you were ordered to, rather than because of your devotion to God, was equally abhorrent.

Once Protector, Cromwell continued to use this tone in the orders for occasional prayer days until the autumn of 1654 when the first Protectorate Parliament was called. MPs not only disagreed with Cromwell's method of gentle persuasion, but also objected to him issuing declarations at all, which were to all intents and purposes quasi-royal proclamations.¹⁶⁴ A comparison of some of the orders for occasional prayer days between September 1654 and the fall of the Protectorate demonstrates the tension between Cromwell and his parliaments over the tone, and thereby the theological implications, of ordering state occasional days of prayer. While some groups of MPs, notably Presbyterians, were keen to try to enforce occasional days of prayer, both Protectors and much of the Army sought a degree of religious toleration and strongly opposed forcing observance. These Independents rather sought to invite the people and lead by example. A compromise was occasionally agreed upon to enforce an order to cease labour and trading on the day, but not to force Church attendance. The distinction between the desires of both Protectors for the calling of occasional prayer days remained markedly different from, and in tension with, those in parliament. However, the procedures for ordering prayer days allowed both Protectors to promulgate their preferred style of nationwide occasions.

With the establishment of the Protectorate on 16 December 1653, government largely returned to its traditional state in 1640 with three bases of power: the Protectorate 'crown', the Council of State as a quasi-privy council, and parliament. This resulted in the return to the ordering processes for prayer days used in 1640, either through 'crown' and council, or alternatively via parliamentary petition, the securing of conciliar approval, and endorsement by the 'king'. Thus, while controversial, Cromwell was able to use the first method to call prayer days without parliament via declarations, which acted in the place of royal proclamations. On 20 March 1654, while sitting in Council, Cromwell ordered a fast day in response to prevalent sins and drought.¹⁶⁵ Yet, in keeping

¹⁶⁴ See David L. Smith, 'Oliver Cromwell, the First Protectorate Parliament and Religious Reform', in idem., (ed.), *Cromwell and the Interregnum: the Essential Readings* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 167-181; idem, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate Parliaments' in Patrick Little (ed.), *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 14-31.

¹⁶⁵ The fast day was observed on 24 March 1654 in London, Westminster and surrounding parishes and on 7 April 1654 elsewhere in England and Wales *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, Inviting the People of England and Wales, to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1654; Wing C7077).

with the preference he had shown for suggesting rather than ordering prayer, the Protector's declaration invited the people to observe a general fast. Though Cromwell gave some guidelines for spiritual examination, he was keen 'not to impose them upon any, or to confine any within the compass thereof, [...] leaving every man free to the Grace of God'.¹⁶⁶ The model of ordering nationwide prayer via royal proclamation and consultation with a privy council had returned in all but name.

The national fast day across the three kingdoms in the autumn of 1654 marked the start of a return to the second traditional model used in 1640. Once parliament had passed a declaration for the occasion, they sent a committee 'to attend his Highness the Lord Protector... and to desire his Highness's Concurrence'. The Protector's agreement was reported to parliament by a nobleman, the earl of Salisbury, before being sent to the Council of State for distribution.¹⁶⁷

With the opening of the first protectorate parliament there appears to have been a sense of willing co-operation with the Protector's wishes over occasional prayer days with an incitement and encouragement of the people to observe the day but no threats of enforcement if they did not. However, the tone of the declaration was far more forceful, stopping just short of an actual order. It presumed that the people would observe the day as their duty.¹⁶⁸ With the dismissal of the first parliament, the tone of the declarations becomes markedly gentler with another invitation from Cromwell to all the people of God; the only order is that the ministers read the declaration to their congregations on the day of prayer.¹⁶⁹

Yet in parliament's absence, Cromwell and his council reverted to the Protector's original position and chose to invite 'all who fear the Lord' to a general fast,

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. For a similar example from 'the General and Council of State' see *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State... for the late great Victory at Sea* (Wing E775aA).

¹⁶⁷ Salisbury was also a member of the Council of State, see G.D. Owen, 'Cecil, William, second earl of Salisbury', *ODNB*.

¹⁶⁸ *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector and the Parliament of the Common-Wealth of England, Scotland, & Ireland, for a Day of Solemn Fasting & Humiliation in the Three Nations* (Wing C7068A). Care needs to be taken with this Wing reference owing to some confusion on EEBO with two declarations with different purposes and dates being ascribed Wing C7068A. This reference is to the general fast ordered on 19 September 1654 for the three Nations. This was the only national occasional day of prayer ordered by this parliament.

¹⁶⁹ *A Declaration of His Highness, with the Advice of His Council, Inviting the People of England and Wales to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1655; Thomason E.1064[54]).

rather than make its observance compulsory.¹⁷⁰ In these invitations we see not only Cromwell's commitment to a degree of religious toleration, but a sense that in theological terms only voluntary prayers and humiliation were of value to God.¹⁷¹ Cromwell did not move from this position; his last declaration for an occasional prayer day on 3 July 1658 is for 'all such as fear God, and are wise to observe these things' with no threat of enforcement in England.¹⁷² In this respect, Richard Cromwell's position mirrored that of his father. He did not wish to force, but rather exhort, his people to pray. However, when parliament was sitting, his preference for an invitation was turned into an order for a national occasional day of prayer. Indeed, Richard's lack of influence over his parliament is demonstrated by the fact that JPs were ordered to enforce the observance of the fast day of 18 May 1659.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ *Thursday the Tenth of September, 1657 at the Council at White-Hall* (London, 1657; Wing E2926C). This was ordered on 10 September 1657. Parliament had adjourned on 26 June, and did not to reconvene until 20 January 1658, see *CJ* 26/6/1657.

¹⁷¹ For Cromwell's commitment to a form of religious toleration based on the concept of 'unity of the godly party' see Blair Worden, 'Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate' in W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984), especially p. 210. In his belief that one had to be in the right frame of mind and receptive to the Lord for prayer to be worthwhile, Cromwell shows himself to be similar to the Earl of Manchester despite their many other points of tension. Manchester had delayed his thanksgiving day in April 1644 after a military defeat, because the people would be unable to thank God with joy in their hearts, *A Catalogue of Remarkable Mercies Conferred Upon the Seven Associated Counties, Viz. Cambridge, Essex, Hartford, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincoln. Printed by the Command of the Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Manchester, the Major Generall Thereof, and the Committee Now Residing in Cambridge: And Appointed to Be Published in the Severall Parish-Churches of the Aforenamed Counties, Upon the Seventh of April, Being the Day of Thanksgiving, That Almighty God May Have the Glory Due Unto His Name. Hereunto Is Annexed an Order for the More Solemn Keeping of the Publick Fast* (Cambridge, 1644; Wing C1365A)

¹⁷² *A Declaration of His Highnes the Lord Protector for a Day of Publick Thanksgiving, with an Order of His Highnes Council in Scotland for the Government Thereof, for a Day of Publick Thanksgiving in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1658; Wing C7068). However, the Presbyterian Protectorate Council in Scotland chose to modify the order on 21 July with an addition of their own which adds orders to enforce observance. Other examples among others of Cromwell's tolerant orders are *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector... Solemn Fasting & Humiliation in the Three Nations* (Wing C7068A), ordered on 19/9/1654 and *A Declaration* (Thomason E.1064[54]), ordered 14/6/1655. Yet when Parliament is sitting on 23 September 1656 the order is for 'all persons whatsoever' to abstain from work, though technically they are not required to attend Church, *A Declaration of His Highnes the Lord Protector and the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation in the Three Nations* (London, 1656; Wing C7070).

¹⁷³ Compare the above of Oliver Cromwell's invitations and his Parliament's orders, with Richard Cromwell's protectorate declaration invitations, *By the Protector. A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Publique Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1658; Wing C7181); *A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Solemn Fasting & Humiliation* (London, 1658; Wing C7182). The general fast for 18 May 1659 ordered by Richard with Parliament was clearly an order for all to observe: 'we doe also hereby will and require all Iustices of the Peace, and other Officers to see that the said day be duly observed', see *A Declaration of the Lord Protector and Both Houses of Parliament, for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, to Be Observed in All*

With the opening of the second protectorate parliament, the tone reverted to one of enforcement as once again prayer day ordering shifted from the first model to the second. While technically church attendance was not enforced, the order for ‘all persons whatsoever’ to abstain from work was to be enforced by JPs, who, in effect, enforced observance of the day at least in a practical sense.¹⁷⁴ The intention of the majority in parliament in May 1657 was made clear in their order for a thanksgiving within the London area to which Cromwell consented but was distanced from in the title-page, ‘An Order of Parliament, with the Consent of His Highness the Lord Protector’.¹⁷⁵ Parliament ordered the day in a similar style to parliamentary orders in the mid-1640s and observance was presumed for all.

VII

The return to the ordering processes from before the Civil War begun in the autumn of 1654, increased rapidly in pace in 1660 with the possibility of a return to monarchy. However, there was one final unusual episode of ordering. On 28 February 1660 the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common-Council of London informed the Commons of their own thanksgiving and the House elected to hold their own thanksgiving at St Margaret’s on the same day.¹⁷⁶ This was part of an apology to parliament by the representatives of the City who had previously ‘not fully answered what was expected of them’. The City also explained that there was division among the City over the best form of government following the fall of the Protectorate, but this came with an assurance that they would not get involved unless there was a threat of anarchy: ‘they found some Persons for a Monarchical; some for a Commonwealth; some for No Government at all: The last they did dislike: For the other they would not presume to direct.’¹⁷⁷ Yet with the return of the Lords and the Convention Parliament, the ordering process

Places within the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, Upon the Eighteenth Day of May, 1659 (London, 1659; Wing C7183).

¹⁷⁴ *A Declaration* (Wing C7070), for the three nations.

¹⁷⁵ *An Order of Parliament with the Consent of His Highness the Lord Protector, for a Day of Publike Thanksgiving within the Cities of London and Westminster, the Late Lines of Communication, and Weekly Bills of Mortality, on Wednesday the Third of June Next; for the Great Success God Hath Been Pleased to Give the Navy of This Commonwealth under the Command of General Blake against the Spaniard. Together with a Narrative of the Same Success, as It Was Communicated in a Letter from the Said General* (London, 1657; Wing E1694A).

¹⁷⁶ *CJ 23/2/1660*.

¹⁷⁷ *CJ 23/2/1660*.

reverted to that of 1642 with the Lords and Commons co-operating over the authorization of occasional prayer days and the reissue of set forms of prayer for the occasions.¹⁷⁸

By June 1660, the pre-civil war process was re-established. The Commons presented ‘an humble petition’ to the Lords for their concurrence and aid in seeking a royal proclamation for a solemn thanksgiving for ‘the great Revolutions of Affairs, and the great Mercy in giving His Majesty a happy and safe Arrival’. The Lords agreed, and the earl of Manchester approached the king on behalf of parliament with the humble petition laced with flattery of the new king’s ‘great Wisdom’.¹⁷⁹ This is also the date at which the Lords declared that the forms of prayer formerly used in their House were to be used again.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, regular, set forms of prayer had returned. The king appointed the date of 28 June 1660 by proclamation and ordered a form of prayer to be issued.¹⁸¹ Clearly members of the episcopate composed and distributed the form, though episcopacy was not officially reinstated until 1661. The necessity of royal authority in ordering national occasional days of prayer had been restored.

In conclusion, the desire in parliament to curb the king in 1641 caused attacks on episcopacy and set prayer to become more successful than the vast majority intended. This had the unintended consequence of parliament assuming spiritual authority for the ordering of nationwide prayer. Thus the most significant changes occurred prior to the outbreak of the civil war but after 1640. Close

¹⁷⁸ See *LJ* 25/4/1660, where they Lords order a national fast for a blessing on the meeting of both Houses in order to create a settlement of the Nation. They seek the Commons concurrence with it received by the Lords the following day. At the same time, the Commons, possibly not to be out done by the Lords, appoint a national thanksgiving and ask for the Lords concurrence, which they receive on 26 April 1660, see *LJ* 26/4/1660. The joint agreement is printed as *Thursday, April 26. 1660* (London, 1660; Wing E2243C). A form of prayer was also printed, *A Forme of Thanksgiving for the great Mercy that God hath bestowed upon these three Nations of England, Scotland and Ireland by the Hand of the Lord General Monck and the Two Houses of Parliament, in Restoring the King unto his Right and Government; and in the opening a Doore thereby to Establishment, of the the true Religion, and to the Settlement of these Distracted and Oppressed Nations in Peace and Righteousnesse, by the Proclamation of King Charles the II. May this 8. 1660* (London, 1660; Wing F1572A).

¹⁷⁹ *LJ* 31/5/1660.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *By the King. A Proclamation for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn and Publick Thanksgiving Throughout the Whole Kingdom* (London, 1660; Wing C3426); *A Form of Prayer, with Thanksgiving, to Be Used of All the Kings Majesties Loving Subjects. The 28th of June, 1660. For His Majesties Happy Return to His Kingdoms* (London, 1660; Wing C4170).

examination of the alterations to the ordering process for prayer days proves to be a particularly fruitful approach for studying shifts in authority amongst the parliamentarians given the great regularity of their occasions. Analysis of parliamentarian occasions demonstrates a move away from, and ultimately a return to, the traditional model of ordering which correlates with the attack, destruction and re-establishment of royal authority during this period. Yet as well as reflecting the escalating tensions between Charles and parliament, this methodology allows an investigation of the shifts in authority within parliament itself and the relationship between the two Houses in the 1640s.

Four key points deserve emphasis. First, the significance of royal authority to the traditional ordering procedures of the pre-civil war period cannot be overstated. Whether the inspiration for holding a day of nationwide prayer originated from MPs, privy councillors, or king, royal assent was essential for authorisation. Its importance was due to the legislative power of the crown and the royal supremacy, which drew upon both secular and spiritual authority in order to suspend temporarily the Book of Common Prayer enshrined in statute. In addition to providing authorisation, the crown's unique position enabled effective organisation and distribution of these occasions that straddled both spheres of politics and religion. Inextricably linked to the role of royal authority, and reflecting the dual nature of secular and spiritual authority, was the episcopate. Sitting in the Lords and chosen by the monarch, these were men who embodied the power of the crown, making them clear targets for any attack on royal authority. The end of episcopacy (in practical terms) in the autumn and winter of 1641 had unintended consequences in terms of leaving spiritual and administrative lacunae, but also in damaging the integrity of government authority. A government at war with itself hardly demonstrated unquestionable authority.

Second, in contrast with the prevailing historiography, close examination of the alterations to the ordering process tells us about an unwanted struggle for supreme authority and attempts to fill the vacuum left by the bishops by highlighting flash points of significant changes. It is essential to exercise caution and place these key periods within their immediate political context to avoid

overemphasis with the benefit of hindsight. For example, there was nothing suspicious or usurpatory about the parliamentary ordinance for the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland. Nevertheless, there is significant correlation between alterations to ordering procedures and shifts in political power and authority. Clearly, these alterations reflected unwanted shifts in the structure of authority (while keenly seeking a change personnel), because the escalating tensions between the king and parliament (and between the Houses themselves) were balanced by a determination to continue with the traditional processes for as long as possible. It is remarkable that parliament did not order a prayer day without royal consent until December 1642 and it was not until February 1643 that it ordered an occasion to be observed nationwide. Moreover, Charles did not challenge the usurped monthly fast until October 1643 because it was founded upon his own authority. Altering the ordering procedure damaged the integrity of government authority, highlighting its weaknesses rather than the personnel in key positions. Thus, in one sense there was unity between parliamentarians and royalists during the civil war, a desire to protect English government and remove or curtail the poisonous personnel – whether king and counsellors, or parliamentary rebels.

Third, authority was tied to the continuation of the traditional ordering procedures for prayer days (as far as practically possible). Both sides sought to adapt the established model of ordering prayer days once civil war broke out rather than innovate an entirely new procedure. Naturally, the royalist model, complete with royal authority, episcopal influence and forms of prayer, was able to do this most successfully. However, parliament continued to use ordinances to authorise most occasions as a means of ‘borrowing’ royal power until the king could be trusted, creating a strong sense of continuation with the traditional processes. Parliament quickly learned that tension between the Houses only damaged parliamentary authority and the vast majority of parliamentary occasions during the civil war were assented to by both. In this sense, the ordering processes of prayer days were utilised by both sides to construct an official narrative of authority, part of which was disseminated to the public in the form of printed orders and materials required for prayer day services (such as forms, narrative of victory and confessions). In following traditional ordering

procedures as much as possible, both sides sought to appeal to the idea that continuation of the established process demonstrated stability, which in turn was the mark of legitimate authority.

Alterations to the ordering processes of prayer days have far wider implications and indicate the changing nature of authority in this period. Both the parliamentary and royalist leaderships sought to portray their side as a functioning government that was as close as possible to the established model of English government (though naturally they interpreted this differently). Crucially, this was linked to the continuation of the law and the established use of legislative authority. In this way, the Commons' order of 8 September 1641 was a serious error. This was the point when the Commons broke the cover of convention and damaged parliamentary authority severely. In seeking to enforce an order without the assent of the crown or the Lords, 'the Commons, for the first time, were making it possible to turn the rule of law into an effective Royalist slogan'.¹⁸² Over time, parliamentary authority became more closely associated with military strength than the law. From the perspective of ordering nationwide special worship, initially this was in form of military leaders authorising local occasions and suggesting nationwide prayer days to parliament. Yet following the self-denying ordinance it was clear that the power to order prayer, along with control of the army, lay in the Commons.

Only in the wake of the Regicide was it truly possible to address this without risking damaging the parliamentarian war effort (though the political-Presbyterians had made some headway in 1647), and it is from this point that the ordering process began to return to its pre-civil war model. While on the brink and in the early months of the war between king and parliament both sides sought to attack the others' authority in an attempt to bolster their own (and in parliament's case this continued between the Houses). This quickly changed to an attempt to seize the conceptual territory of 'traditional government' and the stability of established procedures. However, ultimately traditional government rested on royal authority, which (despite Cromwell's valiant attempt) required

¹⁸² Russell, *Fall*, p. 371.

the power of the crown, the title of king and a willingness to order a nation to prayer.

Chapter Three: Content

Once the decision was made to order an occasional prayer day, official items such as forms of prayer were produced to unify prayer across the nation. Examination of orders, forms, confessions and narratives used on prayer days reveals the structure and content of church services on these occasions. When studied across this period as a whole, shifts in the religious remit of state authorities and nuances in theological emphasis become clear. Furthermore, these items outlined in greater detail the purpose of the occasion and thus are a key means of identifying the key messages authorities sought to disseminate to the people on these special days of prayer. In this way, they allow us to consider to what extent these occasions may be considered nationwide propaganda.

The limited historiography pertaining to these occasions does not directly consider the content and structure of the forms of prayer for these occasions. Generally, scholars who do discuss the forms of prayer for these occasions are concerned with developments of the Book of Common Prayer. However, these works such as that by Frank Streatfeild, focus only on ‘annexed’ forms that ‘made their appearance within the covers of the Prayer Book’.¹ A noteworthy exemption to this trend is an anonymous review of Edward Cardwell’s *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church in the Church of England Quarterly Review*. Though very dated and keen to emphasise how ‘the mantle of the Reformers descended in their successors in the Church’ and influenced the Church of England in their present day (1839), the reviewers did discuss key changes in the forms of occasional prayer days.² While being one of only a very

¹ Frank Streatfeild, *The State Prayers and other variations in the Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1950), p. 42. The most well known annexed form is the commemoration for the fire of London.

² For example, this work noted the change, at the turn of the seventeenth century, from the monarch’s printer printing additional prayers to be inserted into regular Book of Common Prayer service as had been customary under Elizabeth to producing ‘the whole morning and evening service... the particular prayers being introduced at proper places; and in some instances, though not frequently, they were substituted for some of the prayers in the daily services.’ Through comparing forms from the reigns of James I, Charles I, Charles II and William and Mary, the conclusion was made ‘that it was not often that any part of the service was excluded; on the contrary, the new prayers were read in addition to the usual ones’, Anon, ‘Article VIII: Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England, being a Collection of Injunctions, Declarations, Orders, Articles of Inquiry, &c., from the year 1546 to the year 1716, with Notes,

small number of works to discuss the content of occasional prayer day forms in any detail, this work's lack of detail of what occurred when the parliamentarians abandoned forms in 1641 is a significant lacunae.

Clearly, further consideration of the official content and structure of occasional prayer day services is needed. Naturally, parliamentary fast or thanksgiving day sermons are excluded from this remit as, while they gained official endorsement in receiving permission to be printed, they were not ordered to be used across the nation on the day in question. Printed sermons were products of occasional prayer days, rather than requisite raw materials.³ Further analysis of the official material required to be used by all ministers on these occasions will enable a discussion as to whether these prayer days constituted state propaganda. State propaganda may be defined as polemical work produced by state authorities, the existence of which would best serve their own interests.⁴

Close analysis of prayer day materials will enable reflection upon how the content and structure of prayer days changed between 1640 and 1660. How did royalist forms adapt to the context of the civil war and seek to increase support for the king? How did parliamentary occasions change in the absence of bishops? What can official alterations to church services tell us about the nature of nationwide occasional days of prayer in this period? By comparing forms of prayer and their parliamentary equivalents, this chapter considers how and why prayer day services changed in this period. Through highlighting shifts in theological emphasis and the spiritual remit of state authorities, this chapter also questions to what extent these occasions may be considered propaganda.

historical and explanatory. By Edward Cardwell', *The Church of England Quarterly Review*, 8 (1840), pp. 144-5.

³ On the impact of sermons in the early modern period see Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁴ This is adapted from Jason Peacey's definition of propaganda more generally: 'Propaganda in its strictest sense... means not simply books produced with the intention of advocating, promulgating and propagating a political message to a public audience. This is what might be called political *polemic*. Rather, *propaganda* is taken to mean polemical work which appeared with the connivance of those political figures whose interests were best served by the existence of such books, tracts and pamphlets.' Jason Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers: propaganda during the English civil wars and interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 2.

I

Just as the national fast for plague on 8 July 1640 had been characteristic of the traditional ordering process, so too it exemplified tradition in the form of prayer produced for the occasion.⁵ As with the proclamation, the structure and content of the majority of the form followed a traditional model. Indeed, there is significant similarity between the forms used in 1640 and their Elizabethan predecessors.⁶ Evidence is elusive as to the precise orders to compose the form. However, since Laud was present at the privy council meeting on 31 May, it is likely that he was given the task of organising the composition. Internal evidence of additions made when compared to previous forms suggests that he did so himself.⁷

The form was divided into four key sections: the preface, the order for morning service, the order for evening service and the homily.⁸ The form followed the orders for service given in the Book of Common Prayer with five key alterations, all of which occurred in the morning services. The preface outlined to the minister receiving the form the purpose of nationwide fast days and potentially could have been used by ministers to encourage attendance when he gave his congregation notice of the occasion or as the foundation for his sermon.

Despite the alterations, the order for the prayer day morning service generally followed the structure of morning service in the Book of Common Prayer. The opening sentence was either Jeremiah 10.24 or Joel 2.13, taken from the

⁵ *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Eighth of July: On Which Day a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Averting of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16557)

⁶ For example, compare *A Fourme to Be Used in Common Prayer Twyse a Weke, and Also an Order of Publique Fast, to Be Used Euery Wednesday in the Weeke, Durying This Tyme of Mortalitie, and Other Afflictions, Wherwith the Realme at This Present Is Visited* (London, 1563; STC 16506.3) and *A Forme* (STC 16557).

⁷ For Laud's presence at the privy council meeting on 31 May 1640 see PC 2/52/519. Internal evidence of Laud's authorship of the form will be demonstrated below. Laud's authorship of the form is also suggested in Anon, 'Article VIII', pp. 149-150.

⁸ The use of an evening service had been an innovation in 1626, see Natalie Mears, 'Special nationwide worship and the Book of Common Prayer in England, Wales and Ireland, 1533-1642' in Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Ashgate, forthcoming 2013), p. 227.

selection of opening sentences for a standard morning service. Nevertheless, this choice allowed the minister to set the tone for the occasion in highlighting either God's furious or merciful qualities.⁹ This element of ministerial choice between scriptural passages that drew attention to the anger or mercy of God continued through both morning services on the fast day via selected passages for opening services, lessons within them, and particularly the choice of either utilising the homily or producing a sermon. The effect was to create an occasion that was both uniform across the nation and yet could be flexible, allowing the minister to mould it to his own liking or the particular needs of his congregation as well as providing variety to avoid 'mechanical' prayer.

The opening to morning service was followed by the Book of Common Prayer address, general confession from a kneeling congregation, announcement of absolution, the Lord's prayer and the standard *preces* 'O Lord open our lips' with the congregation responding with their well known phrases. Thus far, this service was indistinguishable from regular morning prayer. The first significant departure occurred after this *preces*. Rather than the *venite exultemus*, a composite psalm was used. This heralded the positive message that if the people repent and turn to God 'the Lord will turn from his heavy wrath, and will pardon us, and we shall not perish'.¹⁰ As their fathers had been saved through faith, so would they.¹¹ The appointed psalms of 6, 32, 38, 39 and 51 all emphasised the importance of confession and petitionary prayer to ensure divine mercy release from just affliction for all who are true of heart. Psalm 39 was particularly topical: 'take thy plague away from mee'.¹²

The theme of relief from plague through fasting was continued in the first lesson. This was selected from 1 Kings 8, 2 Samuel 24, Joel 2 or Jonah 3 and was

⁹ While both passages provided a strong opening, the Jeremiah passage highlighted the danger of God's fury and would appeal to those of more godly persuasions, 'Correct us, O Lord, and yet in thy judgement, not in thy fury, lest we should be consumed, and brought to nothing'. On the other hand, the excerpt from Joel emphasised the merciful qualities of the divine, 'Rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, because he is gentle and merciful, he is patient, and of much mercy, and such a one as is sorry for your afflictions', *A Forme* (STC 16557), sig. A4r.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r

¹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v

¹² *Ibid.*, sig. C2r

followed by the *te deum laudamus*. The Old Testament lessons provided biblical examples of the potential of true fasting.¹³ The second lesson was Matthew 6, Matthew 8, Matthew 9 or Luke 13. Matthew 6 focused more on the juxtaposition between true and false fasting. False fasters ‘disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting’, true fasting ‘may be seen not by others but by your Father’.¹⁴ This theme is also taken up in Matthew 9.14-17 contrasting Jesus’ disciples with those of John and the Pharisees, and Jesus predicting that ‘days will come’ when Jesus’ followers will fast.¹⁵ All the selected lessons highlighted the need truly to repent and turn to God, outward action would not be sufficient.¹⁶ The *benedictus*, apostles’ creed, salutation and response, the Lord’s prayer, the suffrages and responses (including ‘O Lord save the king’) followed, returning the congregation to the standard Book of Common Prayer morning service.¹⁷

The second key alteration in the service was the collect. The first collect was composed especially for the occasion, replacing the prescribed daily collect. Recognising ‘that thy judgements are just’, its petitionary prayers called upon God’s promises of mercy for his repentant people, ‘O Lord forget nor thou to be gracious, and shut not up thy loving kindnesse in displeasure ... be mercifull unto thy servants’.¹⁸ The petition developed into a specific request: ‘take thy plague, and all other judgements from us, that we be not consumed by the means of thy

¹³ Solomon’s prayer of dedication (when the ark of the covenant was carried into the sanctuary of the Temple) foretold periods of plague or sickness, yet petitioned for divine intervention: ‘whatever plea there is from any individual or from all your people Israel, all knowing the afflictions of their own hearts ... then hear in heaven your dwelling place, forgive, act, and render to all whose hearts you know’ (1 Kings 8.38-39). 2 Samuel 24 describes the plague set on Israel following David’s sin of the census. All appeared lost with 70,000 dead but ‘the Lord relented’ saying to the angel of destruction “it is enough” (2 Samuel 24. 15-16). David is sent to buy a threshing floor ‘in order to build an altar to the Lord, so that the plague may be averted from the people’ (2 Samuel 24.21). Joel 2 describes the imminent and terrible ‘day of the Lord’ when his ‘great and powerful army’ will destroy everything in its wake. ‘Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing’ (Joel 2.12-13). It cannot be known ‘whether he will not turn and relent’, but following a fast and a solemn assembly, Joel saw the Lord have ‘pity on his people’ and ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ (Joel 2.14, 18, 32). Jonah 3 will be discussed below.

¹⁴ Matthew 6.16, 18.

¹⁵ To an early modern audience parallels would also be drawn between Catholics and false fasting.

¹⁶ As with Matthew 8 and 9, Luke 13 describes Jesus’ healing miracles through the parables of the fig tree, mustard seed, yeast and narrow door, all of which emphasis the importance of faith (Luke 13.10-35). However, the need to repent is emphasised in the opening of Luke 13, which calls all to confess and repent: ‘unless you repent, you will all perish’ (Luke 13.5).

¹⁷ *A Forme* (STC 16557), sig. D4v

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sigs. E1r-v

heavy hand upon our sins' and a desire to 'be thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, give thee thanks for ever'.¹⁹

The second and third collects for peace and grace and the litany were taken from the Book of Common Prayer. Therefore, the third alteration to morning service likely to be noticed by the congregation as denoting a special prayer day was an insertion of three prayers and was made into the litany before its final two prayers.²⁰ This was standard on fast and thanksgiving days.²¹ The first additional prayer was adapted from the collect for the day used in the *Form of prayer necessary to be used in these dangerous times of war and pestilence* (1626) attributed to Laud.²² Yet, additional material was added to it seeking to bring unity in religion for the sake of church and state:

Our charity to our neighbour is cold, and our disobedience aboundeth. Religion is with many of us, as in too many places besides, made but a pretence for other ends then thy service; and there hath been little or no care among us to keep Truth, and Peace together, for the preserving of both Church, and State.²³

The second additional prayer sought Christ's intercession despite the worthiness of punishment, while the third dwelt particularly on sins committed 'since our last solemn humiliation' and sought divine assistance to ensure 'that we may never so presume of thy mercy' as well as leading the people to repentance and amendment of their sinful lives. In this way, these additional prayers inserted into the litany highlighted the special nature of the occasion, marking it as spiritually significant. The first morning service then returned to the standard liturgy including prayers for the king, queen, Prince Charles and the royal progeny as well as including the prayer for the clergy and people before the prayer of Chrysostom and the reading of 2 Corinthians 13.

¹⁹ Ibid., sig. E1v

²⁰ However, the congregation would have been familiar with the insertion of additional prayer at this point in a special prayer day service as this structure had been in use from the 1560s. See Alasdair Raffe, Natalie Mears, Stephen Taylor and Philip Williamson, Philip with Lucy Bates (eds.), *National Prayers. Special Worship since the Reformation: vol. 1: Fasts, Thanksgivings and Special Prayers in the British Isles 1530s-1870* (forthcoming, 2013).

²¹ See WKC, BCP, pp. 55-56. Standard too was the composition of the first collect.

²² Anon, 'Article VIII: Documentary Annals', p. 150.

²³ *A Forme* (STC 16557), sig. F2r.

The latter morning service (used if communion was to be held) also closely followed the Book of Common Prayer, modelling itself on the communion service. It opened with ‘the priest standing at the North side of the Lords Table’ reciting the Lord’s prayer.²⁴ This alignment of the fast day service with the communion service further emphasised the need for unity among the congregation and their common purpose in divine petitioning. Through its collects, petitionary prayer, epistles and gospel readings, the second service balanced the need for communal solidarity with individualistic, inward, spiritual reflection.²⁵

After the Nicene Creed, the minister could give his own sermon or read the ‘Homily of Repentance and of true Reconciliation unto God’ enclosed with the form. In either case, this would have been the part of the service that most effectively marked its purpose and status as special, extraordinary worship. The homily highlighted the necessity of repentance, inwardly as well as outwardly, and returning to God, having been led away by sin.²⁶ Being true of heart in confession was necessary to avoid hypocrisy and the role of God’s grace was pivotal.²⁷ The homily again addressed the dangerous question of whether observing a fast day could ‘cure’ the plague in and of itself. The Church was keen to emphasise that this was not the case and that only God’s grace could ensure the removal of affliction. The sermon or homily was followed by a set offertory of Matthew 5 and further prayers from the Book of Common Prayer communion service ‘for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here on earth’ (though almsgiving remained optional as it did in communion services).²⁸

²⁴ Ibid., sig. F4r.

²⁵ Following the collect for the king, the collect of the day emphasised God patience, kindness and mercy: ‘God, which hatest nothing that thou hast made, and doest forgive the sins of all them that be penitent’ (*A Forme* (STC 16557), sig. G2r). It also petitioned for divine order in governance and ‘all godly quietness’ in the Church (sig. G2r). The chosen epistle was Joel 2.12, which further highlighted the need to turn to God with emphasis that his forgiveness was certain: ‘then (no doubt) he also shall turn and forgive’ (sig. G2r). This positive tone continued in the chosen gospel reading, Matthew 6.16, ‘When ye fast, be not sad’, which also served to highlight the importance of inward spiritual fasting which ‘appear not unto men... but unto thy father ... which seeth in secret [and] shall reward thee openly’ (sig. G2v).

²⁶ *A Forme* (STC 16557), sigs. I3v-L4r

²⁷ The homily warned ‘so must we beware, and take heed, that we doe in no wise think in our hearts, imagine, or beleeve that we are able to repent aright, or turn aright, or to turn effectually unto the Lord by our own might and strength. For this must be verified in all men, Without me ye can doe nothing.’ *A Forme* (STC 16557), sig. L3v

²⁸ Ibid., sig. G3v

The sermon or homily was followed by additional prayers in the form before communion itself, a fifth alteration. These provided further confessions imploring God to ‘spare us ... thy people, whom thou hast redeemed’ and who ‘meekly acknowledge our vileness and truly repent us of our faults.’²⁹ The service then returned to the conventional prayers of the prayer book’s communion service with one final additional prayer to God ‘which art alwayes more ready to hear then we to pray, and are wont to give more then either we desire, or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy ... and giving unto us that, which our prayer dare not presume to ask’.³⁰ The great and terrible mystery of God prevented openly asking for the removal of the plague, justly deserved, even when those petitionary prayers were accompanied by communal fasting. Finally, the people took communion before the traditional blessing and departure.

The evening service followed the Book of Common Prayer even more closely and the overall effect of the form was one of comfort and encouragement (though fiery preachers could still counter this via their sermons).³¹ The role of king,

²⁹ Ibid., sigs. G4r-v

³⁰ Ibid., sig. H1r

³¹ Though there were no rubric demands that the minister and people kneel for the Lord’s prayer after the absolution as were given in the morning service and the Book of Common Prayer. The minister commenced by reading both the Jeremiah and Joel opening sentences suggested in the morning service. The appointed psalms were 90, 91, 102, 130 and 143. Psalm 91 reminded ‘hee shall deliver thee from the snare of the Hunter, and from the noysome pestilence’, Psalm 130 to ‘trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy’ (*A Forme* (STC 16557), sigs. C4r, D1v). The Old Testament reading was to be ‘one of the Chapters appointed, and unread at Morning Prayer’, thus a minister was required to use two out of four appointed texts (sig. H3v). There was then the option of the magnificat or composite psalm used in the first morning service ‘O come let us humble ourselves’ (sig. H3v). The second lesson was to be the first fifteen verses of Romans 6 or 1 Corinthians 10, or 2 Corinthians 9 or 1 Thessalonians 4. These were highly popular texts for fast days and had been since the reign of Elizabeth. See Thomas Cornell Doumaux, ‘Fast days and faction: the struggle for reformation, order, and unity in England, 1558-c.1640’, PhD thesis, Vanderbilt University (2008), especially chapters 2 and 3. The first three texts emphasised avoiding sin and the importance of inward belief - doing ‘everything for the glory of God’ giving ‘as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion’, not outward action (1 Corinthians 10.31, 2 Corinthians 9.7). However, 1 Thessalonians 4 highlighted that inward faith would naturally result in outward behaviour that followed God’s will, ‘that each of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honour, not with lustful passion’ (1 Thessalonians 4.4-5). The text ended with positive assurance, ‘God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation’ (1 Thessalonians 4.9).

The second lesson was followed with Psalm 67, ‘God be mercifull unto us’, which was one of the options in the prayer book’s standard evening service. As with the standard evening service, this was followed by the Apostles Creed and the same prayers and responses made before the litany in the first morning service. The first collect petitioned ‘turn thou us, O good Lord ... be

church and people were emphasised as ordered and divinely blessed. In this way, the form can be seen as a means of endorsing the status quo of government hierarchy, yet prayers such as that for the king were steeped in tradition.

While clearly having a distinct purpose (of persuading the people to fast and turn to God), reiterating conventional government structure via prayer remained a minor part of the service. If we are to label this form 'propaganda', it was certainly weak and not innovative. Prayers for the monarch had been established for over a century. Even so, texts such as Jonah 3 provided a subtle message of reinforcement of Charles' pivotal role as a spiritual as well as secular ruler. Jonah 3 is perhaps the most famous account of a public fast and since it was proclaimed by the king, it provided an ideal model for the fast for plague in 1640. Following Jonah's prophecy of the overthrow of Nineveh in forty days, 'the people of Ninevah ... proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth' (Jonah 3.5). This included the king, who then decreed that no human or animal 'shall feed, nor shall they drink' (Jonah 3.7). All were to put on sackcloth and pray, turning from their evil ways in the hope that God might relent (Jonah 3.8-9). When God witnessed 'that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not' (Jonah 3.10). Thus, the King of Ninevah's proclamation had guided his people in turning from their evil ways and this caused God to change his mind. In selecting this text for the fast day, not only was the status quo of government hierarchy reinforced, but Charles' unique position in being both secular king and supreme governor of the Church.³²

The period from the winter of 1640 to the end of 1642 marks a period of minor adaptation and then dramatic parliamentarian reaction to the standard form considered above. At this point, it is possible to discern propagandistic

favourable to thy people, which turn to thee in weeping, fasting and praying, for thou art a mercifull God, full of compassion... Thou sparest when we deserve punishment'.³¹ One further additional prayer was made, 'We humbly beseech thee', taken from the liturgy to precede the prayers for the king, royal family, clergy and people as it had done in the morning service. The standard third collect for aid against all perils was then used in a later position than was standard and before a closing of the fast day services with 2 Corinthians 13.

³² This theme will be developed further in the conclusion. The quotation of Jonah 3.10 is from the King James version.

alterations to the traditional form outlined above. The general fast for plague on 17 November 1640 was identical to the traditional model aside from the inclusion of a prayer for parliament.³³ Acknowledging parliament's role in the advising process for the fast day, an insertion was made into the form after the title-page: 'A Prayer, For the High Court of Parliament, to be read in such place of these Prayers after the Letany, as the Minister shall think fit'.³⁴ The prayer was very similar to that for the king, asking for wisdom, God's grace and favour. However, while parliament was stated as 'under our most Religious and Gracious King', the sentiment was one of government by the king-in-parliament. Only the two working in conjunction are portrayed as able, with God's favour, to ensure 'the happinesse and blessing of this Commonwealth'.³⁵

Perhaps the phrasing 'as the Minister shall think fit' could have benefited Charles, as ministers could simply ignore it claiming that they did not 'think fit' to read it anywhere. However, the opposite effect appears more likely. For, if used, the place of the prayer in the service was not directly stated beyond 'after the Letany'.³⁶ Therefore, in theory, ministers could read the prayer for parliament before the prayer for the king, demonstrating their own preference for parliamentary power over the monarchy. While no direct evidence of this is extant, there is evidence of the fast being used by ministers to subvert royal authority and so it is a reasonable assumption that this may have occurred in some areas.³⁷

It is unlikely at this point that parliamentary members were attempting to encourage ministers to mock royal authority openly. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a prayer for parliament within a pre-established set form was a noticeable

³³ Compare *A Forme* (STC 16557) and *A Forme of Common Prayer: To Be Used Upon the 17th of November, and the 8th of December: On Which Dayes a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Removing of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God, from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16559).

³⁴ From sig. A3, the form of prayer issued for the November fast, *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640, was identical to that for the previous fast for plague in July, *A Forme* (STC 16557), with the title page only differing in the occasion and printing dates. However, sigs. A2 and A2v of STC 16559 include 'A prayer for the High Court of Parliament, to be read in such places of these Prayers after the Letany, as the Minister shall think fit'.

³⁵ *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640, sig. A2v

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A2

³⁷ This will be discussed further in chapter five.

innovation to parish congregations.³⁸ Furthermore, clearly the prayer was designed to increase public perception of parliamentary power and influence.³⁹

Where parliament was capable of encouraging public scrutiny, if not mockery, of Charles was the choice of date, 17 November. This date for the fast to be observed in London and its suburbs was also the anniversary of the accession of Elizabeth I, a festival that had continued to be regularly celebrated by the English long after her death. The suggestion of this date by the Lords may have encouraged the public to make a comparison between Queen Elizabeth who was perceived to have ruled over a golden age for England and Charles I, who currently presided over a kingdom sorely afflicted by plague. This was the view of James Larkin and Paul Hughes who noted that the date was ‘no compliment to the King’.⁴⁰

As stated in chapter two, the late summer of 1641 marked the start of dramatic alterations to prayer days with the events surrounding the national thanksgiving for the treaty with Scotland held on 7 September 1641. Bishop Williams’ failed attempt to cause a form to be used in his diocese of Lincoln (as well as in the Abbey of Westminster, where he was Dean) may have prompted the use of old forms nationwide. Yet, Williams’ failure was to have far wider-reaching consequences. Most significantly, those who were to become parliamentarians abandoned forms for special days of prayer for almost two decades. Thus, the emphasis within prayer day forms in November 1640, on governance by the king

³⁸ While mention of parliament had been made in prayers from the Elizabethan period, there had not been a separate prayer for parliament. For its introduction, see Richard Mant (ed.), *The Book of Common Prayer: And Administration of the Sacrament and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (Oxford, 1825), pp. 83-4. For mention of parliament within occasional prayer day services under Elizabeth see Mears, ‘Special nationwide worship’.

³⁹ Unfortunately, it has not been possible to establish what role, if any, parliament played in the composition of the prayer.

⁴⁰ L&H, vol. II, p. 735 footnote 2. However, research has shown that the use of Elizabeth was quite varied in meaning and was used by Charles himself on occasion. See Anne Barton, ‘Harking back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline nostalgia’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 48 (1981); Curtis Perry, ‘The citizen politics of nostalgia: Queen Elizabeth in early Jacobean London’, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993); John Watkins, ‘“Old Bess in the Ruff”: remembering Elizabeth I, 1625-1660’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 30 (2000) and idem., *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: literature, history, sovereignty* (Cambridge, 2002). Therefore, it is possible that the Lords intended to draw a parallel between the golden reigns of Elizabeth and Charles. I am grateful to Natalie Mears for drawing my attention to this point and the above references.

in parliament and seeking an increase in public support for parliament, by September 1641 had turned to direct attacks on symbols of royal authority, the episcopacy. Structured, unified prayer day services were an unintended victim of this struggle.

Despite Williams' failure to issue the form successfully, it is worthy of discussion for it demonstrates the message he wished to disseminate to an agitated parliament and public. While the insertion of the prayer for parliament in 1640 had bolstered public perception of parliament, Williams now sought to strengthen his own. Undoubtedly, introducing a form at this point was a political statement, but since bishops had traditionally composed forms (there were even precedents of them doing so on their own authority for their own dioceses) Williams had ample 'cover' for his action. Indeed it was so effective that in the nineteenth century he was portrayed as a victim of parliamentary greed, a misguided but well-intentioned man unaware of the parliamentary factional struggle going on around him.⁴¹

This form was very slim compared to those issued in 1640.⁴² Rather than re-printing the Book of Common Prayer service and litany with the special alterations and additions inserted for the benefit of the clergy, those following Williams' form would have needed the Book of Common Prayer and the form open side by side. There was clearly a concerted effort to save paper and print quickly; even the title-page contains the instructions for the psalms, lessons and the start of the additional prayer to be used in the collects.⁴³

There is far less flexibility within the form: the psalms (95, 96, 122, 126, 133 and 136) and lessons (Jeremiah 31 and Matthew 24) are prescribed. The selection of

⁴¹ Archdeacon Deison (ed.), 'The Crown, the Ordinary, and the Act of Uniformity: II', *Pro Ecclesia Dei: Church and State Review*, 2 (1863), p.173.

⁴² Compare *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640, sigs. A1-L4 to *A Form of Thanksgiving, to Be Used the Seventh of September Thorowout the Diocese of Lincoln, and in the Jurisdiction of Westminster* (London, 1641, Wing C4181A), sigs. A1-A4.

⁴³ *A Form of Thanksgiving...Lincoln*, (Wing C4181A), sig. A1. This style of printing only the parts of the services required to be 'inserted' into Book of Common Prayer services had been common under Elizabeth, see Mears, 'Special nationwide worship'. Here it appears to be indicative of the speed required to produce the form and perhaps also the cost, as one presumes Williams had to fund it himself.

psalms was justified as ‘being all short psalms’, implying that the intention was to keep services short due to continuing fears of plague.⁴⁴ However, these psalms may also be seen as a politically motivated choice by Williams. While psalms 95 and 96 are psalms of thanksgiving, they do not have the same tone of joy as, for example, psalm 92 nor are they as short as other psalms, such as 99 and 100 or the two verses of psalm 117. Rather psalm 95 is ‘a call to worship and obedience’ and 96 offers ‘praise to God who comes in judgement’, not the thanksgivings for peace one might expect.⁴⁵ Psalms 122, 126 and 133 are short psalms assuring God’s protection, the joy of being God’s chosen nation and the blessing of unity and far more in keeping with the occasion. The final psalm of thanksgiving had the repeated refrain ‘for his steadfast love endures forever’ and outlined God’s aid to his chosen nation throughout Israelite history.

The first lesson described joyful return from exile and the establishment of a new covenant with the Israelites where the law is written on their hearts for God had forgiven their iniquity remembered ‘their sin no more’. Williams was keen to highlight the necessity of order and obedience. First emphasised in the service with psalm 95, the theme was strongly underlined in the first lesson for ‘if this fixed order were ever to cease from my presence, says the Lord, then also the offspring of Israel would cease to be a nation before me forever.’⁴⁶ While the original context for this phrase referred to the fixed order of day and night, in the context of a weak king, who had just had to wage war one of his own kingdoms, it sought to bolster the divinely appointed order of the body politic with the king firmly at its head. The importance of remaining loyal and obedient, even during times of trouble, was reinforced in the second lesson, Matthew 24, for ‘one who endures to the end will be saved’.⁴⁷ After warning of following false prophets who ‘appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect’, the lesson culminated in the parable of the talents.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Fear of plague was the justification used by the Commons for moving their thanksgiving service to Lincoln’s Inn (and out of Williams’ jurisdiction). See chapter two.

⁴⁵ Section headings of Psalms 95 and 96 as provided in NRSV.

⁴⁶ Jeremiah 31.36

⁴⁷ Matthew 24.13

⁴⁸ Matthew 24.24

Here, the allegorical nature of the parable could equally be utilised to consider the role of parliament. Parliament could be blessed, ‘the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time’.⁴⁹ This slave is put ‘in charge of all his [master’s] possessions.’⁵⁰ When king and parliament worked together, both benefited. However, the wicked slave who, when his master is away, abuses his authority, as Williams believed parliament (especially the Commons) had done while Charles was in Scotland, will one day be caught when his master returns unexpectedly. Then, the master will cut the slave ‘in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’.⁵¹ The message Williams was sending was clear: if parliament continued to abuse its power, the king would return to the ‘thorough’ policy of government used in the personal rule and they would lose all power and credibility.

The additional prayer added to the collects was not short, but it continued Williams’ theme. In the visitation made during the parliamentary adjournment, Williams had sought to renew the episcopacy’s position. It is likely (but currently unverifiable) that he made a speech calling those under his jurisdiction to remember the Church’s strength in the reign of Elizabeth, ‘Can the church stand better against the church of Rome than it has done under the bishops, liturgy, and canons? Therefore, do not abandon the good old way for another, of which you do not know how much evil may be in it.’⁵² The sentiments of that speech were echoed in the form. After relating ‘our great transgressions’, ‘hardnesse of heart’ and ‘charity cold’, it typically emphasised that their ‘sins did well deserve’ the withdrawing of God’s favour, ‘that our Plentie should be turned into Want and Famine, our Health into Sickneses, Plagues, and Pestilences, and our long Peace

⁴⁹ Matthew 24.46

⁵⁰ Matthew 24.47

⁵¹ Matthew 24.51

⁵² John Bayley Sommers Carwithen, *The History of the Church of England, Part the First. To the Restoration of the Church and Monarchy in 1668* (London, 1829), vol. 2, p. 369. This work places this speech in direct quotes but does not have a supporting footnote. I have not found another source to collaborate this speech by Williams. However, other quotations from key sources (such as speeches made in the Commons can be collaborated) that frame this section of the work can be verified.

(the Crown of all these blessings, and the Envie of all the Nations round about us) into the worst and most miserable of all Wars, a Civil War.⁵³

The ‘small measure and degree of Reformation’ already undertaken was rewarded ‘with great abundance of temporall blessings’ and which now had ‘a shew rather than any showre of Disaeases, which serve only to keep us awake’. For Williams, the great work of God in bringing union to Scotland and England in this peace was accomplished by the Holy Spirit’s wisdom and counsel and providence in the ‘Hearts of our Gracious King, and the Peers and Commons now assembled in Parliament’. With the ‘wise and timely disposing of a few drops’, God sought to ‘prevent the unnaturall spilling of whole Chanel and Rivers of Christian blood’ by calling his people to turn.⁵⁴ In calling for the preservation of Charles and his family but the increase ‘more and more [of] the Spirit of Wisdom, and Understanding upon the Lords and Commons’, Williams highlighted where he thought wisdom was lacking.⁵⁵ The unity of the nation ‘under one Crown and Scepter’ was the only way to ‘begin the Church Triumphant in this Church Militant’; and ensure God’s continued favour.⁵⁶

In seeking to bolster the position of Charles and the episcopacy, Williams was undoubtedly composing a form with a central theme that best served his own interests. For, he wished to be a central focal point for a renewed positive relationship between king and parliament, a position that should result in renewed favour with Charles and promotion to the dizzying heights that Laud enjoyed. In this sense, Williams had produced a proto-royalist propaganda to counter that of the prayer for parliament used on the previous nationwide prayer day.

However, Williams’ failure to ensure that the form was used and made an impact resulted in the end of forms in any nationwide prayer day for two years. When the fast for the Irish rebellion was proposed in the winter of 1641/2 neither the few bishops who escaped imprisonment following the December petition nor the

⁵³ *A Form of Thanksgiving...Lincoln*, (Wing C4181A), sigs. A1v-A2r.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, sigs. A2r-A3r.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A3v.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, sigs. A3v-A4r.

king attempted to issue a form of prayer. The matter was not raised when the fast for the Irish rebellion became a monthly occurrence. For parliament, the use of forms, tainted by their episcopal composition, had ended (though similar official prayer day materials were to emerge later). For Charles' supporters issuing new forms of prayer was not a priority in a period marked by fears for the life of the queen and the first few months of civil war. After all, ministers could simply reuse old forms given the strength of the traditional model and the similarity between previous forms.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Williams' attempt to issue the form had highlighted the debate between set and ex tempore prayer (as discussed in chapter one). This debate was not new, but it was thrown into sharp relief as members of the Commons found themselves forced into making a decision within a very tight timeframe. Some more moderate individuals may have felt that they were rejecting only Williams' form, and not set prayer in general, but the result was significant. A precedent had been set of a nationwide thanksgiving, ordered on royal authority (albeit 'borrowed'), but without an accompanying set prayer or form. Furthermore, not only had the government failed to provide a set prayer or form for the occasion, but part of it, parliament, had rejected one. Thus, the political situation applied pressure to a long-standing theological debate, and the legitimacy of set prayer suffered along with the authority of the bishops.

II

While the autumn and winter of 1641 had resulted in dramatic changes in terms of abandonment of forms, 1643 was a year of remodelling and reintroduction. The parliamentarians began to produce quasi-forms to fill the lacunae, while the royalists reintroduced the traditional model but revitalised it to suit their new situation.

February 1643 marked a turning point for the parliamentarians with an order for a general public confession to be published in the churches, particularly on the

⁵⁷ For example, note the similarities between *A Forme* (STC 16557) and *Forme* (STC 16559) observed 17/11/1640, 8/12/1640.

monthly fast days.⁵⁸ In many ways this was similar to the confessions (and confessional elements of petitionary prayers) used in forms of prayer from 1640 to 1641. The parliamentary confession highlighted ‘how flourishing Kingdoms have been ruined’ by sin, citing ‘the Sacred Story’, before emphasising how near to ruin England was and the necessity of following God’s ‘Remedy of Repentance’ so England might prevail as Nineveh did when all seemed lost.⁵⁹ The demonstration of humiliation and sorrow was to occur within the individual, their family and especially publicly in their congregation. Interestingly, although the order came from parliament and the civil war had been fought for some months, the people of England were still referred to as ‘His Majesty’s Subjects’ as they had been in traditional forms of prayer.⁶⁰

However, this confession was no endorsement of the king or attempt at reconciliation. The heavy weight of sin upon England included ‘wicked Prophanations of the Lords-day, by Sports and Gamings, formerly encouraged even by Authority’. The confession was a direct attack on the king who had issued the Book of Sports. Idolatry and bloodshed were some of the sins having ‘a more immediate Influence’ on England’s imminent destruction. Idolatry was prevalent due to the continuation ‘and almost toleration’ of Roman Catholics who were now armed, and having nearly destroyed Ireland, were turning towards England.⁶¹ Bloodshed, aside from unexpiated murders, weighed heavy on the nation for God had not been appeased for the Protestant martyrs persecuted by Mary and some of her predecessors who had been encouraged in their evil deeds by the idol of the mass. Despite the repeal by parliament of the Acts which caused this shedding of innocent blood, there had not been ‘a solemn, Public, and National Acknowledgement of this Sin, as might appease the Wrath of that jealous God, against whom, and against whose People, with so high a Hand it was committed.’⁶²

⁵⁸ Parliament ordered ‘That every Minister and Preacher of God’s Word in the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, in their several Auditories and Congregations, especially upon the Fast-days, shall most earnestly persuade and inculcate the constant Practice of this Public Acknowledgement and deep Humiliation’, *LJ* 15/2/1643. The confession was first presented by the godly MP Mr Francis Rous to the Commons, see *CJ* 23/1/1643.

⁵⁹ *LJ* 15/2/1643.

⁶⁰ *LJ* 15/2/1643.

⁶¹ *LJ* 15/2/1643.

⁶² *LJ* 15/2/1643.

In a desperate search to explain the cause of England's current plight; a nation at war against its king; parliament identified the nation's sins in ignoring God's ordinances, England's failure to stamp out Catholicism, and the failure of the English to atone for the persecution of God's people. The civil war was perceived as a divine and just affliction. It had been caused by the continued ignorance of the grievous sins of the authorised murder of godly men and women, compounded by the existence and even toleration of papists, and the continuation of sinful activities by the nation, such as wearing fine apparel which flattered vanity, drunkenness, and the playing of sports and games even on the Lord's day.⁶³ While the confession retained the primary purpose of a special form of prayer (turning the nation to God), undoubtedly it served the interests of parliament and was designed to do so. Indeed, it would be difficult to argue that this confession was not parliamentary propaganda.

Parliamentarian adaptation of the role of traditional forms of prayer in providing a unified message in church services across the national on occasional prayer days continued to develop through thanksgivings. The national thanksgiving for the success of the forces in Yorkshire, observed across England on 5 February 1643, was the first special day of prayer held without royal consent.⁶⁴ During the prayer day services Fairfax's letter of victory was to be read, framed by a parliamentary declaration.⁶⁵ The use of accounts of military victory as part of a church service was a parliamentarian innovation with clearly propagandistic value and became a regular feature of their prayer days from this point.⁶⁶ The declaration preceding Fairfax's letter was closely aligned with the abandoned forms, its language even evoking the traditional model:

Whereas many and fervent Prayers have been sent up to God, for His Blessing to be poured down upon the Endeavours of the Parliament, in Maintenance of His own Cause

⁶³ *LJ* 15/2/1643.

⁶⁴ *CJ* and *LJ* 30/1/1643.

⁶⁵ For the parliamentary orders see *CJ* and *LJ* 30/1/1643.

⁶⁶ However, there was a precedent for forms having items of news attached, as occurred with some thanksgiving forms following the earthquake in 1580. For example, see *The order of prayer, and other exercises, vpon Wednesdays and Frydayes, to auert and turne Gods wrath from vs, threatned by the late terrible earthquake: to be vsed in all parish churches and houtholdes throughout the realme* (London, 1580; STC 16513), sigs. G1v-F4r.

and Religion, now openly assaulted by Papists; and because it is most just and necessary to observe the Return of these Prayers, that our Mouths and Hearts may be as much enlarged in Praises as they have been in Prayers; the Lords and Commons have thought fit to publish some late good Successes, as so many Answers from Heaven, which God hath given to the Prayers of His Servants.⁶⁷

With their roots in the traditional preface and additions in forms of prayer that detailed the reason for calling the day, quasi-forms (such as narratives of victory or other official material ordered to be used on parliamentary prayer days) had a dual purpose.⁶⁸ Ecclesiastically, they provided the cause for acknowledging divine favour or wrath in order to encourage the people to respond accordingly - either to atone more keenly for the sins of the nation after a defeat, or to raise their spirits by confirming that God was on parliament's side for they had been victorious. Politically, these additional materials clearly sought to promote as well as reinforce parliamentary support. Moreover, it was a further step in promoting parliament as the natural temporary successors of episcopacy, as guardians of 'the most precious Things in the World, God's Glory and true Worship, and the Salvation and Souls of Men'.⁶⁹ As parliament began to assimilate this new role, the purpose of parliamentary occasions started to change.

Occasional prayer days for forgiveness of sins and or seeking direction for the Church gradually became more prominent during the 1640s. While these reasons for fasts were not unique to this period, nor to the parliamentarians, there was a distinction in priority. Traditional forms of prayer issued in 1640 had acknowledged the sins of the nation as the cause of the plague afflicting England and both royalist and parliamentary authorities continued to share the mindset that sin caused God's displeasure and resulted in disasters for the nation. However, the established format highlighted, first, that the affliction needed religious redress and then noted its fundamental cause: the sin of man. Yet, from early 1643, parliament began to place the sins of the nation more prominently.

⁶⁷ *LJ* 30/1/1643.

⁶⁸ While not a liturgy, these additional printed materials ordered to be used on parliamentary prayer days nonetheless provided structure to services and are therefore referred to as quasi-forms for the remainder of this thesis.

⁶⁹ *LJ* 30/1/1643.

Initially, this was achieved by ministers drawing attention to it at the monthly fast. For example, the monthly fast in February 1643 was to focus on seeking forgiveness for national sins, particularly the murders of the Marian martyrs.⁷⁰ However, by 1647, with the brief prominence of the Presbyterians, entire prayer days were set aside, for example, for the removal of errors, heresies, blasphemies and schisms (10 March 1647).⁷¹ Later, specific moral sins started to be highlighted, such as the fast day of 19 April 1649 for ingratitude, unfruitfulness and lack of charity.⁷² This shift in purpose was to be a temporary experiment, prolific at a time when parliament and king were rival heads of the Church of England. With the end of this struggle, the focus returned to generalities and the term ‘prevalent sins’ remerged in the 1650s.⁷³

In part, this parliamentary development was a reaction to the end of the role of the king in occasional prayer days and the need to replace his role in the salvation of the nation. In the traditional model of government, the king and his church led the people along the right path to salvation and took some responsibility for their souls as God’s representative on earth. Providing the people followed the directions of their king and his church, they could be confident of a place in heaven. However, in the absence of a monarch and bishops, the responsibility for salvation passed entirely to the people themselves.

⁷⁰ *LJ 15/2/1643.*

⁷¹ *An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament. Concerning the growth and spreading of errors, heresies, and blasphemies. Setting a part a day of publike humiliation, to seeke Gods assistance for the suppressing and preventing the same* (London, 1647; Wing E1824).

⁷² *An Act of the Commons of England Assembled in Parliament, For the keeping a day of Humiliation upon Thursday the 19 day of April, 1649* (London, 1649; Wing E2505).

⁷³ See for example the authorised fast days of March and April 1654, 6 December 1655, 28 March 1656 and 18 May 1659. It should be noted that the 14 June 1655 was set apart for the persecutions in Switzerland, so the developments after 1643 did not preclude highlighting specific sinful acts. The orders for these occasions are *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector and the Parliament of the Common-Wealth of England, Scotland, & Ireland, for a Day of Solemn Fasting & Humiliation in the Three Nations* (London, 1654; Wing C7068A); *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, Inviting the People of England and Wales, to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1654; Wing C7077); *A Declaration of His Highness, with the Advice of His Council, Inviting the People of This Commonwealth to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1655; Wing C7078); *A Declaration of His Highness, Inviting the People of England and Wales to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1656; Wing C7078b); *A Declaration of His Highness, Inviting the People of England and Wales to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1656; Wing C7079); *A Declaration of His Highness, with the Advice of His Council, Inviting the People of England and Wales to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1655; Thomason E.1064[54])

The role of the parliamentary authorities was to highlight the sins of the nation and implore the people to remedy the situation. Though they sought to provide (and sometimes enforce) the means for the saving of the nation's souls, parliament took no responsibility for them - that now resided entirely with the individual.

The attempt to reform the nation was not limited to the parliamentarians. The royalists made regular and firm attempts to control the behaviour of their army and make religious provisions for it, as well as warning the nation against the 'pretended Ordinances of one or both Houses'.⁷⁴ By October 1643, the king could no longer ignore parliament's usurpation of the monthly fast days authorised in his name. Charles issued a second proclamation 'for a Generall Fast to be held throughout this Kingdome on the second Friday in every Moneth' on 5 October 1643, complete with a new form of common prayer to be used in conjunction with it, which is likely to have been composed by Bishop Duppa.⁷⁵

The Oxford writs of 10 October 1643 gave instructions for the printing of 1200 copies of

⁷⁴ For example, Charles I's proclamation issued on 13 June 1643 'for the inhibiting all manner of Oathes, other Abuses and Prophanations by any of His Majesties Army, As Likewise strictly Commanding the due and constant frequenting of the Service of God, by all Officers and Souldiers of the same.' This was a further extension of Charles' *Military Orders and Articles*, see L&H, vol. II, pp. 909-11. A proclamation warning his Majesties subjects against the pretended ordinances of Parliament followed on 20 June 1643, see also L&H, vol. II, p. 911.

⁷⁵ See *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth*, (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2584). The form had at least two printings, see *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Solemn Fast Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4111) and *idem.*, (Wing C4111A). Both are 'Set forth by His Majesties Authority' and stated that they were printed by Leonard Lichfield, printer to the University of Oxford in 1643. An examination of the two variants reveals that the text for the service is the same. Previously, Wing C4111 has been interpreted as a London copy made shortly after the version from Oxford was printed. The British Library online notes given on EEBO for Wing C4111A state, 'The imprint is false. "This is a counterfeit reprint of Madan 1469, but the woodcut ornaments and device have not elsewhere occurred in London counterfeit issues, so it may be suspected of having been printed in Bristol or York, for distribution in the Royalist Army"--Madan'. However, I feel it more likely that two versions were produced in Oxford, one more expensive and another for mass cheap distribution, for Wing C4111 is a far weightier pamphlet running to 76 printed pages compared to the 45 found in Wing C4111A. The reason for this variation is the use of illustration and decorative borders in Wing C4111. Wing C4111 may also have used a higher quality of paper as there is no bleed-through, which is found on the title page of the Bodleian copy of Wing C4111A. It seems reasonable to suppose that two versions were deliberately produced for two different markets. Wing C4111 was a higher quality and more expensive version, perhaps for the University and the Court in Oxford, and Wing C4111A was for dispersing into the parishes. An example of Wing C4111 can be found in the Bodleian Library and a copy of Wing C4111A resides in the British Library. For Duppa's probable authorship of the form see chapter two.

the proclamation, in which Charles referred to the ‘devout formes of Prayers’ he had had composed and printed to disperse ‘into all parts of this Our Kingdome’.⁷⁶ The royalist monthly fast day would certainly have been a more cheerful and comforting affair than its parliamentary equivalent. While naturally the ‘prayer for the high court of Parliament’ was removed, and certain prayers were added to reflect the difficulties of the conflict, the negative aspects were not dwelt upon.⁷⁷ Rather than asking for those things necessary for the body and soul as in the old form, the new occasion directly petitioned for the end of the rebellion and the restoration of peace: the saving of the nation, the church and the state.⁷⁸ Thus, while parliament’s purposes in calling fasts were placing a greater emphasis on sin, particularly with the introduction of specific fast days ‘for sin’, the royalist divine petitions were also evolving, becoming even more specific in their aims as well as being a more uplifting experience for its participants due to their more positive tone. In contrast to early proclamations, and no doubt due to the denial of the necessity of forms by parliament, it was felt necessary to state directly the purpose of a form of prayer - providing unity. The form ensured that ‘with one Heart and one Voyce We may performe so Religious an Exercise.’⁷⁹

Unity within the religious duty of fasting was portrayed as essential. The implication was that collective sins called for collective repentance. The whole nation repenting and praying together empowered the petition to God far more than individuals could if they petitioned separately. Put simply, collective prayer was far more likely to be successful. Thus, the key point of the form was that ‘we may all both Prince and People, as one man, earnestly powre out our Prayers to God, for the diverting of his heavy judgement from Us.’ Likewise, a service following a form unified the king and his people: whilst at their service the people could contemplate that the king and his court were petitioning for divine aid to end the war at the same time and in the same way as themselves, though perhaps very different surroundings. In the proclamation Charles was keen to

⁷⁶ See Dugdale 19/32, as cited by L&H, vol. II, p. 954. See *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2583).

⁷⁷ Additional prayers included the prayer ‘in time of warre’, ‘Hyme or generall Thanksgiving’ and ‘A Thanksgiving for the Queenes safe Returne’, *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A).

⁷⁸ For example amongst many others, see the first collect for evening prayer, ‘spare a great, though most sinfull Nation, pity a despised Church, and a distracted State’. See *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast... on the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C2583).

emphasise that he and his court had observed the monthly fast ‘as a Religious duty, fit to be exercised in a time of common Calamity’ further emphasizing unity between himself and his subjects.⁸⁰

While parliament had been innovative in their use of prayer days, providing additional materials despite abandoning conventional forms, the royalist monthly fast did not hold as close to the status quo as one might expect. Though certainly more conservative in their theological approach to the occasions, the royalists did not waste the opportunity to further their cause. The alterations to the form of prayer for the monthly fast were designed to raise morale and gain support from the people. This is most clearly seen by a close comparison of the form of prayer for the fast for plague in June 1640 with the form of prayer issued by the king for the royalist monthly fast held on the second Friday of each month.⁸¹

As one would expect there is far more emphasis on royal authority and the Christian duty of loyalty to the monarch in the new form.⁸² God gives victory to kings, and those who rebel only ever meet horrible ends. This is extremely well illustrated through the selection of texts, such as 2 Samuel 15-16. Absalom’s attempt to usurp the throne of King David was a ‘conspiracy’. Some followers ‘went in their innocence’ but soon ‘the hearts of the Israelites’ had gone to Absalom and David was forced to flee for his life (as Charles had fled London).⁸³

Numbers 16 was the alternative first lesson in the form. It is an interesting text for it is a synthesis of two source strands within the book of Numbers, the priestly strand and an older epic.⁸⁴ The older epic is concerned with a secular

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The versions of the forms compared here are *A Forme* (STC 16557) and *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A).

⁸² For example, the key New Testament readings of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 are concerned with a Christian’s duty of obedience to God’s chosen secular authorities, even if they are harsh rulers.

⁸³ 2 Samuel 15.11,13-14.

⁸⁴ Source criticism, the most dominant approach in scholarship on the Pentateuch, is a literary-historical analysis most closely associated with Julius Wellhausen. It identifies four major sources for the Pentateuch – Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D) and Priestly (P) as well as many smaller sources, of which the older epic referred to here is one. The Priestly source has within it two basic types of literature – narrative and law – and is characteristic of the Pentateuch as a whole. One of the key features of the Priestly tradition is its emphasis on law as being a response to God’s grace in doing all that he has done for man. Obedience to the law is a way of doing justice to Israel’s relationship with God, rather than a means of salvation, a burden or a moral or divine imperative. The law, for P, is not static and does not claim certainty on every

rebellion led by the Reubenites, whereas the priestly strand describes a more ecclesiastical conflict apparent on two levels. One is a discussion of the Levites' prerogatives over the people, which, to an early modern audience, would seem to be a denial of the necessity of clerical supremacy over a lay congregation. The second debates the supremacy of the Aaronite priests over the Levites, which, in an early modern context, would seem to debate the necessity of bishops over ministers. Unsurprisingly, given that this is from a priestly (P) source, the debate is firmly concluded with the justification of both the Levites supremacy over the people, and the priests rule over the Levites.

To an early modern audience, Numbers 16 spoke of the divine institution of both bishops and ministers over a lay congregation. In this sense, the form of prayer, not only by its very existence and use, but also through the texts within it, denied the Presbyterian model of church government along with more radical approaches. The form continued the traditional structure of the Church of England; the king had supreme authority over his people and the bishops over their ministers. Through the bishops and clergy, the king was able to ensure the maintenance of true religion. This point was not only made in Numbers 16, but throughout the form by the inclusion of the traditional prayer for the bishops and clergy as well as additions to the litany for God 'to deliver this nationall Church from all Sacriledge and profanesse'. Similarly, the first collect of the evening service pleaded for the Lord to 'pitiy a despised Church ... that they service may be the more duely celebrated [and] ... the Church may be restored to a true Christian unity'.⁸⁵

The most significant 'attack' on parliament was the choice of homily. Rather than 'An Homily of Repentance and of true Reconciliation unto God' assigned in 1640, the monthly fast for the royalists enclosed the homily 'against disobedience and wilfull Rebellion' with 'A Prayer against Rebellion, published by the authority of Queene Elizabeth in a Rebellious time, and Printed in the Booke of Homilies', which had been commissioned for thanksgivings ordered

aspect of life, but will evolve with the nation and its relationship with God. For further discussion see Terence E. Fretheim, *The Pentateuch* (Nashville, 1996).

⁸⁵ *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A).

after the failure of the Northern Rising in 1569.⁸⁶ The choice of this text also highlighted that the English monarchy had survived rebellion before, and therefore by implication would do so again. Elizabeth's accession day was still celebrated in many English parishes and her reign was often (but not always) seen as something of a golden age by the 1640s, so to link Charles with Elizabeth in a positive way was likely to achieve public support.

The key point of the foundation of faith upon royal authority as God's chosen anointed was most emphasised in the Elizabethan homily and prayer against rebellion included in the form.⁸⁷ Duty to the king, his safety and the seeking of divine protection of the body of the king were an English Christian's divine obligation.⁸⁸ The truth of divine support for Charles was highlighted further through reminders of recent experiences; even though unworthy and sinful, God had given unlikely victories to the royalists.⁸⁹ Ultimately, the king would prevail,

⁸⁶ See Raffe, Mears, Taylor, Williamson, Bates (eds.), *National Prayers*, 1570-E.

⁸⁷ It should be noted that even if a sermon replaced the homily, the Elizabethan prayer against rebellion would still be read to the congregation. The inclusion of an Elizabethan homily and prayer was perhaps an attempt by the royalists to reclaim Elizabeth as an ancestor of Charles rather than a symbol of 'the good old days'. The text used in the homily is the fourth part of the Homily against disobedience and willful rebellion with some very minor alterations, though interestingly the section with the image of God speeding the plough, which the rebels hinder, has been cut. Perhaps this reflects a society in which many are no longer farming for their daily bread, but employed in trading or skilled labour. The prayer used is the one quoted at the end of the first part of the homily and repeated after subsequent sections. Charles was not completely unconnected with the Elizabethan homilies having ordered their reprinting in 1633 and 1640. I have here compared the sections of *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A) with Jewel, John, *The Second Tome of Homilees, of Such Matters as Were Promised, and Intituled in the Former Part of Homilees. Set out by the Aucthoritie of the Queenes Maiestie: And to Be Read in Euery Parishe Church Agreeably* (London, 1571; STC 13669), as well as the 1640 reprint *Certaine Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches. In the Time of the Late Queene Elizabeth of Famous Memory. And Now Thought Fit to Be Reprinted by Authority from the Kings Most Excellent Majesty* (London, 1640; STC 13677). The 1640 reprint is faithful to the original and does not replace the name Elizabeth with Charles as the royalist monthly form does.

⁸⁸ See for example the insertion to the prayers following the Creed, 'O Lord guard the Person of thy Servant the King which putteth His trust in thee. Send to Him and to His Armies help from thy holy Place, And evermore mightily defend them. Confound the designs of all those that are risen up against Him, And let not their rebellious wickednes approach near to hurt Him. O Lord heare our prayer, And let our cry come unto thee.' This petition was in the form of a dialogue between priest and people, the interactive nature of which would have reinforced the message to the congregation. *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A)

⁸⁹ See particularly the insertion following the prayers for the bishops and clergy part of which is, 'we may well perceive, that the sinnes we have done have not been barely infirmities, but rebellious against thee'. However, God has sweetened the cup of bitterness 'by many strange successes, by frequent and unexpected Victories'. *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A)

and God would smite the ungodly rebels.⁹⁰ In loyalty to the king and recognition of ‘a true sense of that duty to thine Annoynted’ was the comfort of the knowledge of victory, divine protection and rewards in this life and the next.⁹¹

There are warnings of imminent judgement in both forms, but it is far less pronounced in the new form with only two direct references at the opening of morning and evening prayer. Indeed, as the structure of the services remains very similar, the striking difference is one of tone. Whereas the form of 1640 emphasised sin and the just divine punishment of affliction for sin with a plea for God’s mercy to intervene, the form of 1643 is far more uplifting. It does not deny that the nation is sinful, but rather highlights the comfort and safety of faith in God and a conviction that he will ultimately save his people, though they need to repent and be patient until God has dug the pit for the ungodly.⁹²

The royalist attempt to appeal to the people was not only demonstrated in its uplifting language. One of the most distinctive changes that can be seen as a concession by the royalists in order to gain public support, especially those among those who had rejected the Laudian altar policies of the 1630s, came at the start of the second service. Whereas the previous form included instructions such as ‘The Priest standing at the North side of the Lords Table, shall say’, this was removed from the new form.

The placement of the communion table and what sort of table or altar should be used had been a considerable source of tension from the Elizabethan period and was exacerbated by William Laud’s attempts to enforce the use of immoveable altars. The details of the tensions have been eloquently discussed elsewhere, but it is significant that in 1643 the royalists stepped away from reference to the communion table in this form of prayer.⁹³ There is no mention of the table or of

⁹⁰ The rebels are frequently referred to as irreligious: the ungodly, those who ‘seek after my soul’, creatures of sin etc. See *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A).

⁹¹ This is particularly emphasised in the homily.

⁹² See especially Psalm 94 verses 12-14 used in the evening service, and note the scarcity of reference to the nations sins, indeed Psalm 59 used in the morning service stated that ‘the mighty men are gathered against me, without any offence or fault of me, O Lord.’

⁹³ See for example Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored : The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford, 2007).

an altar in the form, which was designed to appeal to as much of the population as possible. Only those who objected to set forms of prayer, kneeling for prayer, or monarchy itself were likely to have difficulties with the form.

During 1643 both sides made adaptations to the traditional form. Parliament's abandonment of set forms of prayer along with its rejection of the episcopacy in the winter of 1641 had created a fundamental problem – how to ensure nationwide prayer days were striving for the same purpose. The laying aside of the means of promulgating messages from state authorities during the services could not continue in the long term and quasi-forms soon emerged. For royalists, the usurpation of royal and episcopal authority by parliament required redress and prayer days were an obvious opportunity. By retaining the structure of the traditional form, royalists sought to equate tradition with legitimacy.

Both sides heralded shifts in theology by implications found in their prayer day materials. For parliament this was in terms of the role of parliament in the Church; for royalists the placement of the communion table was deemed far less significant than loyalty to the monarch. Yet, while petitions to God and the need for nationwide prayer remained the primary focus of forms and quasi-forms, from 1643 alterations to these materials were also designed to portray a positive image of those ordering the occasions. Though a secondary concern, in this sense both sides were producing strong prayer day propaganda from 1643.

III

Parliamentarian efforts to fill the lacunae left by forms peaked in January 1644 with the issue of *A Directory for The Publike Worship of God*.⁹⁴ The Directory outlined instructions for public fasts 'a Duty that God expecteth' from the nation.⁹⁵ The directions

⁹⁴ *A Directory for the Publike Worship of God* (London, 1645; Wing D1544).

⁹⁵ *Directory* (Wing D1544), sig. L2r. The directory also gave similar instructions for observing public thanksgiving days. Services should include 'a word of exhortation to stir up the people', 'a short prayer for Gods assistance and blessing', 'some pithy narration of the Deliverance obtained, or Mercy received', 'singing of psalms', 'reading some portion of the Word suitable to the present bussinesse', further exhortation and prayer before the sermon, further prayers after the sermon 'for that which at present calls them together to give thanks: with humble petition for the continuance and renewing of Gods wonted mercies', and more psalms before 'their repast and refreshing' but not before the minister has admonished the congregation 'to beware of all excesse

repeated some phrases of the traditional model of royal proclamations of nationwide fasts such as abstinence ‘from all worldly labour’ and ‘bodily delights’, yet new emphasis was placed on ‘total abstinence’. The sick were only allowed food ‘very sparingly, to support nature when ready to faint’ and worldly ‘discourse and thoughts’ as well as ‘rich apparell, ornaments ... garish attire, lascivious habits and gestures, and other vanities of either sexe’ which were generally to be reproved by ministers ‘especially at a Fast’.⁹⁶ Preparation was to begin at home both individually and as a family before arriving to church early for the service.⁹⁷

The key elements of the service were those used in a traditional form: public reading and preaching of the Word, psalm singing, and, most especially, prayer.⁹⁸ However, many aspects of the traditional role of the bishops in composing forms now transferred to ministers. The minister was to make ‘speciall choice’ of scriptures read and texts for preaching ‘as may best work the hearts of the hearers to the speciall businesse of the day, and most dispose them to humiliation and repentence’. In doing so, he was to draw on those texts which his ‘observation and experience tels him are most conducing to the edification, and reformation of that Congregation to which he preacheth.’⁹⁹ Furthermore, ministers were to focus ‘more particularly [on] such sins as they have been more remarkably guilty of’ and ‘admonish the people, with all importunity, that the work of the day doth not end with the Publique duties’.¹⁰⁰ In this way, parliamentary services were to be unified in sentiment but tailored to individual congregations to maximise their potential.¹⁰¹ Yet this also demonstrated significant confidence in the abilities of local ministers and particularly parish ministers on whom the burden of this new work would fall.

A set prayer was supplied for fast days in the Directory though the minister was free to create his own to ‘the like effect’. In many ways this was a standard

and riot, tending to gluttony or drunkennesse... to take care that mirth and rejoycing be not carnall, but spirituall’. The latter service should again contain ‘praying, reading, preaching, singing of Psalms, and offering up of more praise and thanksgiving’. As with public fasts ‘a collection is to be made for the poor’ at one or both services. *Directory* (Wing D1544), sigs. L4v-M2r.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. L2r.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. L2v.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. L3v.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ The directory also legitimised private fast days among congregations or families providing they did not clash with public days of prayer. See *Directory* (Wing D1544), sig. L4r.

petition to God, after ‘humbly confessing of sins of all sorts’, for ‘deliverance from the Evils felt, feared, or deserved; and for obtaining the blessings which we need and expect’.¹⁰² However, curiously, it also implored God’s ‘mercy and grace for ourselves, the Church, and Nation, for our King, and all in Authority, and for all others for whom we are bound to pray (according as the present exigent requireth) with more speciall importunity and inlargement then at other times.’¹⁰³ The idea that prayer for the king was even more necessary due to the ‘present exigent’ of civil war underlined not only that parliament still hoped for some form of settlement with Charles in 1644, but perhaps hinted at an emerging belief on both sides that praying for the enemy might be necessary for peace. For, this idea would also be mirrored by the royalists’ form of prayer for the Treaty of Uxbridge.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the parliamentary choice of words were to rile later Anglicans (let alone royalists of the time):

(if this was not downright Cant, Hypocrisie, and mocking God Almighty, I am at a lose to guess what is: These Wretches, at that time, were in actual Rebellion against their King and yet pray for him, and all in Authority; which shews these Juglers in Religion can toss it about as they please, and so make Amends with a double Entendre)... So that they prayed for the King, and all in Authority, pro Forma; but according to their Exigency, for all that were in open Rebellion against the King and his Authority, they were to be more importunate and enrage; or, as the Satyr, with his Breath, could blow hot and cold; so they could pray coldly in one Sentence for the King, and enlarge for an Hour hotly for his Enemies immediately after.¹⁰⁵

While, in 1706, the author of this tract followed a pro-royalist agenda and feared a resurgence of presbyterian political power, it seems likely that his description of hot and cold prayers by parliamentary congregations is valid. While those in parliament and the Westminster assembly may have felt that prayers for the king were necessary, both theologically and in terms of presenting an image of reasonability to the nation, it is unlikely that the majority of their supporters shared their sentiments.

¹⁰² Ibid., sigs. L2v-L3r.

¹⁰³ Ibid., sig. L3r. Thanksgiving days were also to include prayers ‘with remembrance of the necessities of the Church, King, and State’, Ibid., sig. M1r.

¹⁰⁴ *A Forme of Common-Prayer, To be used upon the Solemne Fast, appointed by His Majesties Proclamation upon the Fifth of February, being VVednesday* (Oxford, 1644; Wing C4112). This will be discussed further below.

¹⁰⁵ Anon, *The memorial of the Presbyterians: exemplified in the solemn league and covenant* (London, 1706), sig. A3v.

The need to portray a positive public image remained essential, and caused Manchester to move the day of thanksgiving for the seven associated Counties of Cambridge, Essex, Hartford, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincoln in April 1644. Originally ordered to be observed on 7 April, parliamentarian defeat at Newark on 21 March caused Manchester to move the occasion to 14 April and make alterations to the quasi-form for the service, *A Catalogue of remarkable mercies*.¹⁰⁶ The original *Catalogue* was typical of parliamentarian narratives of victory and included Manchester's authorisation of the thanksgiving.¹⁰⁷ Montagu advertised the success of his Eastern Association forces and his own position as Major General when the central committee funded the printing of the tract.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the ultimate purpose of the occasion was 'for the good both of Church and Commonwealth, by giving unto the God of our salvations, the God of our victories'.¹⁰⁹

Defeat of the forces at Newark caused a second edition of the *Catalogue* to be produced into which a postscript was inserted.¹¹⁰ This was written by Manchester and explained the religious and political reasons for the change of date.¹¹¹ From a theological perspective, one could not be joyful after a defeat. Therefore, it was improper to hold a thanksgiving day when people could not do their duty and thank God with joy in their hearts. Yet, politically Manchester feared accusations 'that this course of ours is but a colourable cover of our great losse lately sustained by their prevailing power': i.e. that royalists could accuse them of

¹⁰⁶ Though ultimately the observance on the 14 April 1644 coincided with a thanksgiving held for areas of England south of the Trent authorised by Parliament for the success of the forces under Waller and Balfour on 29 March, these events are entirely separate and coincidental. Manchester wrote his order to the constables enclosed in *A Catalogue of Remarkable Mercies Conferred Upon the Seven Associated Counties, Viz. Cambridge, Essex, Hartford, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincoln. Printed by the Command of the Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Manchester, the Major Generall Thereof, and the Committee Now Residing in Cambridge: And Appointed to Be Published in the Severall Parish-Churches of the Aforenamed Counties, Upon the Seventh of April, Being the Day of Thanksgiving, That Almighty God May Have the Glory Due Unto His Name. Hereunto Is Annexed an Order for the More Solemn Keeping of the Publick Fast* (Cambridge, 1644; Wing C1365) on 1 April 1644, which was the same day the Parliamentary thanksgiving was authorised in Parliament. Manchester is not listed as present in the Lords in the end of March or the beginning of April. It is highly unlikely he knew of this event on 1 April.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ SP 28/223 unfol. This reference is from Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁹ *A Catalogue of Remarkable Mercies* (Wing C1365A), sig. A4v.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., sig. A4r-v.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

celebrating a thanksgiving to cover up defeat at Newark.¹¹² The threat of public mockery by royalist supporters over the thanksgiving was great enough not only to prompt the moving of the occasion, but also Manchester's public justification for doing so.

Once the military success of the parliamentarians returned with the victory of the forces under Sir William Waller and Sir William Belfore, 'the high employment of praying' God became 'seasonable' once more. Yet, Manchester was keen to pre-empt criticism even though victory had returned:

And if our enemies (whose custome it is to judge others according to their own actions) imagine that we have any low unworthy designe in this our practise, we would have them know, that our hearts abhorre the abusing, the abasing of any holy ordinance to serve sinfull ends...¹¹³

To underscore this point, Manchester annexed the parliamentary order for the better observation of the monthly fast and the Sabbath to the second edition of the *Catalogue*. To this he added an order addressed to the constables with further instructions to return the names of any transgressors to either himself or their local county committee so they may be punished.¹¹⁴ This enabled Manchester to identify and punish anyone who disagreed with the thanksgiving or mocked its change of date.¹¹⁵ Yet it also may have had the effect of emphasising the religious legitimacy of Manchester's actions in ordering the thanksgiving. If he was so concerned that fast days and the Sabbath be kept with due reverence that he was willing to get personally involved in punishing transgressors, it implied that his motivation in ordering the thanksgiving must have been to give thanks to God.

Manchester's concern to ensure that the thanksgiving was held on an appropriate day was in part a response to the fundamental question that began to plague both sides from 1644: why had the public fasts and thanksgivings failed to end the war? Attempts to ensure that the occasions were being observed correctly followed in a flurry of, largely

¹¹² Ibid., sig. A4r.

¹¹³ Ibid., sig. A4v.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., sig. A4v.

¹¹⁵ A further change in the role of ordering occasional days is demonstrated here: those in the ordering authority are also responsible for supervising its observance and punishing miscreant. This will be discussed more in chapter 3.

parliamentarian, legislation, but the royalists too attempted to reform behaviour, most notably of their army.¹¹⁶ As noted above, the Directory instructed prayers for the enemy, particularly the king, on public fast and thanksgiving days, perhaps reflecting a belief that praying for the enemy was a missing element in nationwide prayer. This idea was another shared by parliamentarians and royalists alike, and the final part of the royalist fast for a blessing at Uxbridge focused on this theme.

The royalist fast for a blessing on the treaty at Uxbridge on 5 February 1645 caused the issue of a special royalist form of prayer for the occasion, though it remained reliant on the form distributed for the royalist monthly fasts.¹¹⁷ It made four key petitions: the restoration of peace, ‘the settlement of the true Religion so long professed among us, the Honour, and Safety of the King’s Sacred Person, and the Good of all His People’.¹¹⁸ Despite following the traditional model in most respects, unlike the previous form new emphasis was placed at the close of the service on forgiving the enemy and praying that God would ‘lay not their sinne to their charge, but guide their feet into the way of peace.’¹¹⁹ Hopefully, God would ‘give to those that have done wrong the grace to repent, and to those that have suffered wrong, minds ready to forgive’ and that once peace was restored give all ‘grace to embrace it with all thankfulness, to obey our Governours, to live at unity’.¹²⁰ Even so, in the prayer that Charles apparently directed and dictated he could not resist an attack on his enemies, for if the treaty were to fail Charles hoped that God would make it obvious to all that its failure was parliament’s fault: ‘if the guilt of our great sinnes cause this Treaty to breake off in vaine, Lord let the Truth clearly appeare, who those men are, which under pretence of the Publick good doe pursue their own private ends; that this People may be no longer so blindly miserable, as not to see’.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Margaret Griffin, *Regulating Religion and Morality in the King's Armies, 1639-1646* (Leiden, 2004)

¹¹⁷ The new form was designed to be used in conjunction with the old as highlighted by the direction ‘the rest to go on as it is in the former Fast-Book, with the addition of some Prayers’, *A Forme... upon the Fifth of February, being VVednesday* (Wing C4112), sig. B1v.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. B3r.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r.

This royalist form has a tone of frustrated bafflement (that probably reflects the feelings of the king) over the ‘strange unnaturall Warre, raised we know not why, (thy Justice and our Sinnes excepted)’ that causes the English ‘to become executioners of ourselves, and so to sinne afresh in the very punishments of sinne’.¹²² In posing the question of why the war continues, the only possible answers are that the nation must still be sinning and/or the repentances offered are defective: ‘since the time of our affliction thou hast given is space to repent, and we repented not; Iniquity hath still more and more abounded.’ For royalists, the continuation of the war is found to be a never-ending circle of sin that only God’s aid can break, causing them to call upon the holy spirit to boost defective prayers of repentance: ‘accept of our Repentance, and where it is defective, let thy Holy Spirit make it up with Groanes that cannot be expressed.’¹²³

Thus, the idea that earnest prayers of repentance have physical manifestations by way of groans, stricken faces and tears was not unique to puritan members of the parliamentary side.¹²⁴ By 1645 even the royalist form included references to ‘Horror in our Hearts, and Confusion in our Faces’, ‘that cast heap of crying sins’, ‘the sighing of the prisoners’, ‘the tears of the distressed Orphans and widowes’, God’s visit ‘in blood, to make us teare out our owne bowels’. This may have suggested to its hearers that stricken faces and tears were appropriate responses to the service. The very fact of the war’s continuation meant that prayer must be more earnest; outward signs of inward repentance would provide some comfort to the war weary.

Charles’ public image underwent slight adjustments in the form. He was cast as Moses ‘who standeth in the gap, beseeching thee to turn thine anger from thy People’ and recalled the prayers he made to God and his desire for peace.¹²⁵ Trust in God ‘whom alone is our helpe’ was reinforced by recent experience ‘we find our selves intangled and wearied by our owne counsels’. Royalist prayers

¹²² *A Forme... upon the Fifth of February, being VWednesday* (Wing C4112), sig. B2v.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ This is developed in the forthcoming work by John Craig, ‘Bodies at prayer in early modern England’, in Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Aldershot, forthcoming, 2013). My thanks to Natalie Mears for bringing this forthcoming work to my attention.

¹²⁵ *A Forme... upon the Fifth of February, being VWednesday* (Wing C4112), sig. B2v.

petitioned God to ‘regard the sincerity of thine Annointed’ and preserve Charles’ power as well as his life.¹²⁶ However, like Moses, Charles was not to reach the promised land of peace and prosperity and Oxford fell, causing a parliamentary thanksgiving to be held on 21 July 1646.

IV

The period 1643 to 1645 had been one of marked innovation in prayer day forms and quasi-forms. In the period that followed until the regicide, further changes were small adaptations of now accepted models. For example, while innovation might occur in terms of ordering (such as the Westminster Assembly’s involvement in the day of humiliation for heavy rain in December 1646) or purpose (such as the day of humiliation responding to the spreading of errors, heresies and blasphemies on 10 March 1647), parliamentary nationwide services that day were to remain centred on the instructions given in the Directory.

Once Charles was a prisoner in their charge, the parliamentarians had a golden opportunity to legitimise their approach to prayer days further by forcing royal participation and thereby gaining implicit endorsement. Yet, royalist pamphleteers were still able to respond. *A perfect relation of severall remarkable passages, which passed betwixt the Kings most excellent majesty, and the commissioners, the last fast day at Holmby about the Directory and form of prayer* outlined that, whilst captive in February 1647, the commissioners petitioned the king to keep the Wednesday fast as part of their larger campaign to pressure Charles into accepting the Directory and abandoning the Book of Common Prayer. Reportedly, they utilised a three-fold argument of persuasion, noting the fast to be ‘a thing consented to by himself, or past by Act of Parliament; and for the distressed Kingdome of Ireland’. However, while Charles agreed to fast, ‘hee would not joyn in the prayers, because they were not by him

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B4r.

consented unto.’¹²⁷ On one level this demonstrated Charles’s skills in diplomacy and slipping out of obligations he was unwilling to keep; on another it highlighted his firm commitment to set prayers authorised by the monarch (and composed by bishops).

For royalists, a final form of prayer was printed in 1648 for the negotiations at Newport at which Charles passionately defended episcopacy. The details of this occasion are problematic to piece together owing to multiple versions of the key additional prayer seemingly being issued in a short space of time.¹²⁸ However, it is likely that a royalist nationwide fast took place on 15 September (though few outside of Newport seem to have been aware of it in time to observe it) and that prayers were supposed to continue for the duration of the negotiations. As it became increasingly obvious that the treaty would fail, the language of the prayer was altered to prepare royalist supporters. The prayer for a blessing on the treaty including in the full form stated, ‘O Lord let not the guilt of our sins cause this Treaty to breake off, but let the truth of thy spirit so clearly shine in our mindes, that all private end laid aside, we may every one of us heartily and sincerely pursue the publike good’.¹²⁹ When the prayer was re-issued separately this was altered to read: ‘Or if the guilt of our great sins, cause this Treaty to breake off in vaine, Lord let the Truth clearly appeare, who those men are, which under pretence of the Publicke good doe pursue their own private ends’.¹³⁰ However, within the form there were very minor changes when it is compared for the form issued for the fast for Uxbridge. Small alterations in wording occurred on the final page; more noticeably psalms 77 and 80 were removed from the evening service and the first lesson was altered from Isaiah 51.9-23 to Isaiah 48.1-20 (omitting the final verse 22: ‘There is no peace for the wicked’).¹³¹ In spite of

¹²⁷ *A Perfect Relation of Severall Remarkable Passages, Which Passed Betwixt the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, and the Commissioners, the Last Fast Day at Holmby, About the Directory and Forme of Prayer* (London, 1647; Wing P1507)

¹²⁸ See *A Forme Of Prayer Used At Newport In the Isle of Wight* (London, 1648; Wing C4165), *The Commencement of the Treaty Between the King's Majesty, and the Commissioners of Parliament At Newport. A Prayer Drawne by His Majesties special direction and Dictates, for a blessing on the Treaty at Newport* (Newport, 1648; Wing C5546) and variants thereof.

¹²⁹ *A Forme Of Prayer...Newport* (Wing C4165), sig. B1v.

¹³⁰ *The Commencement... A Prayer... for a blessing on the Treaty at Newport* (Wing C5546).

¹³¹ Compare *A Forme... upon the Fifth of February, being VWednesday* (Wing C4112) and *A Forme Of Prayer...Newport* (Wing C4165). See also Is. 48.22.

their desperate situation royalist supporters still sought to maintain the public image of the king through distributing a form of prayer.

V

The turmoil and political danger of the establishment of the Rump and subsequent regicide was noted by the reduction of special days of prayer. While the authorities may have hoped that their absence would be taken by the public as a mark of stability, their own fear of riots and uprisings would have been clear. It was not until 19 April 1649 that the parliamentarians observed a day of prayer (aside from the monthly fast) following the death of the king. The young regime was keen to cite the success of prayer days in effecting parliamentary victory in the order for the occasion. God had brought them ‘to the hope of a blessed Reformation’ as well as, due to their lack of charity and multiple sins, to ‘the very fountain of our late Civil Wars and Desolations’.¹³²

A new collective national memory, the experience of civil war, was evoked. Not only were scriptural commands and examples cited but ‘our own experience’ gave credence to the necessity and effectiveness of nationwide prayer and fasting ‘for the preventing & removal of the greatest Judgements’ but also ‘our own experience’.¹³³ Furthermore, occasional prayer days had proved effectual ‘for procuring the choicest Mercies’.¹³⁴ Most notable among these mercies was ‘The Commons of England assembled in Parliament having through the wonderful goodness and assistance of God, restored this Nation (as far as in them lieth, and the present interruptions will yet admit) to their just Liberties, and laid Foundations for the well Government thereof in the way of a Commonwealth’.¹³⁵ The continuation of this divinely endorsed government was the purpose of the occasion: ‘this Commonwealth may be settled in a lasting Peace and Happiness’.¹³⁶

¹³² *An Act of the Commons of England... a day of Humiliation upon Thursday the 19 day of April, 1649* (Wing E2505).

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

As the first occasion ordered on the authority of the commonwealth, the justification for this occasion was a matter of careful design and this may also partly explain the numerous delays in holding the occasion.¹³⁷ A committee comprising of Ireton, Cromwell, Harrington, Scott, Gurdon, Masham, Weaver and Say were appointed to draw up the grounds and reasons of the resolution of the fast. While divine petitioning for peace and settlement remained the primary purpose, this order was designed to advance the public image of the fledgling commonwealth government. In terms of language, structure and purpose the materials for the occasion remained consistent with those of the parliamentary regime in the civil war. This furthered the Rump's initial desire for stability and settlement.

However, some innovation was inevitable. The following month, the fast day for prevalent sins and for a blessing on the forces in Ireland prompted a distinct shift.¹³⁸ From this point, many of the printed orders for nationwide days of prayer begin to act as quasi-forms in themselves, though they were to be read by the minister and published by secular authorities before the occasion itself. Most noticeable is a considerable increase in length. Traditional orders, whether royalist or parliamentary, had been constructed to fit on a single sheet of paper in the main (whether folio or folded into a short eight page pamphlet).¹³⁹ *An Act For setting apart A Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, And Repealing the former Monethly-Fast* doubled this paper requirement to two folios.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ The occasion was ordered on 28/2/1649 for 24/3/1649 but was postponed on 8/3/1649 to 5/4/1649, see *CJ* 8/3/1649, 17/3/1649. However, there is no indication that parliament held the fast on 5 April, instead they observed a public fast on 19/4/1649 which is in accordance with the printed order *An Act of the Commons of England...a day of Humiliation upon Thursday the 19 day of April, 1649* (Wing E2505). A change of date of observance must have occurred after 17/3/1649 when the act was ordered to be printed. A probable reason for the change is the refusal of the Mayor of London to comply with publishing the act for abolishing the monarchy (and presumably other acts ordered by the commonwealth). He was imprisoned in the Tower for a month and fined two thousand pounds in addition to being removed from office. See *CJ* 2/4/1649.

¹³⁸ This occasion was observed in London, Westminster and the parishes within the late lines of communication and bills of mortality on 3 May 1649 and elsewhere in England, Wales and Berwick on 17 May 1649.

¹³⁹ See for example *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Solemnized Thorowout This Realm of England* (London, 1640; STC 9159) and *An ordinance...spreading of errors* (Wing E1824).

¹⁴⁰ *An act for setting apart a day of solemn fasting and humiliation, and repealing the former monethly-fast* (London, 1649; Wing E1075).

In part, the additional length of this order may be accounted for by the inclusion of the act repealing the monthly fast. The order justified the repeal on two fronts. First, the occasions were ‘in most places of this Commonwealth wholly neglected’ and, second, ‘such set times for extraordinary duties of Worship’ were apt ‘to degenerate into meer Formality and Customary observances’.¹⁴¹ The solution for the second was ‘to set apart special times for such Solemn Duties’, while the first was to be combated by all mayors, JPs, bailiffs, constables and other officers being ‘authorized and required to restrain all persons from the publique doing of any work, or using any exercise of a worldly nature, either contemptuously or unnecessarily’ drawing on the authority of ‘any Ordinance of Parliament’ for preventing prophaning the monthly fast.¹⁴²

However, Worden argued for additional ‘less exalted and more pressing’ reasons for the repeal of the monthly fast.¹⁴³ It ‘enabled the government thereafter to time public celebration and lamentation to suit its political convenience’.¹⁴⁴ While the repeal of the monthly fasts was not necessary for the commonwealth authorities to order nationwide prayer days, it did prevent prayer days occurring on politically unsatisfactory occasions. Worden also noted that a ‘regime with so narrow a base of support, anxious to create a sense of stability and tranquillity, was in general less inclined than the Long Parliament before it to exhort its countrymen to organised spiritual fervour.’¹⁴⁵ Though earlier chapters have cast doubt on the extent to which the Long Parliament was seeking to create nationwide religious fervour on these occasions, the Rump’s need to create a feeling of settled and secure government in the nation is unquestionable. That this was achieved in part through the end of regularised nationwide prayer days, an indication of turbulent times, was natural.

However, a reduction in the number of prayer days also limited this means of promulgating messages to the people. This need to further a positive public

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 83.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

image whilst under threat of royalist invasion thus accounts for the increase in length of prayer day orders when they were issued.

Victories in Ireland led to a series of thanksgivings from the summer of 1649.¹⁴⁶ By the summer of 1650 the Rump had grown in confidence and skill in portraying not only its own public image positively, but also constructing a negative one of its main threat – Charles Stuart. Following a direction first inserted in August 1649, these long declarations were to be read by minister on the Sunday preceding the occasion and, by the thanksgiving for victory at Ulster on 26 July 1650, the Rump was utilising them to their full potential.¹⁴⁷ Now peppered with scriptural quotations and references, ‘The haters of the Lord have been found lyars, and have not been able to stand in the day of Battel’ evoked Psalm 81.15 and Ephesians 6.13, the central role of the Rump in the English Church was emphasised. The Rump led the nation while God provided ‘a most eminent Example of this His Grace and Goodness to us’ and the ‘Head of this Army of Popish and Irish Rebels, CHARLS STUART, Eldest son of the late King’ was ‘beaten out from his Confidences and Intimacies with the Popish Army in Ireland’.¹⁴⁸ The legitimacy of the Rump traversing both political and religious spheres was further highlighted by the dual endorsement of secular ‘votes’ and spiritual innocence in ‘the sight of God’.¹⁴⁹

VI

¹⁴⁶ For example see the thanksgiving for victory at Rathmines, held on 29/8/1649, *An act for setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Wednesday the 29th of August, 1649. Together with a declaration & a narrative of the grounds and reasons thereof* (London, 1649; Thomason E.1060[55]) and a more general thanksgiving for victories in Ireland held on 1/11/1649, see *Letters from Ireland, relating the several great successes it hath pleased God to give unto the Parliaments forces there, in the taking of Drogheda, Trym, Dundalk, Carlingford, and the Nury* (London, 1649; Wing L1778).

¹⁴⁷ Previous directions ordered that the minister ‘publish’ the order, he was not necessarily required to ‘read’ it to his congregation. The first occasion where this was inserted was the thanksgiving for victory over Ormond at Rathmines on 29 August 1649. See *An act for setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving* (Thomason E.1060[55]).

¹⁴⁸ *An Act for the setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Friday the twenty sixth of this instant July together with a declaration and narrative, expressing the grounds and reasons thereof* (London, 1650; Wing E1123aA).

¹⁴⁹ *An Act for the setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Friday the twenty sixth of this instant July* (Wing E1123aA). These themes were to be expounded upon in the narrative, letters and commissions ordered to be printed for the occasion, see *CJ 9/7/1650*.

Prior to the dissolution of the Rump on 20 April 1653, special days of prayer were closely focused on military engagements of the commonwealth's forces, particularly in Scotland and Ireland.¹⁵⁰ All followed the traditional model of commonwealth prayer day materials and frequently incorporated narratives and letters of victory.

The next significant alteration occurred amidst the reasonable security that followed the defeat of the Scots at Worcester.¹⁵¹ A reduction in the length of prayer day materials (particularly orders) quickly followed: the order for the thanksgiving for the taking of Jersey on 5 November 1651 only consisted of a few lines.¹⁵² Though more detail was provided in terms of narrative, the trend of shorter prayer day materials continued when later occasions were called during the war with the Dutch.¹⁵³ It was no longer necessary to expound at length a negative image of the enemy and a positive image of the commonwealth. Since the authorities' adversary was no longer a rival government authority, the nation as a whole could be counted upon for their support. Consequently, prayer day

¹⁵⁰ Key occasions after the thanksgiving for Ulster were thanksgivings for Waterford, Duncannon and Catherlo (1/9/1650, see *An order of Parliament, for a thanks-giving together with a declaration of the grounds and reasons of it* (London, 1650; Wing E1691), Dunbar (8/10/1650, see *Die Martis, 17 Septembr. 1650. Ordered by the Parliament, that the sheriffs of the respective counties within England and Wales, be required and enjoyned forthwith to send to the ministers of the several parishes in the respective counties, The Act for setting apart Tuesday the eighth day of October* (London, 1650; Wing E1749bA), Worcester (7/9/1651 and 24/10/1651, *A letter from the Lord General Cromvvel, dated September the fourth, 1651. To the Right Honorable William Lenthal Esq; speaker of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England. Touching the taking of the city of VVorcester; and the total routing of the enemies army. Saturday, September 6. 1651. Resolved by the Parliament, that the letter from the Lord General, dated the fourth of September, 1651. be printed, together with the order made yesterday for a thanksgiving on the next Lords Day, and read, together with the said order* (London, 1651; Wing C7096) and *An act for setting apart Friday the four and twentieth day of October, one thousand six hundred fifty one, for a day of publique thanksgiving: together with a narrative declaring the grounds and reasons thereof* (London, 1651; Thomason E.1061[57]) and a more general thanksgiving for parliament's victories held on the anniversary of Charles I's execution (30/1/1650, *An act for setting apart Thursday the thirtieth day of January, 1650. for a day of publique thanksgiving: together with a declaration of the grounds and reasons thereof* (London, 1651; Thomason E.1061[33])). A fast for blessings on commonwealth forces occurred on 13/3/1651.

¹⁵¹ *An act for setting apart Friday the four and twentieth day of October, one thousand six hundred fifty one, for a day of publique thanksgiving* (Thomason E.1061[57]).

¹⁵² *CJ 30/10/1651.*

¹⁵³ *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State To incite all the good People of these Nations to thankfullness and holy rejoycing in the Lord, for the late great Victory at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E775aA).

materials in the latter commonwealth began to demonstrate greater similarity to those issued by parliament during the civil war in language as well as length.¹⁵⁴

Surprisingly, this halt in innovation continued in the second half of 1653 under the Nominated Assembly (or Barebones' Parliament). In opposition to the radical nature highlighted by most scholars, the only occasion ordered by this parliament (a conservative stance in itself) continued the commonwealth style of single page parliamentary declaration that evoked the language of traditional prayer day materials. Indeed, it even evoked the image of another more traditional element of pre-civil war prayer days – song. While only a metaphor for unity, as opposed to an actual song, thoughts of the bonfires and bells of the past may have come to observers as they contemplated the unifying song of 'He hath dealt bountifully with us, for his mercy endureth for ever'.¹⁵⁵

The clear hand of Cromwell in the design of prayer days predates the protectorate to the thanksgiving for the victory over the Dutch fleet observed on 23 June 1653. The declaration of the occasion distributed to the nation, despite its innovative invitatory tone, moved even closer to traditional prayer day forms.¹⁵⁶ It was structured around a significant number of scriptural passages taken from Isaiah 10-12 and Psalms 107 and 118. Although titled a 'declaration', the body of the text referred to it as an 'exhortation' rather than an order. While the passages chosen were not ordered to be used on the day itself, they would have acted as prompts to many members of the clergy and are likely to have been read aloud in church the preceding Sunday. The choice of scriptural references was conservative and traditional. Isaiah 12.5, 'Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the Earth', and Psalm 107.1, 'O give

¹⁵⁴ For example, compare the act for the fast for a blessing on the forces of the Commonwealth on 9 and 30 June 1652, *An act for the observation of a day of publique fasting and humiliation* (London, 1652; Wing E1118), with the parliamentary order for the fast responding to the discomfiture of parliament's forces in the north and west on 21 July 1643, *Die Mercurii*, 19. July, 1643. The Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, out of the deep sense of Gods heavy wrath now upon this kingdome (London, 1643; Wing E1640B).

¹⁵⁵ *A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, for a Time of Publique Thanksgiving, Upon the Five and Twentieth of This Instant August, for the Great Victory Lately Vouchsafed to Their Fleet at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E1510).

¹⁵⁶ *A Declaration from the Generall and Council of State... for the late great Victory at Sea* (London, 1653; Wing E775aA). For the innovation of inviting the nation to pray by Cromwell see chapter two.

thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever', would not have been out of place in a traditional royalist form.

Once Cromwell became protector, suggestions of scriptural passages or points of contemplation became more direct though not compulsory:

And although the General End and Intendment of inviting to a Day of Fast, be, that all of every Condition and Quality whatever, do try and examine their heart and way more especially, according to their own Light, and in the use of such Helps and Means as the Lord in His Providence shall afford to each one, before and upon the said day of Meeting; yet finding some thoughts set seriously upon our Heart, We judged it not amiss to recommend the same to Christian Consideration, not to impose them upon any, or to confine any within the compass thereof; but leaving every man free to the Grace of God.¹⁵⁷

Such instances are perhaps the closest Cromwell came to acting as head of the Church of England, yet they demonstrate his unwillingness to prescribe on matters of religion. During the protectorate, occasional days of prayer may have moved far closer to the traditional model in terms of content by way of these quasi-forms. Yet, in tone and nature, they became even more radical because they were not imposed. However, it must be noted that, when subject to the influence of a protectorate parliament, prayer day materials reverted to the previous commonwealth-style.¹⁵⁸

A change in tone and style in the content of protectorate declarations is discernable following the defeat of English troops in Hispaniola in April 1655 (part of the Western Design expedition). Though news reached London in July, no order for public prayer was made until November. It is unclear why this should be the case, though Cromwell did consider his own sin to be part of the cause (whether or not this was prompted by Henry Vane's publication of *A Healing Question Propounded* and other radical pamphlets that laid the blame at his door we will probably never know).¹⁵⁹ Thus the delay may have been caused

¹⁵⁷ *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, Inviting the People of England and Wales, to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1654; Wing C7077). The nationwide fast was observed on 24 March 1654.

¹⁵⁸ See *A Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector... Solemn Fasting & Humiliation in the Three Nations* (Wing C7068A).

¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, at his state trial Vane claimed that it had been his spiritual reflections on the nationwide fast of 13 March 1655 which had prompted him to write *A Healing Question Propounded*. See T.B. Howell (ed.), *State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other*

by Cromwell's inward spiritual searching for 'that accursed thing' which was bringing God's wrath upon the kingdom and divine guidance as to how to proceed, only much later turning his attention to the sins of the rest of the nation. He may have been trying to 'solve' the problem alone with private fasting. He certainly shut himself away for a whole day on hearing the news.¹⁶⁰

When nationwide fasts were authorised in November 1655 and March and September 1656, the tone was one of increasing desperation.¹⁶¹ For the first time Cromwell stated that the devil was at work amongst the godly in government as well as the nation as a whole: 'When we call to mind, together with the repeated loving kindnesses of God to his People in these Nations, the late rebukes We have received, the Tares of Division that have been sown by the envious one, and the growth they have had, through his Subtilty, amongst Us'.¹⁶² The only response possible was 'Solemn and Earnest Supplications to the Throne of Grace (a way wherein We have often experimented the good presence of God)' a duty demanded not only of Cromwell who would 'lie low before the Lord' but also 'all the People of God in these Nations'.¹⁶³

The declarations given in November 1655 and March 1656 refrained from suggesting scriptural passages; perhaps Cromwell did not feel worthy to do so. Even once suggestions of biblical verses returned in the autumn of 1656, they were again scattered through the declaration, as they had been in the commonwealth, rather than directly stated as recommended passages for contemplation.¹⁶⁴ This would support Worden's notion of a change in Cromwell's attitude in the months following the collapse of the first protectorate parliament in January 1655 when he 'seems to have abandoned the conciliatory

Crimes and Misdemeanors from the earliest period to the year 1783 (London, 1816), vol. 5, pp. 791-800, esp. 799. For Cromwell's reaction to Hispanola see Blair Worden, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan', in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best (eds.), *History, Society and the Churches: Essays in honour of Owen Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1985), especially pp. 135-139.

¹⁶⁰ Worden, 'Achan', p. 135.

¹⁶¹ Dates of observance were 6 December 1655, 28 March 1656 and 30 October 1656.

¹⁶² *A Declaration... Inviting the People* (Wing C7078)

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Compare *An act for setting apart Thursday the thirtieth day of January, 1650. for a day of publique thanksgiving* (Thomason E.1061[33]), the order for the thanksgiving for the victory of commonwealth forces, with *A Declaration of His Highnes the Lord Protector and the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation in the Three Nations* (London, 1656; Wing C7070), observed on 30 October 1656).

policies he had pursued, in politics and religion, since December 1653.’¹⁶⁵ The defeat in Hispaniola made this change even more stark. In traversing political and religious spheres following the crisis, Cromwell’s reflections upon the present or future became ‘more conventional and more stoical’ in terms of providence and resembled approaches of ‘moderate and Court party politicians like John Thurloe and Henry Cromwell’.¹⁶⁶ In becoming ‘resigned unto’ or ‘submitted’ to providence, Cromwell lost confidence in his worthiness to direct the nation in prayer through quasi-forms like declarations.¹⁶⁷ His submission to his parliaments meant that the prayer day materials for the thanksgiving for victory against the Spanish at Santa Cruz followed the later commonwealth style with a short order and detailed narrative of victory.¹⁶⁸ Thus, two competing styles of declarations existed: the later Cromwellian style consisting of a single proclamation-like sheet with scattered biblical references, and that preferred by protectorate parliaments, a short order and detailed narrative or justification. This tension in declaration style depended on whether or not parliament was in session and continued during the second protectorate, demonstrating the continuing tensions over where authority for these occasions lay.¹⁶⁹

VII

Following the resignation of Protector Richard Cromwell on 24 May 1659, prayer day materials moved further towards those of early parliamentary occasions with very brief declarations to order occasions.¹⁷⁰ By the summer of

¹⁶⁵ Worden, ‘Achan’, p. 135.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁶⁷ For his new attitude to providence see *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *An Order of Parliament with the Consent of His Highness the Lord Protector, for a Day of Publike Thanksgiving within the Cities of London and Westminster, the Late Lines of Communication, and Weekly Bills of Mortality, on Wednesday the Third of June Next; for the Great Success God Hath Been Pleased to Give the Navy of This Commonwealth under the Command of General Blake against the Spaniard. Together with a Narrative of the Same Success, as It Was Communicated in a Letter from the Said General* (London, 1657; Wing E1694A).

¹⁶⁹ Compare *By the Protector. A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Publique Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1658; Wing C7181) and *A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Solemn Fasting & Humiliation* (London, 1658; Wing C7182) with *A Declaration of the Lord Protector and Both Houses of Parliament, for a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, to Be Observed in All Places within the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, Upon the Eighteenth Day of May, 1659* (London, 1659; Wing C7183).

¹⁷⁰ See the fast for prevalent sins and a blessing on the commonwealth observed on 31 August 1659, *Tuesday, July 26. 1659* (London, 1659; Wing E1753) and fast day for prevalent sins and

1660 even the official directions for fast and thanksgiving services given in the Directory were superseded by the most traditional of prayer day materials. The form of prayer composed for the thanksgiving for 'His Majesties Happy Return' on 28 June 1660 demonstrated a distinct return to 1640. In 1660, even the rubric instructing the minister to stand at the north side of the table was reinserted into the form of prayer. Laudianism had started to gain prominence once more - a backlash against puritan innovation and a symbolization of stability.¹⁷¹

Unsurprisingly, this form emphasized the importance and divine institution of kingship and the duty of Christian people to obey their king. The psalms read, such as Psalm 21, repeatedly referred to the king; and the key readings, such as Matthew 22.16-22, described the importance of paying Caesar his due tribute.¹⁷² Authorised national days of prayer, despite twenty years of a flow and ebb of tides of innovation, had returned to a traditional form that had its foundations in the mid-sixteenth century.

In conclusion, the content and structure of prayer day materials, such as forms of prayer, changed in response to the struggles of civil war and the birth of subsequent government regimes. Given the causal link between prayer day ordering processes and the production of prayer day materials, it is unsurprising that in general the key turning points of shifts in authority identified in chapter two mirror those outlined above. As tension turned to military engagement, there was a correlating increase in the strength of propagandistic elements in materials issued for prayer days on both sides. For royalists, initial alterations to the traditional form sought to increase their appeal, comfort their supporters, and improve the public image of the king. Analysis of parliamentary

for a blessing on parliament, observed on 6 April 1660, see *Friday, March the 16th. 1659 Resolved, &C.* (London, 1659; Wing E2237A). The thanksgiving for deliverance from Sir George Booth's plot may be considered a slight exception here. The declaration of the thanksgiving comprised of a single sheet folded in half to create an A1r-2v pamphlet, the additional space required was necessary to ensure the public was aware of Booth's and his accomplices' attempts to readmit 'a Kingly Interest... against which God hath so long by a Successive and uninterrupted Series of Providences very fully witnessed', *A Declaration of the Parliament for a day of thanksgiving* (London, 1659; Wing E1493), sig. A1v.

¹⁷¹ Compare *A Forme* (STC 16557), *A Forme of Common Prayer...the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Wing C4111A) and *A Form of Prayer, with Thanksgiving, to Be Used of All the Kings Majesties Loving Subjects. The 28th of June, 1660. For His Majesties Happy Return to His Kingdoms* (London, 1660; Wing C4170). For the rise of Laudianism after 1660 see Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), particularly chapters 1, 2 and 4.

¹⁷² *A Form... Happy Return* (Wing C4170). The form has a misprint that identifies this passage as Matthew 2.16.

materials demonstrates an initial utter rejection of the traditional form with the ousting of episcopacy followed by attempts to imitate their purpose – uniformity of worship. With the issuing of the Directory, parliament attempted to find a balance between the need for uniformity and to assuage individual consciences.

However, ultimately it came to recognise the need to order prayers in the traditional manner, particularly if some necessary prayers were unpalatable (such as those for the king). Parliament soon came to imitate the traditional form, utilising orders and declarations as quasi-forms in addition to the directions outlined in the Directory. As new commonwealth and protectorate governments sought to establish their authority, prayer day materials were a key means of bolstering their public image. Just as changes to the traditional form had indicated the growth of tension, the reversal of innovations in the 1650s as materials moved closer to the content of traditional forms signified security and stability. Ultimately this culminated in the issue of a traditional form of prayer in 1660 marking the return of monarchy.

Three key aspects are of particular importance. First, the primacy of theological purpose in these occasions cannot be overemphasised. Although those in authority used occasions for propaganda purposes (to a stronger or weaker extent depending on the immediate context) this never became their key focus. Consideration of the significance of prayer day propaganda in influencing the nation (and parliament in particular) must be tempered in light of this. Whether royalist or parliamentarian, whether issued in 1640, 1650 or 1660 all prayer day materials were designed to turn the nation to God in the hope that either his hand of judgment would be stayed or that his bountiful mercies would continue.

Second, given this fundamental purpose, from c.1644 to 1645 and after, both royalist and parliamentarian prayer days materials had to address the significant question of why their occasions had not worked yet. For, why was the nation still at war if God was on their side? The only potential reasons for the ‘failure’ of prior occasions lay the blame either on the people or the authorities. If the occasions had not been observed correctly either through willful outward disobedience to the instructions of the authorities, or inward spiritual unwillingness; then the nation had not turned. Naturally, God would not respond. Alternatively, and more worryingly, perhaps the orders of the authorities had not been sufficient? The introduction of prayers aimed at petitioning on behalf of the

enemy was an attempt to counter this. Both sides needed to reinforce the potential effect of their occasions by addressing both potential causes.

In this way, shifts in theology were dependent on the political context. Parliamentary attitudes to set prayer and regular nationwide prayer days altered at the specific turning points of 1641 and 1649 due to the political turmoil of the 1640s. This is not to say that the concept of set, regular prayer was not under question until this point, but rather that the political situation acted as the catalyst for changes to prayer day materials. Similarly, the fledgling regimes of the 1650s were eager to exert control over prayer days and the dates upon which they fell in order to exude an image of stability and settled government to the people. Those in power needed to establish themselves as the legitimate politico-religious authority. By both reducing the number of occasions and the content of prayer day materials, the authorities in the 1650s were able to convey security to a shaken public following the regicide.

Adaptations of prayer day materials and their politico-religious implications raise further questions about national religion in this period. As demonstrated in chapter two, both sides were keen to establish their authority in ordering these occasions and this is borne out in the prayer day materials analysed above. However, as highlighted above, the production of prayer day materials involved considerable responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the nation. Failure to provide sufficient orders would result in ineffective occasions. In this way, materials for these occasions give some insight to the extent to which parliament and later Cromwell considered themselves the head of the Church of England.¹⁷³ Neither the commons nor either protector was willing to take up the mantle of monarchical responsibility fully for the salvation of the nation. Only with the 'happy return' of Charles II did this comfort return to the people, reflected in the return of a traditional form of prayer.

¹⁷³ This broader question will be considered in more detail in the conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter Four: Distribution

On 26 June 1640 Master Gulston set out through the streets of London delivering forms of prayer. He met with the churchwardens for St Dunstan in the West on Fleet Street, delivered two forms for the general fast for the averting of the plague appointed for 8 July, and collected 5s.¹ He probably made the same delivery at St Bartholomew by the Exchange, and may also have been responsible for the delivery of this form to the parishes of All Hallows Honey Lane, St James Garlickhithe, and St Lawrence Jewry.² The following November, Gulston made a similar journeys with forms for another nationwide fast.³ However, the timing of payment for these deliveries demonstrates that the forms were delayed and more sporadic, though it is unclear whether this was the fault of printers or distributors.⁴ Indeed, All Hallows Honey Lane was the only parish surveyed for this project that definitely took delivery of the forms in time for the general fast, receiving them the day before it was scheduled to take place.⁵

¹ GL, 2968/3, St Dunstan in the West Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 598r; Warwickshire CRO, DR0087/2, St Nicholas Churchwardens' accounts, p. 999; *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Eighth of July: On Which Day a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Averting of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16557). Please note that the place of printing of all early modern work is London unless otherwise specified.

² St Bartholomew recorded receipt of the form on 26 June see GL, 4381/1, St Bartholomew Exchange Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 416r. While the Churchwardens accounts for the remaining parishes record the receipt of the form they do not allocate a precise date to the payment. This is a reflection of a less precise style of recording within their accounts when compared to those of St Dunstan in the West or St Bartholomew by the Exchange. Compare GL, 4383/1, St Bartholomew Exchange Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 416r; GL, 2968/3, St Dunstan in the West Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 598r; GL, 5026/1, AllHallows Honey Lane Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 50r; GL, 4810/2, St James Garlickhithe Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 93v; GL, 2593/2, St Lawrence Jewry Churchwardens' accounts, p. 11.

³ *A Forme of Common Prayer: To Be Used Upon the 17th of November, and the 8th of December: On Which Dayes a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Removing of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God, from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16559).

⁴ While Churchwardens' accounts attest that Mr Gulston delivered forms of prayer to St Michael's Queenhithe and St Dunstan in the West, the Churchwardens of St Michael's did not record receiving their forms until 21 November - four days after the general fast, see GL, 4825/1, St Michael Queenhithe Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 55r; GL, 2968/3, St Dunstan in the West Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 599r. This was not a unique occurrence and St Bartholomew's by the Exchange probably did not receive theirs until 25 November, see GL, 4381/1, St Bartholomew Exchange Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 416r.

⁵ GL, 5026/1, All Hallows Honey Lane Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 50v. At this point Master Gulston seems to disappear from the records.

In the churchwardens' accounts where he is mentioned by name, Master Gulston is referred to as 'the officer' and the most likely position he occupied was that of bishop's officer or apparitor. Apparitors were the messengers of the ecclesiastical courts. They served citations and conveyed orders.⁶ As the ecclesiastical courts were responsible for ensuring that local churches were equipped with all the necessarily liturgical equipment, they regularly sent apparitors around their area of jurisdiction delivering items such as printed prayers, articles, canons or books of service.⁷ As the officer responsible for delivering officially printed documents required by parish churches, Gulston's role was vital in communicating the order for a prayer day and enabling it to take place in accordance with the prescribed order of service.

The printed prayer day materials that needed to reach the parishes, such as proclamations, ordinances, forms of prayer or narratives (or any other items specially produced for use within a prayer day service), were ephemeral items designed for single or short-term use on or shortly prior to nationwide days of prayer. All were cheap and disposable items. In delivering prayer day materials men like Gulston played a significant role in enabling the state to reach into the localities to order occasions and parish churches to act in a unified manner on these occasions. Fundamentally, wherever state orders originated, whether from king, bishop or parliament, without messengers to deliver them they would have been without impact. Yet, like his poor amount of official pay, the attention paid to deliverymen, such as Master Gulston the apparitor, by historians is negligible given the importance of his occupation.⁸

⁶ They served summons for both office and instance causes. For more details see R. B. Outhwaite, *The rise and fall of the English ecclesiastical courts, 1500-1860* (Cambridge, 2006) pp. 10, 19, 57, 66, 73.

⁷ See Martin Ingram, *Church courts, sex and marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987) pp. 1-2. While I have not found any record confirming Gulston's position as that of apparitor, there is evidence from Cambridge and Warwick of apparitors delivering the forms of prayer for the 1640 general fasts. 'Payd to the parator for 2 payer bookes for the fast - 1s 8d', Cambridgeshire CRO, P30/4/2, St Mary the Great Churchwardens' accounts, p. 41. 'It[e]m pd to the Apparator for 2 bookes at the Fast - ijs', Warwickshire CRO, DR0087/2, St Nicholas Churchwardens' accounts, p. 149. It is clear that in 1640 the apparitors were responsible for delivering printed forms of prayer, it is therefore highly probably that this was Gulston's occupation.

⁸ Martin Ingram's work is a key exception here in noting the poor pay of the apparitors. Ingram, *Church courts, sex and marriage*, p. 66. See also Outhwaite, *The rise and fall of the English ecclesiastical courts, 1500-1860* pp. 21, 64, 100.

The key question of how prayer day materials were moved physically from the place of printing to those responsible for distributing them in the localities demands attention. With the end of the role of bishops in the ordering of prayer days in the autumn of 1641 came the end of their role in distribution. The gradual breakdown of the structure of the Church of England in the early 1640s eroded, and then ended, the occupation of apparitor until the Restoration.⁹ Within the churchwardens' accounts surveyed, the financial year of 1643-44 is the last to record an apparitor delivering an order and form of prayer for a fast day to the parish of St Philip and St Jacob in Bristol.¹⁰ As early as December 1641 secular representatives used their network – knights, citizens, burgesses, barons to sheriffs and then to the constables and churchwardens – to distribute orders. The early 1640s saw dramatic changes in the distribution of prayer day materials as the role of the bishops ended and secular authorities began to fill the vacuum, the crown left the capital and set up a rival distribution system, and both sides started to order separate occasions. The alterations to distributing orders, forms of prayer and official accounts of battles also had significant implications for the systems used by state authorities in the 1650s and beyond. While some of this was due to legal entanglement over the monopoly of the post system, other aspects were more positive, such as the growth of accountability.

Despite the significance of investigating the extent of successful dispersal of official printed documents, little work has been produced in this area, though the works of Filippo de Vivo and Mark Brayshay are noteworthy exceptions.¹¹

Though focused on Venice, Vivo describes official publication as 'the paradigm ritual enacted by the state', given that ritual is arguably 'a public form of

⁹ In theory, church government (and therefore ecclesiastical courts and the office of apparitor) continued until the parliamentary ordinance of 9 October 1646, see *A&O*, vol. I, pp. 879-883. However, the situation was not clear-cut. Probate cases continued to be heard by the ecclesiastical courts long after their supposed suppression and the state did not establish a central Court for Probate until April 1653. See Christopher Kitching, 'Probate during the civil war and interregnum: Part 1: The survival of the prerogative court in the 1640s', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 5 (1976), p. 283.

¹⁰ Bristol RO, P/ST P & J/ChW/3a, St Philip and St Jacob, Churchwarden accounts, 1643. These were the order and form of prayer for the Royalist monthly fasts appointed for the second Friday of each month from October 1643.

¹¹ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and communication in Venice: rethinking early modern politics* (Oxford, 2007) pp. 127-136; Mark Brayshay, 'Royal Post-Horse Routes in England and Wales: The evolution of the network in the later-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 17 (1991).

communication'.¹² He highlights the significance of the distribution of official printed material by state authorities, for they were 'a special kind of communication' that 'implied a moment of contact ... between the government and its subjects'.¹³ This was highly regularised and ritualised, which in theory formed 'a monologue contemplating no reply other than obedience', though in practice it frequently elicited a public response.¹⁴

Brayshay's work is focused on pre-civil war England and is highly practical in nature, providing detailed calculations of the time taken and cost implications for the state in utilising the post for delivery of official letters, proclamations and despatches. Having established the routes and expansion of the royal post network in the sixteenth century, his work with Philip Harrison and Brian Chalkley demonstrated the significant improvements in the speed of the post between London and provincial centres under Elizabeth and James.¹⁵ Others have investigated the use of royal messengers and the post individually, but their works are largely theoretical and based upon the assumption that orders from the centre, such as proclamations to establish posts, were always followed at ground level. Furthermore, while there are some scholarly investigations, such as those by Philip Beale, most of these works are by enthusiasts of the modern equivalents of these institutions, without much desire to place the development of these services in their wider political and cultural contexts.¹⁶

¹² Vivo, *Information*, p. 128.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 127.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ Mark Brayshay, 'Royal post-horse routes'; Mark Brayshay, Philip Harrison and Brian Chalkley, 'Knowledge, nationhood and governance: the speed of the Royal post in early-modern England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24 (1998).

¹⁶ On the king's messengers see Priscilla Scott Cady and Henry Cady, *The English Royal Messengers Service, 1685-1750: an institutional study* (New York, 1999); V. Wheeler Holohan, *The History of the King's Messengers* (London, 1935). On the post office see R. M. Willcocks, *England's postal history to 1840 with notes on Scotland, Wales and Ireland* (London, 1975); P. O. Beale, *A history of the post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts* (Aldershot, 1998); P. O. Beale, *England's mail: two millennia of letter writing* (Stroud, 2005); Mark Brayshay, 'Royal post-horse routes'; Brayshay, Harrison, Chalkley, 'The speed of the Royal post'; Cecil Ridsdale Clear, *Thomas Witherings and the Birth of the Postal Service*, vol. 15 (London, 1935); William George Stitt Dibden, *The Post-Office 1635-1720* (Bath, 1960); Charles Firth, 'Thurloe and the Post Office', *English Historical Review*, (1898); Peter Gaunt, 'Interregnum Governments and the Reform of the Post Office, 1649-59,' *Historical Research*, 60 (1987); J. C. Hemmeon, *The history of the British post office* (USA, 1912); Herbert Joyce, *The History of the Post Office from its establishment down to 1836* (London, 1893); Paul J. Phillips, 'An Unrecorded Post Route of the 1660s', *The Philatelist and PJGB* 4.Nov/Dec (1984); Alan W. Robertson, *Great Britain: post roads, post towns and postal rates 1635-1839* (Middlesex, 1961); Howard Robinson, *The*

Therefore, distribution networks as the practical means of dispersing material through the country are striking in their absence from our understanding of how the messages and orders of the state reached the localities in the 1640s and 1650s.¹⁷ The practicalities of issuing and ensuring official items, such as prayer days materials, were received in local communities is vital to our understanding of how widespread observation of nationwide prayer days was. Furthermore, this knowledge would shed further light on early modern communications between the authorities and local communities, whether initiated by secular or ecclesiastical powers. Furthermore, the question of how (and how successfully) official materials in general were distributed has implications for the study of propaganda.

Until relatively recently, the parliamentarians were credited, unquestioningly, as the more effective propagandists in print; only now is the royalists' use of print recognised by more than a handful of scholars as significant.¹⁸ In 1987, G. E. Aylmer made reference to the 'perennial question' over printed pamphlets of this period, 'who read them and how much impact they had'. He highlighted that this objection is frequently raised by those keen to 'deflate the significance of the Levellers, Diggers and the more extreme religious sects', but pointed out that it is fair to suggest that 'what is sauce for the radical goose should also be so for the royalist gander.'¹⁹ Despite acknowledging the strong arguments made by some royalists in print, Aylmer implied that their impact, and perhaps also their

British Post Office: a history (Princeton, 1948); Kevin Sharpe, 'Thomas Witherings and the Reform of the Foreign Posts, 1632-40', *Historical Research*, 57 (1984); J. W. M. Stone, 'An Early Postmaster's Book', *The Philatelist and PJGB* 4 (1984).

¹⁷ As opposed to readership circulation which has received significant attention, see Ian Atherton, "'The Itch grown a Disease": Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century' in Joad Raymond (ed.), *News, newspapers, and society in early modern Britain* (London, 1999); Joad Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century' in idem. (ed.), *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London, 1999); Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the struggle for the English revolution* (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁸ The implication of this view can be clearly seen in Christopher Hill's eloquent discussion of parliament embracing of the printing press from 1641. The discussion of the royalists print is conspicuous by its absence, see Christopher Hill, *The world turned upside down: radical ideas during the English revolution* (London, 1975), p. 22. G. E. Aylmer recognised the under-utilisation of royalist propaganda in G. E. Aylmer, 'Presidential Address: Collective Mentalities in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England: II: Royalist Attitudes' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 37 (1987), p. 7.

¹⁹ Aylmer, 'Presidential Address', p. 7.

distribution, was limited. He concluded that ‘the strength and fighting spirit of [Charles’] supporters may well have owed more to the concept of honour and loyalty than to the force or validity of [royalist] arguments.’²⁰

Thus, distribution matters because if no one read the authorities’ official publications, they were without purpose as the orders they contained would be entirely without impact. Though this chapter remains confined to discussion of prayer day orders and forms, the distribution of these items will hopefully shed light on the dispersal of officially printed items more generally in future work. Given their increased difficulties and history of general scholarly neglect, this chapter seeks to establish the royalists’ approach to the problem of distribution in addition to that of parliament. Churchwardens’ accounts attest that many local parishes responded positively to orders for national prayer days throughout the period 1640 to 1660, so the messages evidently were received in the localities.²¹

While it would seem a fruitful endeavour to analyse which distribution method was employed for a particular type of official publication, such as proclamations, so far research seems to indicate a variety of parallel methods employed for each type of printed item. This does not appear to have changed during the civil war and all distribution methods were affected by the hostilities. Both sides used a combination of distribution methods in order to use the most viable means of distributing printed prayer day material for the particular circumstances at the time.

I

There were three main distribution methods for the state authorities in 1640: the royal messengers (or other dedicated and endorsed messengers), the post service and the carriers.²² There were two key intermediary points of contact for official

²⁰ Ibid, p. 30.

²¹ I have surveyed parish accounts from Berkshire, Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Chester, Cornwall, Coventry, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, London, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Yorkshire.

²² The growth of a more unified postal system was enabled by the rise of the town borough in the medieval period, Beale, *England’s mail*, p. 145. Carriers carried letters as well as more bulky items and the public’s use of the carriers was sufficient enough to encourage John Taylor to produce a survey of the days of departure and arrival of the carriers in major towns in 1637 along

documents: the sheriffs and mayors for secular proclamations and orders and the bishops for ecclesiastical documents such as prayer day materials. The sheriffs ensured delivery into every hundred, the mayors throughout every town, while the bishops ensured sufficient copies were distributed in the parishes. Royal messengers were the most reliable and fastest means of distribution, as well as the most expensive. These were men permanently employed by the crown for the task and held accountable for every delivery. Other dedicated messengers, such as those of the Exchequer or those employed by an individual, did not have the same caché as royal messengers but were similar in terms of speed, reliability and expense. The Hanaper accounts of the Exchequer record the delivery of a variety of royal proclamations and other printed official material from the Elizabethan period to the Restoration, though are less detailed for the period 1640-60. For example, in 1623 payments were made to Henry Greene, Isaac Bushe, John Shockledge and Richard Bradley, ordinary pursuivants ‘for delivery of various specified proclamations from London to all counties and cities’ including £13 13s 4d for letters to JPs of many counties by warrant of 7 October 1622.²³

The inland letter office was established by proclamation in 1635, possibly largely as the eventual outcome of a moneymaking enterprise of James I. It was granted to Thomas Witherings, who had proposed the large-scale reformation of the inland post system and already had control of the foreign posts. The proclamation outlined postage rates for the public of two pence for a single letter for a single journey up to eighty miles, four pence for 80 to 140 miles and six pence for journeys over 140 miles. Withering’s men were to pay the postmasters

with lists of where particular carriers stayed on their journeys to and from London, John Taylor, *The Carriers Cosmographie* (London, 1637; STC 23740).

²³ National Archives, Hanaper office account, E351/1657, Account of George Mynne for the year ending Michaelmas 1623. By the early 1640s unfortunately the records are not as detailed, perhaps reflecting the use of the new inland letter office. Payments for the year ending 1642 included £568 to Isaac Bushe, Robert Bembow, Thomas Bembow and Robert Johnson, ordinary messengers, for payments by warrant for delivery of proclamations from London to all counties and cities. Unfortunately, the payment is broken down by warrant date rather than by a description of the items delivered for example ‘£24 by warrant of 11 Dec. 1641; £24 by warrant of 13 Dec. 1641; £24 by warrant of 11 Jan. 1641/2’ so it is not possible to be certain which proclamations these were, though the charge of £24 seems to have been standard. Other entries for £24 included ‘£24 by warrant of 25 Oct. 1641; £24 by warrant of 3 Dec. 1641’, National Archives, Hanaper, AO1/1374/121, Account of Sir Richard Younge for the year ending Michaelmas 1642. It is possible that the warrant of 11 January might refer to the general fast for Ireland formerly ordered on 8 January, but at present this is conjecture.

two and a half pence per mile for post horses and if two horses were used another five pence for a guide. Bundles of letters in one packet were to be paid for 'according to the bignesse of the said Packet, after the rate as before'.²⁴ The actual payment of port (i.e. carriage) was to be paid 'upon the receiving and delivery of the said Letters here in London'. Whereas previously a dual system had run of ordinary town posts (financed by the towns) and royal post routes (financed by the crown) the proclamation sought to combine these into a national post service that was free for the government's use. However, it must be noted that the transition from some state-employed postmasters to a self-sufficient inland letter office was not immediate and in July 1637 sixty-six postmasters remained on the payroll.²⁵

The postal service was designed to run from London. All roads servicing the post came out of London and the capital was the natural location to arrange for mail from one road to be delivered on another.²⁶ Therefore, in terms of a postal route, there was no early modern equivalent of the M5 and this was to be one of several major problems for the royalists. On leaving London, they effectively handed the existing post system to parliament who lost no time in ensuring both dedicated messengers riding post and postal letters were checked for royalist infiltration.

While carriers had been the most common means of sending private letters from the medieval period to the early seventeenth century, over time they were superseded by the post service or integrated into it through licensing. While the role of the carriers in mail delivery gradually subsided, their primary function of

²⁴ *By the King. A Proclamation for the Setling of the Letter Office of England and Scotland* (London, 1635; STC 9041).

²⁵ Beale, *England's mail*, p. 271. The concept of financial input from the public in order to subsidize government expenditure on distribution was not new. An earlier proposal for a national service by Stanhope around 1620 had also highlighted the money to be saved in sending proclamations and other official documents by post rather than by dedicated messengers, Beale, *England's mail*, p. 251. This proposal is significant in highlighting that proclamations and other documents relating to 'public service', were usually distributed by dedicated messengers; whereas 'ordinary' government post was dealt with by royally subsidized postmasters. As Kevin Sharpe's article on Witherings highlights his appointment as postmaster for foreign parts immediately created a series of law suits which questioned the legality of dividing the monopoly of the post into two - with one for inland and the other for foreign mail, Sharpe, 'Witherings'. The legality of the case was not clear-cut and by the restoration multiple claimants had legitimate suits in their attempts to control the post.

²⁶ See map 2.

distributing of goods and raw materials across the country continued.²⁷ In some areas, such as Oxford, carriers had been the primary means of all mail delivery rather than a parallel service to the post from its inception. In these locations, carriers were an integral extension of the royal postal service for state dispatches as well as private letters, for no papers could be delivered to these areas via the post unless taken on the final stage of their journey by carriers and/or foot posts. However, since the post had been organised around London from its inception, it would be unusual for carriers to be employed directly by state authorities for distributing printed documents. They were only used regularly in areas where they were effectively part of the post system.

The method chosen for distributing official documents affected its impact on state expenditure. In some areas postmasters were subsidized by the state and items were passed from stage to stage along routes to their state-funded destination points. By 1628 ninety-nine such postmasters were owed wages from the government.²⁸ Some items were forwarded between non-state-funded towns without incurring a charge by utilising the town's charter obligations, even when a destination had a postmaster paid by the crown. It is not currently entirely clear why some towns were penalised in this way while others were entirely funded by the state but excessive demand on the route would seem to be the most likely factor. However, if the crown used dedicated messengers, such as those from the Exchequer, Chancery, or the Chamber, the government was likely to acquire post charges. These messengers usually used the post horses belonging to towns along their route rather than waiting for a single horse to recover at various points along their journey. In order to use or 'seize' the post horses of a town, an official post warrant was required and the messengers would have to pay for each stage on demand. One such post warrant exists in the Evelyn papers dated 14 September 1640 and authorized by Sir Francis Windebanke to provide William Hawkins with 'two able post horses and sufficient guides from stage to stage' in

²⁷ For the use of carriers before 1640 see Beale, *England's mail*, pp. 125-137.

²⁸ *House of Commons, Report from the Secret Committee on the Post-Office; Together with the Appendix* (London, 1844), p. 52.

order to ensure 'his speedy repaire to Yorke' and back with Hawkins paying 'the vsuall rates'.²⁹

The messengers would submit accounts in order to be reimbursed for the stage post charges upon their return to London.³⁰ The cost of riding post, while theoretically a flat rate of 1s 6d, fluctuated according to the conditions and demand. For example, in 1651 when messengers rode for the commonwealth with urgent items of intelligence after the routing of the Scots at Worcester they were charged not the usual rate of 1s 6d per stage but 'at the expenses of 2s 6d every stage sometimes more'.³¹ They were reimbursed accordingly, demonstrating the state's recognition of the costs of riding post in difficult circumstances.

Urgency and reliability were key factors in the choice of distribution methods. Bishop Morton of Durham used a dedicated messenger on 12 January 1640 when he feared his original reply to a letter from Windebank had gone astray: 'Thus much I certified you by the last post, but fearing miscarriage I have renewed it by this gentleman.'³² Morton had responded to an earlier letter from Windebank relaying the king's request for men to aid his campaign in the North (the Bishop's wars) and sent three regiments out from Durham bound for Newcastle. Concerned that Windebank might not know his loyal actions and given the urgency of the matter, Morton elected to use a dedicated messenger for greater reliability.³³

Assigning a status of urgent/non-urgent or sensitive/ordinary to items for which we do not have clear evidence of their delivery method is highly problematic and yet there is clear evidence that these distinctions were made by contemporaries.³⁴

²⁹ BL, Additional 78268, fo. 1r.

³⁰ National Archives, Hanaper, E351/1654-E351/1684. For earlier accounts see Beale, *England's mail*, pp. 181-183.

³¹ BL, Additional 78260, fo. 63r.

³² William Douglas Hamilton (ed.), *CSPD*, Charles I, 1639-40 (London, 1877), item 112, 12 January 1640.

³³ It may be significant that he chose a gentleman to act as his messenger. See the works of Philip Beale for the potential importance of the status of messengers.

³⁴ For example, there are distinctions between ordinary and extraordinary dispatches. See BL, Additional 22546, fl. 109r.

We are in danger of projecting our own ideas of what was important on to our subjects. In 1641 the Commons had authorised payments for messengers of the Exchequer to deliver a thanksgiving order at the cost of thirty pounds.

Conversely, they did not use dedicated messengers to distribute the urgent and sensitive *Act for prohibiting the proclaiming of any person to be King* after the regicide. Their actions in 1649 may have been to show its faith in the postal service; alternatively it may have been merely to save money.³⁵

Therefore, before 1641, when the crown authorised a prayer day and the bishops were called upon to distribute forms of prayer, they had a variety of distribution options at their disposal: private household messengers, apparitors in their diocese, the post, and occasionally royal messengers.³⁶ Given the breadth of its network and low cost, for non-urgent items it seems likely that a significant proportion of printed material came to the bishop's *apparator generalis* (as the Bishop's representative) via the postal service. Once received, items were then distributed by the apparitors throughout the diocese. Similarly, communication with other bishops or with the central authorities would likely be sent via the post, though if the message was pressing dedicated messengers could be employed. Following the end of the bishops' role in prayer days in September 1641, the initial step of assigning responsibility for distribution to the episcopacy no longer existed and very quickly the ecclesiastical methods of distribution, such as the use of apparitors, disintegrated. Both parliament and king would need to be innovative in seeking ways to distribute prayer day materials.

II

³⁵ *CJ* 30/1/1649.

³⁶ *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Solemnized Thorowout This Realm of England* (London, 1640; STC 9159). Since the medieval period, each ecclesiastical court had developed its own messenger service and in addition bishops had their own private messengers as demonstrated by their household accounts. Bishops sometimes used the royal messengers, but they had no unified nationwide messenger service to rival it for non-urgent dispatches. Thus, from the sixteenth-century there were instances of bishops regularly 'using the town posts'. Beale, *A history of the post*, pp. 64, 67; idem., *England's mail*, p. 91. James F. Willard, 'The Dating and Delivery of Letters Patent and Writs in the Fourteenth Century', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 10 (1933), p. 9.

While the royalists were to have the harder task, parliamentarians were still challenged by the problem of distribution. Though naturally keener to step away from use of the ecclesiastical distribution network for distributing official publications to the parishes, its replacement was not straightforward. The thanksgiving for the treaty with Scotland ordered for 7 September 1641, over which Bishop John Williams had lost the fight for episcopacy, highlighted the friction between the Lords and the Commons. The power to control distribution was recognised by both houses as highly advantageous in bolstering the position of their house and by extension their position relative to the king. With their natural role of negotiator between king and parliament, the Lords recognised that control of distribution could ease some of the political pressure surrounding the issue of episcopacy. In return the Commons were keen to ensure the utter removal of the bishops.

Nevertheless, before the king left London and with their rejection of the episcopate, parliament had to find an effective means of distributing their orders for prayer days which were still ‘Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie: and by the Assignes of Iohn Bill.’³⁷ While the Commons were increasing their authority over prayer days, the Lords chose the date of the thanksgiving and had the final role in authorising the order, its printing and its publication. Though both houses agreed that sheriffs should be used to distribute the order throughout the provinces, there was disagreement as to whether they should be used exclusively. The Lords originally responded to the Commons that they would ensure the ‘sending of the Ordinances for the Day of Thanksgiving to the Sheriffs, and for the Dispersing of it all other ways they can’.³⁸ This was not enough for the Commons, for presumably it left the door open for some distribution of the orders to be done by the bishops and their officers. They pressured the Lords and insisted on sole distribution by the sheriffs. The Lords conceded.³⁹

³⁷ *An Ordinance of Parliament for a day of publike Thanksgiving for the Peace concluded between England and Scotland* (London, 1641; Wing E1797), observed 7/9/1641.

³⁸ See the answer from the Lords in *CJ* 30/8/1641.

³⁹ *LJ* 30/8/1641. For further details on the ordering of this occasion, see chapter two above.

The problem remained of how to send the orders from London to the sheriffs in the localities. On 31 August 1641 the Commons ordered £30 ‘out of the Receipt of the Poll-money’ to be paid to ‘Messengers of the Exchequer ... for their Charges in dispersing the Ordinance for celebrating the Day of Publick Thanksgiving’ and using ‘their best Diligence in the speediest Dispersing of them.’⁴⁰ This seems to be a reaction to a realisation that they had ordered a thanksgiving to take place across the whole kingdom with only a week to get the order into the localities. This was an expensive method of distribution and infrequently used by the parliamentarians through the period 1640-1660 reflecting their belief in the urgency and status of the occasion.

The speed of delivery is highlighted by how quickly Edward Nicholas became aware of parliament’s actions. He had sent out orders for forwarding some enclosed packets on 25 August and learned of the sending of the ordinance via express messenger the same day it was ordered (31 August) through a reply to his letter:

Yo[u]r honors Let[ter] of y^e 25th [pre]sent I rec[eive]d yesterday in y^e afternoone About 2 a Clocke and forth w[i]th sent yo[u]r severall paquets according to their direcc[i]ones. I haue herew[i]th sent yo[u]r hono[u]r an Ordinance of Parliament for publique thanksgiving whereof seuerall {[insert:]} printed coppies} were that day by the Parliament sent to all parts of this kyngdome by express Messengers.⁴¹

Therefore, the distribution process could also be used in reverse to forward useful information to the central authorities. Orders for distribution from the centre seem to have expected a response from the recipients responsible for delivery. Bristol replied to Nicholas on 9 September:

I haue receved y[ou]rs of [th]e 7th and shall make [th]e best vse I can of the in-closed for [th]e Kinges Service ... Wee have here performed The Publicke Thankesgiuing for [th]e Peace w[i]th great Solemnitye, and trewly {[insert:]} [th]e most} of the better sorte of this Countrye stand very well affected. I knowe y[ou] can expect nothing from this barren

⁴⁰ *CJ* 31/8/1641.

⁴¹ BL, Egerton 2533, fo. 192r.

place, in riterne of [th]e carefull Correspondencye, y[ou] will accept of my thanks, vntill I may haue some better meanes to serve y[ou].⁴²

The order for the public fast for Ireland (which would later become the monthly fast) was spread throughout London, in the first instance, by MPs and London citizens using their own initiative (and finances). Evidence is lacking as to how they approached this problem and the success rate would have depended upon the dedication of the MP. Only once a general fast for the kingdom had been agreed was further attention given to the problem of distribution. On 23 December, the Commons took the lead role:

Now to the end that all places may the better take notice hereof; It is this day Ordered by the Commons now assembled in Parliament, That the Knights, Citizens, Burgesses, and Barons of the Cinque-Ports, that serve for the severall Counties, Cities, Boroughs, and Cinque-Ports respectively, shall forthwith send down Copies of this Order to the severall Sheriffs, requiring them to deliver Copies thereof to the severall Head-Constables, and they are likewise required to deliver the like Copies to the Pettie-Constables and Church-Wardens, and they to the Ministers of each severall Parish respectively. And that they may the more speedily and conveniently be dispersed;

It is further Ordered by the Commons, That this Order be forthwith published in Print.⁴³

The king's printer, Robert Barker, printed the order, though it has not been possible to establish the size of the print run. Parishes outside London and Westminster were not due to observe the occasion until 20 January 1642, giving almost a month for distribution to take place. The knights, citizens, burgesses and barons of the Cinque Ports referred to as serving (presumably as members of parliament) were to ensure delivery of the printed order to the sheriffs, which included instructions for further distribution. The method of sending down copies to the sheriffs is not stated, but it seems reasonable to suppose that the post was used for at least a significant number of the orders. The order may have qualified for postage exemption as an official order but, if not, it was a cheap method of distribution for the members concerned. In any case, it does not appear to have cost parliament any money as there is no mention of payment in the journals as

⁴² Ibid., fo. 204r.

⁴³ CJ 18/12/1641; *Commons Ordinance for the General Fast* (London, 23 December 1641; Wing E2778).

there had been for the thanksgiving for peace with Scotland. Instead charges seem to have fallen either to particular members or to the inland letter office itself. The use of the post by parliament to distribute printed material requires further research, particularly for the period 1643 to 1649. There are frequent orders in the journals for printed materials to be ‘sent abroad to all parishes’ or for members of the Commons to send copies of order ‘to the several respective Committees of the several Counties, to the End that they may be so dispersed.’⁴⁴ Yet concrete evidence as to how these printed copies physically left London remains elusive.

III

The order to make the occasion a monthly general fast rather than a single national occasion on 20 January is confirmed by one of the last royal proclamations to come from Whitehall before the king fled the capital, being ordered on 8 January. The distribution of the proclamation was probably via royal messengers, perhaps due to the immediacy of the occasion. The writ addressed to the mayor and sheriffs concerning the general fast was issued on 11 January, which is the same day that Isaac Bushe, Robert Bembow, Thomas Bembow and Robert Johnson as ordinary messengers were ordered and paid twenty-four pounds to distribute proclamations from London to all counties and cities.⁴⁵ Secular authorities made payments for delivery in Bristol, Dunwich, Gloucester, Leicester, Rye, Shrewsbury and York.⁴⁶ In Coventry delivery charges were ‘paid to the Messenger ... for a bundle of p[ro]clamac[i]ons’ which included that one ‘for the gen[er]all fast the xvijth January 1641[2] - ijs vjd’.⁴⁷

The royalists continued to utilise the traditional secular distribution methods of delivery to sheriffs and mayors via royal messengers or the post once Charles left the capital and it is likely that they used them to deliver prayer day material as

⁴⁴ *CJ* 24/6/1643, *LJ* 27/9/1645.

⁴⁵ L&H, vol. II, p. 759. National Archives, Hanaper, AO1/1374/121, Account of Sir Richard Younge for the year ending Michaelmas 1642.

⁴⁶ See Bristol 1640-44/164, Dunwich 140, Gloucester 1396/155, Leicester 11/71, Rye 48/1/475, Shrewsbury 586 payment made on 18 January, York 23(3)/33 as given in L&H, vol. II, p. 759.

⁴⁷ Coventry HC, Herbert Gallery, BA/A/1/26/3, Chamberlain and Warden accounts, p. 99.

well.⁴⁸ The roads highlighted in Map 2 were not the only major roads capable of carrying the post, though they appear to be the established routes that remained largely consistent (though not necessarily in constant use) from the Elizabethan period until they were supplemented in 1643. Equally, roads were not the only means of transporting post: key rivers were also vital in transporting documents to particular areas, such as Oxford. Even so, as Map 2 illustrates, the existing post routes available to the king when he left London on 10 January 1642 were completely under the control of parliament. The situation only worsened when he settled in Oxford, for it was not even on a direct post route but a ‘by-road’ route via the river.

The king’s administrators were not entirely unaccustomed to this problem. Precedents had been set when the court was on progress and temporary post routes were set up to accommodate its needs. These were funded by the crown (unless it could persuade local officials to pay) but utilised local post resources, such as horses, while reimbursing the locality.⁴⁹ However, this task in a time of civil war was far more challenging. Nevertheless, the royalists set about selecting key roads that could be utilised and equipped for a post service. Map 3 shows the key roads in England and Wales in 1675. Though only a preliminary survey, a comparison of these maps highlights several major developments in the transportation network of England and Wales between the 1640s and 1675. Several of these transformations, illustrated on Map 4 such as the inclusion of York on the ‘great North road’, appear to be a direct result of the civil war itself and the royalists’ attempt to circulate their printed communications.

It is possible that the royalists turned key roads into a functioning temporary royalist postal system almost immediately on leaving the capital in January 1642.

⁴⁸ For evidence that sheriffs were responsible for delivery into every hundred see Flintshire CRO, D/DE271, Notebook belonging to David Pennant, fos. 14, 17, 50. It has not been possible to identify which act the letter refers to. Further evidence for the distribution of official printed materials to the constable of the hundreds can be found in the Bodmin mayoral accounts. ‘14 Maye 1643 It[em] p[ay]d Jo[h]n: Frod for carrying a posse warrant to the constable of the hundred of [blank] – 1s [pence missing due to manuscript damage].’ Cornwall CRO, BBOD 285, Bodmin Mayor’s accounts, 1643.

⁴⁹ See Brayshay, ‘Royal post-horse routes’, p. 375. Wiltshire RO G23 1/3, ‘A remembrance what money was paid when her majesty [Elizabeth I] was at this city, 1574’, as quoted in Brayshay, ‘Royal post-horse routes’, p. 388.

This may have been orchestrated and managed by James Hickes, who had been a clerk under Witherings. The evidence is sketchy, but in 1660 as part of his petition for control of the post, Hickes claimed credit for moving the northern route so that it ran through York and 1642 would seem to be the most realistic date for this to have occurred. He also claimed to have settled the Bristol post and delivered letters to the king at Edgehill and Oxford. Naturally this petition would be designed to paint Hickes in as good a light as possible but he may well have had some hand in these endeavours.⁵⁰

The obvious alternative to the post for distributing royalist materials to areas beyond the reach of Hickes' temporary post system was to use the royal messengers. David Pennant, sheriff of Flintshire, referred to Houlbrooke 'a messenger of the painted chamber' as having delivered the orders by hand.⁵¹ This is likely to be James Houlbrooke whose name appears on the payroll as a king's messenger both in 1641 and 1660.⁵² The order of 29 September 1642 was urgent since it was to send 'all the powder, shot, match and other munition in or belonging to the magazine of that our county' to Shrewsbury. Pennant responded accordingly, because he sent Houlbrooke's order, which he received at 7pm, to the deputy the following morning.⁵³ This method would also account for the order of 1643 and form for the Friday fast reaching York from Oxford.⁵⁴ Therefore, prior to the last months of 1643, the king's messengers were used to distribute the royalist orders, at least where they needed to cross enemy lines or where the message was urgent. Churchwardens' accounts attest that at least some parishes in Reading, Bristol, Chester, Cambridge, Oxford, and York received the form of prayer for the Friday royalist fast. Areas such as Coventry, Shrewsbury (and interestingly Beverley) did not. Delivering the form of prayer to Cambridge and York was problematic, Cambridge being firmly within parliamentary

⁵⁰ Hickes also traced his claim back to origins of the inland letter office claiming that he 'sent the first letter from Nantwich to London by post in 1637, a road now bringing in £4000 a year'. James Wilson Hyde, *The Post in Grant and Farm* (London, 1894), p. 281.

⁵¹ Flintshire CRO, D/DE271, Notebook belonging to David Pennant, fos. 19, 50.

⁵² Holohan, *History of the King's Messengers*, pp. 10-11, 266.

⁵³ Flintshire CRO, D/DE271, Notebook belonging to David Pennant, fo. 50. I have not seen any evidence of forms of prayer or orders for the same being sent to Pennant but it is likely that they were included among the various unnamed items mentioned in his notebook.

⁵⁴ For example see the 1643 entries in Borthwick Institute, PR Y/MS 5, St Michael's parish Spurriergate, Churchwardens' accounts; Borthwick Institute, PR Y/J 17, St John's Ousebridge, Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 89r.

territory, and to deliver materials to York would require crossing parliamentary areas before reaching the royalist stronghold in the north.

However, this became an increasingly dangerous method (as well as expensive) because messengers became targets for parliamentarians in their livery, no longer protected by the name of the king. Daniel Knifton was brought before the Commons on 31 October 1643, arrested, and presented by the sheriffs of London to parliament for bringing several bundles of proclamations and writs for publishing from Oxford, including the proclamation for the Friday royalist monthly fast. The Commons forbade the publishing of the proclamations, but despite Knifton's pleas that he was a royal messenger, he was also tried as a spy under martial law. He was publicly executed as such on Monday 27 November 1643. To execute a king's messenger was a bold move. The Venetian ambassador reported that 'although their action is condemned, yet the severity shown is not approved, as people like the laws and not the judge to condemn in this country'.⁵⁵

Whether Knifton was a king's messenger or a spy cannot be proven: he was not on the payroll in 1641 but here seems little reason for him to have had so many proclamations on him when he was apprehended if he were not.⁵⁶ Using the king's messengers was an expensive and risky method of distributing official royalist material and parliament's treatment of Knifton seems to have been an effective deterrent. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that any London parish, even those who continued to celebrate the king's birthday and coronation day, obtained a copy of the order or form for the occasion, nor any evidence of messengers of the king delivering materials into or through Eastern parliamentary areas after October 1643. Therefore, while there were significant advantages to utilising the king's messengers, who were known for their

⁵⁵ *CJ* 31/10/1643, 10/11/1643, 22/11/1643. *The True Informer*, (1643, Thomason 13:E.74[21]), p. 52; John Rushworth, *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State with M.S. notes by Francis Hargrave* (London 1721), vol. 5, pp. 369-370. Allen Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers relating to English Affairs, existing in the archives of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, volume XXVII: 1643-1647* (London, 1926), item 55.

⁵⁶ The king's messengers payroll for 1641 is given in Holohan, *History of the King's Messengers*, Appendix 1, p. 266.

reliability, loyalty and accountability, their use seems to have been highly restricted during the hostilities.

Even when official printed material reached the locality further problems might occur as men might refuse to distribute the material by ‘pretending ignorance’ and disrupting the publication of proclamations, or alternatively refusing to perform a service for which they did not believe they would be paid.⁵⁷ In a letter of complaint to the governor of Dartmouth in December 1643, Sir Edward Nicholas writing on the king’s behalf notes that the recent royal proclamations:

have been scarce heard of in some parts of our kingdom and when they have been tendered to some chief officers whose duty it is to cause them to be published, they have either resolutely refused or else excused the doing thereof without a writ, which though it be the regular and orderly way, yet in a time of so general disorder and distraction we hold it very fit to dispense with such a formality.⁵⁸

However, alternative distribution methods remained and were utilised by the royalists. Perhaps prompted by the difficulties of using royal messengers in the final months of 1643, Charles commissioned a more permanent royalist post network. On 27 January 1644 Charles ordered Hicke, who by this time had significant and valuable experience (either through Witherings or managing the temporary post system), to set up a postal system centred on Oxford for inland mail and Weymouth for letters bound for the continent to be sent via Cherbourg.⁵⁹ The warrants issued to Hicke required him to ‘receive and demand from all postmasters on the Western and other roads obedient to His Majesty, the arrears in their hands due to the Letter Office’.⁶⁰ This was a statement of claimed ownership by the royalists of the western post route, which ran to Plymouth. The other post route roads indicated must be the Bristol road and Chester road, which

⁵⁷ A letter dated 2 August 1641 from E. Martyn to the Earl of Bridgwater explains that because the Earl had not explicitly stated in his letter that the books and proclamations concerning poll money must be delivered by the messengers in Ludlow, Martyn had had a hard time convincing them to. The messengers were ‘very unwilling’ and needed ‘the justices directions’ before taking them into the Welsh counties ‘because the clerk of fines would not undertake to pay them for that service, or other bills due, which generally he denies to pay’, Shropshire CRO, 212/364/53, Letter from E. Martyn to the Earl of Bridgwater.

⁵⁸ Devon RO, 1392M/L1643/46, Letter to the governor of Dartmouth.

⁵⁹ See William Douglas Hamilton (ed.), *CSPD*, 1644, item 21, 27 January 1644; Hyde, *Grant and Farm*, p. 281.

⁶⁰ Hyde, *Grant and Farm*, pp. 192-193.

were the only other major routes held by the king (at least in part) for much of the civil war. However, this left some major royalist areas, like York, outside of the remit of the new service from its inception, creating a key royalist information gap on the eastern side of the country. That payments for clearly royalist post continued to be made in the west can be taken as a clear sign that this royalist rival post enjoyed some success. For example, 'It[em] to viveane for A post letter to Sir Cha[rles] Trevanion – 2s 6d' was recorded as late as 1647.⁶¹ However, from the start of 1644 (and therefore before the key parliamentary battles of Marston Moor and Naseby) the royalists were at a severe disadvantage as they were unable to communicate effectively with local royalists living in areas in the eastern side of the country.

There were significant geographical problems in establishing a semi-national postal service with its centre at Oxford. Naturally, the nearby major roads into Oxford needed to be equipped with posts. While some form of road existed between Sherborne and Weymouth, this had traditionally been a subsidiary route and it has been estimated that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century a letter travelling on this route would have taken nine hours.⁶² It was not an easy journey. Equally, there was no Oxford-Reading-Basingstoke route. This would have been very useful to the royalists as a key means of communication between their headquarters in Oxford and their allies in Exeter and Cornwall. While post was probably carried from Oxford to Reading by river, there was no useful waterway from Oxford to join the Chester road. Therefore the royalist post required the establishment of key links to existing major roads from byroads, and this was incredibly challenging with towns such as Coventry in the middle of key post roads being parliamentary from close to the outset of hostilities.

Therefore, the alternative of sending printed proclamations, orders, forms of prayer etc via the post was cheaper and safer, though would not penetrate areas outside of the royalist stronghold. David Pennant's notebook demonstrates the effectiveness of this method but highlights that it was employed alongside rather than instead of the king's messengers. One letter of instruction by the king to

⁶¹ Cornwall CRO, BBOD 286, Bodmin Mayor's accounts, 1647.

⁶² Brayshay, Harrison and Chalkley, 'The speed of the post', p. 283.

‘receive and forthwith publish and disperse in the several towns, markets & other chief places in that our county all the printed copies herewith sent’ is inscribed by Pennant with the information that it was received by a foot post from Chester and that the enclosed printed orders were disperse by him two days later.⁶³

The royalists appear to have continued to attempt delivery throughout the kingdom until the end of December 1644. The standard print run of a royal proclamation under Charles in 1640 and 1641 (and therefore before he left London and had use of the post and royal messengers for distribution) seems to have been 10,000 for a proclamation pertaining to religion, which needed to be distributed to every parish, and 1,200 for ‘secular’ proclamations sent to the mayors and sheriffs only.⁶⁴ With Charles’ withdrawal from London, print runs for ‘religious’ proclamations, such as the Friday fast, also appear to be printed in the smaller quantity of 1,200 and therefore were probably intended to be distributed through secular channels as well as reflecting the difficulty of attempting delivery to more than 9,000 parishes. Where royalist mayoral accounts survive they do note the receipt of fast books, suggesting that it is possible that the mayors and sheriffs received all royalist printed official materials and then passed relevant documents to churchwardens ideally recouping some of their delivery charges.⁶⁵ By 5 February 1645 there was no hope of distributing so large a number of proclamations and the standard print run dropped to 500, where it can be traced at all.⁶⁶ This is also the point at which Chester appears to have stopped receiving the proclamations from the king.

⁶³ Flintshire CRO, D/DE271, Notebook belonging to David Pennant, fo. 6.

⁶⁴ Compare ‘A Proclamation and Declaration to inform Our loving Subjects of Our Kingdom of England of the seditious practices of some in Scotland, seeking to overthrow Our Regall Power under false pretences of Religion’ (print run 10,000), ‘A Proclamation commanding Henry Percy, Esquire, Henry Jermyn, Esquire, Sir John Sucklyn, Knight, William Davenant, and Captain Billingsley, to render themselves within ten dayes’ (print run 1,200), and ‘A Proclamation for the prizing of Wines’ (print run 1,200), L&H, vol. II, pp. 662, 742, 760. The distinction here between secular and religious denotes the final recipient’s office rather than the text itself, hence ‘A Proclamation for obedience to the Lawes ordained for establishing of the true Religion in this Kingdom of England’ (print run of 1,200) was sent to the mayors and sheriffs as law-enforcers, rather than religious office-holders. L&H, vol. II, p. 752.

⁶⁵ Royalist mayoral accounts covering 1643-1648 are understandably very scarce. Bodmin mayoral accounts note receipt of a fast book in 1645 for 2s 6d, Cornwall CRO, BBOD 286, Bodmin Mayor’s accounts, 1645-1645. Unfortunately, I was unable to find a corresponding entry in local churchwardens’ accounts.

⁶⁶ Compare the print runs of proclamations issued in 1645 with those of previous year as given in L&H, vol. II.

Oxford is the only area I have surveyed that appears to have received royal proclamations, orders for prayers or ringing after this date, even though Cornwall continued to be part of some form of royalist post until 1647. Therefore, 5 February 1645 appears to mark the start of the total collapse of the royalist distribution network.

Evidently, there was a link between Oxford and Chester because royalist prayer materials reached Chester until at least 1644-5, possibly by utilising the old medieval road between Gloucester, Shrewsbury, Nantwich and Chester linking with the existing Chester road at Litchfield.⁶⁷ While this is only a preliminary survey and more work remains to be done on the distribution methods of the early modern period more generally, it is clear that the royalists in particular were faced with serious challenges and that the Oxford post was severely limited. The exact date of its demise is unknown but it had certainly perished by the siege of Oxford in 1646, and there is little evidence to support it after 1645. However, some form of royalist post continued in Cornwall until at least in 1647.⁶⁸

The execution of Knifton was a stark warning and the rival post set up in Oxford under Hicke did not attempt to deliver outside of royalist areas. Later royalist commands for fasts, thanksgivings or ringing for royalist victories are seen in the accounts of parishes in Reading, Bristol, Chester and Oxford between 1644 and 1646 as we would expect.⁶⁹ As more and more territory was lost to parliament, particularly after Marston Moor and Naseby, the potential audience of the royalists in the printed medium, even to those loyal to them but living under enemy control, was severely limited. This did not just affect whether royalist orders reached such isolated royalists, but any royalist propaganda at all. The

⁶⁷ 'pd for Ringinge for his Ma[ies]ties victories two seu[er]all tymes; by speciall comaund; in August & September last – vs' Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, 1644-1645. Further research is required in order to establish this connection, but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁶⁸ Cornwall CRO, BBOD 286, Bodmin Mayor's accounts, 1645-1647.

⁶⁹ For example see Berkshire CRO, D/P 89/5/1 [Microfilm consulted 97112/A], St Nicholas Newbury Churchwardens' accounts; Bristol RO, P/St W/ChW/3/b, St Werberge Churchwardens' accounts; Cheshire CRO, P51/12/1, St John Baptist Churchwardens' accounts; Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts; Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's Churchwardens' accounts; Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 211/4/F1/3, St Michael, Churchwardens' accounts; Oxfordshire CRO, PAR Oxford St Aldate b.17, St Aldate Churchwardens' accounts.

royalists could have the most sophisticated propagandists writing for them, but once they decided to restrict their postal service to the west only, their potential for winning hearts and minds was almost non-existent.

IV

When Charles left the capital in January 1642, parliamentary prayer day materials continued to be distributed via MPs and the post, a process that would continue until the regicide. From the point of view of parliament, control of London was a significant advantage. London had the distinct benefit of being the central hub of the established post system through which almost all post came, both financially and physically as the point where all established post routes before 1643 converged. Similarly, as one would expect most of the established major roads in England linked directly with the capital. As the printing capital, its capacity of printed pages per hour far outstripped any location under royalist control. The question of how the royalists obtained the amount of paper they required, especially before they settled in Oxford, is yet to be ascertained; but for the parliamentarians a steady supply came in from the continent.

There is evidence of ordinances being distributed by mayors, such as the ordinance of banning ‘th[e] superstitious & idolatory observac[i]ons of Christmas and other festivals, vulgarly called Holy daies’. This was received by the Mayor of Chester and entered into the ‘Great Letter book’. The Mayor was ordered to ‘publish & declare vnto all whom itt may Conserne aswell Cittizens as others that the Martkett daues shalbe continued... not withstanding any use or Custome to the Contrary.’⁷⁰ It seems likely on these occasions that the post delivered the printed items to the mayor as parliament had left sufficient time for them to be printed and distributed.⁷¹ Other evidence of the use of the post by parliament can be ascertained from post warrants on 15 December 1646 issued to John Taylor MP and Colonel Carter who were to make ‘speedy repaire to Westminster vpon Speciall Service of the state’. All secular authorities, including postmasters, were to ‘furnish the said Gentlemen with foure Horses and a Guide

⁷⁰ Cheshire CRO, Z/ML/2, City of Chester Great Letter Book, item 297.

⁷¹ The ordinance was authorised on 8 June 1647, see *A&O*, vol. I, p. 954.

to goe from stage to stage...Payinge the Usual Rates'.⁷² Parliament certainly used the postal system, and there were frequent attempts to settle the monopoly of the inland letter office to parliament's advantage throughout the 1640s, particularly as dependence on it grew in the absence of both the episcopal and royal messengers.

Parliament did not use the post exclusively, and on occasion required dedicated messengers for speed and reliability. For example in 1644 Coventry paid two shillings and six pence to 'the mesanger that brought downe an ordinance of Parliament for a Court Marshall by a bill.'⁷³ Yet, the reduction in orders received in parishes that had been sent by messenger from 1643 would seem to indicate that the post (via the local MP) became increasingly the key means of distributing material.⁷⁴ For example, ordinances for the Directory and the better observation of the Lord's day were brought to the parish of Holy Trinity Goodramgate in York 'by my lord maior officeres on 30 October 1645'.⁷⁵ Given the difficulties of civil war it seems likely that distribution was somewhat on an 'ad hoc' basis and only once hostilities ceased was the matter given clear attention.

After 1649, parliament's methods of distribution appear to shift slightly, removing the need for MPs to ensure the use of the post into the locality and centralising the procedure. On 18 July 1650 the act for the thanksgiving day was sent to the county sheriffs 'by the Post' they were 'to disperse the same to the respective Ministers, within their Counties.'⁷⁶ Similarly, the act prohibiting proclamation of any person to be king can be confirmed as distributed by the post because it was ordered to be stayed until ten o'clock the following morning

⁷² Cheshire CRO, Z/ML/2, City of Chester Great Letter Book, item 301.

⁷³ Coventry HC, Herbert Gallery, BA/A/1/26/3, Chamberlain and Warden accounts, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Designated distribution for nationwide prayer day materials was utilised by parliament for other administrative purposes too. Presumably, this was because they were to be directed all the way down to each individual parish and therefore, theoretically, every parishioner. This was the method chosen for disseminating the vow and covenant. In areas outside of London and Westminster (where it had already been sworn) the oath was ordered to be taken at the thanksgiving for delivery from a plot in London on 11 July 1643. See *LJ* 17/6/1643.

⁷⁵ Borthwick Institute, PR Y/HTG/12, Holy Trinity Goodramgate Churchwardens' accounts, p. 399.

⁷⁶ *CJ* 18/7/1650.

in order to allow for the necessary preparations and printing.⁷⁷ In August 1649, the thanksgiving for the victory against the rebels in Ireland was ordered to be distributed by Edward Dendy, the House of Commons' serjeant at arms.⁷⁸ He was to ensure that his servants delivered 'a proportional Number' to every sheriff with an allowance of four pence per mile for every mile they rode paid by the committee of the revenue. On receiving 'a competent Number' the sheriffs were to distribute them to the several ministers in their county.⁷⁹ This unusual method of distribution presumably was chosen for speed, since the order to print the declaration and act was given on 16 August and the date of observance was 29 August. Still, it caused the question of the distribution of official materials more generally to be raised. Following the order for the committee of revenue to sit that afternoon to discuss payment of the serjeant's servants on 17 August, the Commons:

Ordered, That it be referred to the Council of State, to consider of the most convenient Way, for the future, to disperse the Acts and Declarations or Orders of Parliament, into the several Counties, with least Charge to the State; and report their Opinions therein to the House.⁸⁰

It has not been possible to trace the council of state's response to this order directly, but with respect to the distribution of acts pertinent to nationwide days of prayer from October 1649, the council of state took a key role in their printing and distribution. It was the council of state that authorised the printing of 12,000 copies of the act for the thanksgiving of 1 November 1649 – a larger print run than any previous national prayer day act – and the sending of these items 'to the Sheriffs... to be dispersed to all the Ministers of the several Parishes in England and Wales'.⁸¹ A further example of this role of the council of state occurred over the day of humiliation seeking God's direction and blessing on the councils and endeavours of parliament and their forces. However in this case, the parliament appears to have power to give orders to the council. Parliament ordered the act

⁷⁷ *CJ* 30/1/1649.

⁷⁸ For more on Edward Dendy's role in the Commonwealth see Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a republic: the political culture of the English commonwealth, 1649-1653* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 32, 41, 91, 168.

⁷⁹ *CJ* 16-17/8/1649.

⁸⁰ *CJ* 17/8/1649.

⁸¹ *CJ* 11/10/1649.

for the day of humiliation to be printed and published on 4 February 1650, and at the same time it ordered ‘that the Council of State do see the said Act sent down, and dispersed, into the several Counties of this Commonwealth.’⁸²

During the 1650s, the council devoted more time to considering ‘the most convenient way’ to distribute official printed material. The Postage Act (1657) acknowledged the post office as ‘the best means... to Convey the Publique Dispatches’ among its many other benefits, but at what point the post service came to be recognised as such requires further investigation.⁸³ While the complexity of rival claims remains unresolved, it seems likely that the earl of Warwick and Thomas Witherings were successful in their claim over the inland letter office in 1642-3.⁸⁴ Yet to what extent this struggle of high politics affected the post’s regularity is unknown, aside from the royalists seizing of letters on the Chester road whilst parliament sought to untangle the Warwick-Prideaux claims in 1642.⁸⁵ However, by 1644 Attorney-General Prideaux’s control of the inland post in parliamentary areas seems to have enjoyed a reasonable amount of success, certainly more than his royalist counterpart James Hickee.

Gaunt argues that the regicide and the onset of the interregnum did not initially affect the administration of the post office, which remained under the control of Prideaux.⁸⁶ However, an inconsistency arises from the sources. While it seems likely that the post was regularly used to distribute printed official material on behalf of parliament before 1649, firm evidence remains elusive. There is little evidence of the use of the post by parliament in its journals before 1649 so it seems likely that the responsibility for sending items via the post rested with MPs. Yet, after the regicide, the post is regularly referred to in the journals and is frequently employed as a key means of distribution, if not the state’s main method of delivering official material into the localities.⁸⁷ When the state started

⁸² *CJ* 4/2/1650.

⁸³ *A&O*, vol. II, p. 1110.

⁸⁴ Gaunt, ‘Interregnum Governments’, especially p. 283.

⁸⁵ See the entries for the Earl of Warwick’s claim to the inland letter office in the winter of 1642-1643, especially that of 5 December 1642 when James Hickee and Edward Roden are noted as ‘pretended’ servants of Prideaux who had seized mail on the Chester road. *LJ* 5/12/1642.

⁸⁶ Gaunt, ‘Interregnum Governments’, p. 283.

⁸⁷ For example, see the use of the post for delivery of the act prohibiting proclaiming of anyone to be king, *CJ* 30/1/1649.

to review the legal claims to the post in March 1650, Prideaux highlighted his successful efforts to improve the postal service during the 1640s on behalf of the state. While a petition for continued control of the posts is naturally a persuasive piece of writing, the confidence of the state in the post system in the early months of 1649 would suggest that some of Prideaux's claims were true.⁸⁸

Further debates and legal challenges followed until Cromwell's approval of an ordinance, which passed into law via the council on 2 September 1654.⁸⁹ This ordinance ended the state's reliance on the legally and financially independent enterprises that had supported the post service previously when the authorities were not using dedicated messengers.⁹⁰ The ordinance ensured the delivery of all communications to those particular localities, including acts, proclamations, writs, summons and other state-concerned correspondence and also underlined the responsibility of Manley to distribute state letters and papers. He was to

safely and faithfully carry all ordinary and extraordinary Letters and Dispatches to or from His Highness, and to or from his Council, or Secretary of State, or any of them; And to and from all Members of the Legislative power, and to or from the Commissioners or Committee of the Admiralty or Navy, Generals of the Fleet, General Officers of the Army, Committee of the Army, Committee for Scotch and Irish Affairs, and that by the Common, Ordinary Male or other speedy and safe passage as the urgency of the occasion shall or may require.⁹¹

This order appears to confirm distinct status levels of state letters and dispatches – ordinary and extraordinary. The former would be sent by the ordinary mail system, while the second might be sent by other 'speedy' means if it were urgent, which presumably meant dedicated messengers. The equivalent of the royal messengers continued to be employed by the state (presumably they were taken to be private servants of the state and so did not contravene the ordinance) but

⁸⁸ *CJ* 21/3/1649. Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1650, item 13, 14 dated 21 March 1650; items 9, 10 dated 23 March 1650.

⁸⁹ *A&O*, vol. II, pp. 1007-1013.

⁹⁰ There is evidence that during the Commonwealth and the Protectorate similar state messenger services took the traditional role of the Royal Messengers. For example, see the reference to messengers of the council of state in Bod., Rawlinson A 477, fo. 10; Beale, *A history of the post*, p. 74.

⁹¹ *A&O*, vol. II, p. 1009.

this clause allowed for the possibility that Manley could be forced to carry all official documents and finance dedicated messengers if necessary.

V

Therefore, a sense of accountability for delivery of the post grew out of the civil war, though credit for this must largely be given to the parliamentarians. After 1649, local constables and bailiffs assigned to deliver an item by the sheriff could be held accountable for ensuring the delivery of prayer day orders into the hands of the local minister. When investigating accusations that one Francis Willford, a minister of Bluntisham in Cambridgeshire, refused to observe the fast and thanksgiving days of the commonwealth and protectorate, the magistrate Valentine Walton took care to obtain evidence that the local constables and bailiffs had done their duty in delivering the orders in good time.⁹² Though equivalents of the royal messengers continued throughout 1649-1660, before the king's messengers themselves were re-established at the Restoration, they too appear only to have been used only in unusual or 'extraordinary' circumstances given the cost.⁹³

This preliminary survey of the payments made by parishes and towns for acts, ordinances, orders and forms of prayer pertaining to national prayers or prayer days yields interesting, though complex, results. Payments appear to be for delivery of the item rather than the item itself as they are inconsistent both between neighbouring churches for the same item and for very similar items delivered to the same church on different occasions. There is some correlation between the wealth of a parish and the amount paid, suggesting that some sort of 'tip' was received by the deliverer according to what the parish could afford. Distance from the place of print appears to bear almost no relation to the sums paid. There is also a possibility that printers and booksellers were marketing private ownership of these materials either to corporations or individuals and charging for the item itself as well as delivery costs. It appears that the state

⁹² BL, Additional 78259, fos. 136r-137v.

⁹³ Payments for these messengers can be found throughout the parliamentary journals and state papers.

consistently paid for the production of these items, though perhaps individual printers might produce additional copies for private sale, and there is no evidence to suggest that it sought to recuperate the costs from the parishes. Payments for delivery of these items range from around one penny to several shillings. Frequently payments are made for multiple items presumably received at once, though instances of this seem to decrease after 1643 with the demise of the apparitors and regular use of royal messengers for delivering official printed material. When the term ‘messenger’ is specifically used, payments tend to be higher, typically two shillings and six pence which may indicate dedicated messengers performing these deliveries. This decrease would be consistent with the rise in the use of the post, for rather than bundling proclamations together to avoid multiple journeys to the same location in quick succession, particular proclamations could be sent out as they became available.⁹⁴ The post ran regardless of whether there were state dispatches to be sent into the localities.

Further research could provide a means of being able to calculate the success of these items in persuading the public to comply with them (its propaganda potential), whether the people complied enthusiastically or begrudgingly. Another key aspect to be investigated is the question of how distribution had an impact on enforcement. Despite compliance clauses within published statutes, proclamations and other official orders, the defence by an individual of not knowing about, or not receiving, the order was a reasonable one. It was also probably fairly effective, for it was one many investigators took pains to prepare against.⁹⁵

From a royalist point of view, while serious efforts were made, by 1643 the battle for an effective means of distribution across the country had already been won by parliament. After this date the royalists were not even able to get prayer day material to parishes loyal to them situated in the eastern side of the country. This was a significant blow, for their inability to distribute large quantities of printed prayer day material effectively probably extended to include other

⁹⁴ For examples of proclamations arriving in bundles see Coventry HC, Herbert Gallery, BA/A/1/26/3, Chamberlain and Warden accounts, pp. 76, 89, 99.

⁹⁵ For example see the investigation notes of Valentine Walton in BL, Additional 78259, fos. 136r-137v.

printed material including royalist proclamations, orders and propaganda. Indeed, it may have been a key factor in the royalists' defeat, though this is beyond the scope of this project. The royalists had a group of highly gifted and persuasive writers at their disposal, but these were wasted if their work could not be widely distributed. The circulation of royalist printed material could never hope to reach the levels of their parliamentary counterparts. To make matters worse, it seems that late in 1643, the royalists were well aware that they could not distribute their printed material effectively over much of the country, but could do relatively little about it. Therefore, while in the early days of conflict royalist leaders may not have considered parliament's rebellion a suitable cause for calling the nation to prayer, by the time royalist defeat began to seem a possibility they no longer had the means to order nationwide prayer days effectively. From surviving sources, it appears that the only royalist occasion ordered after 1643 and distributed with a significant level of success was for the treaty at Uxbridge in 1645 – an occasion that the parliamentarians were unlikely to disturb the distribution of prayer materials for.

For the royalists, the overwhelming difficulties facing them in distributing official printed materials (as well as private letters) has far wider reaching implications than can be outlined here. However, a significant, yet currently unacknowledged effect of Charles leaving the capital in 1642 was the loss of the practical potential to disseminate his orders and messages throughout his kingdom. Though Charles made serious efforts to distance himself publicly from accusations of Catholicism and to make 'royalist religion' more appealing to the population with his reform of the monthly fast service in 1643, his efforts were largely pointless.⁹⁶ For however persuasive his arguments, they were simply not heard by the majority of English men and women whether they were interested or not.

⁹⁶ See chapter three.

Chapter Five: Reception

The question of how the English people responded to orders for nationwide prayer days is both intriguing and problematic. Current scholarship supposes that the legislation produced in the 1640s and 1650s designed to improve prayer day observation (particularly that of the monthly fasts) is evidence of the neglect (and unpopularity) of these occasions by the majority of the public.¹ However, this chapter suggests that the issue is more complex and that the concept of a traditional nationwide prayer day retained its popularity with the majority throughout this period. Trevor-Roper first suggested a link between fast day legislation and unpopularity: ‘In fact the fasts were always regarded as party propaganda and, in consequence, were often resented in the country ... a constant stream of orders and ordinances, imposing new burdens of enforcement and new penalties for omission, showed that the parliamentary example was ill followed’.²

Christopher Hill later took up this view of the unpopularity of national fasts. While noting the difficulty of obtaining ‘accurate information’, he suggested that ‘fasts were more honoured in the breach than in the observance’. He argued that the average member of the English population ‘may well have resented giving up time for week-day fasts which might have been better spent’. Furthermore, according to Hill ‘royalist fasts were no more successful than Parliamentary’.³ However, it was Christopher Durston who examined this issue in the most detail.

Durston holds that godly individuals who valued the parliamentary monthly fast day were outnumbered by two groups: an active royalist opposition and ‘a much larger group of English men and women [who] appear to have rejected it out of a disinclination towards the rigours of the godly self-examination and self-

¹ For example, in August 1642 parliament passed an ordinance ‘for the better observation of monthly fasts’, *A&O*, vol. I, pp. 22-24. In February 1647 all existing orders of parliament were reprinted together, *A&O*, vol. I, pp. 905-7.

² Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament’, in idem., *Religion, the Reformation and social change, and other essays* (London, 1984), pp. 309-310.

³ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1993), p. 84.

denial'.⁴ Durston examined ten separate orders by London MPs between August 1642 and March 1647, which attempted to improve observance of the monthly fast. He concluded that 'rather than bringing about any improvement these injunctions served only to publicize their [MPs] inability to enforce their will'.⁵ He also outlined that the situation did not change in the 1650s, where radicals and conservatives alike openly opposed nationwide fast and thanksgiving days as well as 'a largely uninterested populace' repudiating them.⁶ Durston's 'legislative testimony to unpopularity' and prayer day neglect is supported by other sources.⁷ Ralph Josselin's diary, sermons (such as that by Matthew Newcomen), and newsbooks including *The Perfect Weekly Account* all bear testament to this.⁸

However, the difficulty of Durston's argument is that he fails to distinguish consistently between public repudiation of nationwide prayer days as a concept and the neglect (and unpopularity) of those occasions ordered by parliament and instructed to be observed in the parliamentary style. In part, this chapter seeks to clarify whether occasional days of prayer as a whole were neglected and unpopular, or whether it was the parliamentary adaptations of prayer days that failed to capture public enthusiasm. Furthermore, if the idea of nationwide prayer days was held as valuable by many individuals, what might cause their neglect? What other factors affected observation?

These lines of investigation are underpinned by the question of how to measure prayer day reception (and therefore popularity). By nature, observation of these occasions was a communal action, made up of the combined efforts and negotiations of individuals. Therefore, this chapter investigates the reception of national days of prayer by organised groups or institutions, such as parishes, companies and colleges, as well as particular individuals. The evidence for this

⁴ Christopher Durston, "'For the Better Humiliation of the People": Public Days of Fasting and Thanksgiving During the English Revolution', *Seventeenth Century*, 7 (1992), p. 139.

⁵ Durston, 'Humiliation', pp. 140-141.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-145, especially 144.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-143. See also, *The Perfect Weekly Account*, 25 July-1 August 1649 (Thomason E.566.17) and Newcomen, Matthew, *A Sermon Tending to set forth the Right Use of Disasters* (London, 1644; Wing N913), pp. 11, 39.

study was predominately collected from a widespread survey of churchwardens' accounts from various counties, supplemented with other source material useful for investigating communal prayer day reception, such as the accounts of university colleges and London companies, the papers of the committees of scandalous ministers, and mayoral precepts.⁹ This focus on churchwardens' accounts allows a fuller understanding of the history of nationwide prayer days to be pieced together.¹⁰ Given that the churchwardens acted as ecclesiastical officers of the parish in the same way that constables did for secular matters, their 'duties included reporting any deviations from official religion to the authorities'. Through 'inaction or connivance' they could accelerate, stall or even prevent adherence to orders issued by state authorities.¹¹ Similarly, ministers, mayors, magistrates or constables who were enthusiastic supporters of national prayer days were likely to cause a rise in attendance in their locality.¹² Therefore, these accounts provide a detailed insight into parish life and the reception of nationwide prayer days at the grass roots level rather than the ideal of central authorities.

However, there are some significant difficulties with these sources and caution must be exercised. Though historiography that focuses on the problems of early modern communal records has been largely concerned with churchwardens'

⁹ These are rare documents from the mayor to local companies with specific instructions, usually in addition to recent orders by the state or common council, such as requiring them to present themselves in livery on special occasions including prayer days. The Barber's company appear to be unique in preserving these orders in a 'mayoral precept book' though other companies did preserve them among their correspondence papers, see Barbers' company archive, MS 9821, 5 May 1660. All mayoral precepts surveyed for this thesis are from London mayors. However, it seems likely that other mayors (such as Chester and Coventry) used this system, though direct evidence is elusive. Initial research also included quarter sessions, corporation records (outside of London), constable accounts and vestry minutes; though these records rarely included sufficient numbers of items of interest to warrant the time and cost of systematic reading. Where time permitted such papers were briefly assessed and in particular archives these items did prove worthwhile (for example the corporation accounts in Coventry) but for the majority of archives visited this was not the case. This concurs with some of Hutton's research experiences, see Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994), p. 2.

¹⁰ This is as well as the religious history of the parish more generally, see John Craig, 'Co-operation and initiatives: Elizabethan churchwardens and the parish accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History*, 18 (1993), p. 375.

¹¹ Eric Carlson, 'The origins, functions, and status of the office of churchwarden: with particular reference to the diocese of Ely' in Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The world of rural dissenters, 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 164-165.

¹² For example, collections and attendance were raised at St. Dunstan in the West following the influence of members of the Assembly of Divines. GL, 2968/4, St Dunstan in the West Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 11r. This will be discussed in more detail below.

accounts, the problems it highlights also apply to the accounts of university colleges and company records. First, there is the problem of source survival. In terms of churchwardens' accounts, Andrew Foster has estimated that of around 10,000 parishes, only approximately eight percent (800 accounts) survive for the period 1558-1660.¹³ Furthermore, of those that do survive, parishes that are urban, located in the south of England, wealthy or linked to powerful patrons are over-represented.¹⁴ Additionally, there is the further difficulty of the turmoil of the civil war and interregnum. From 1642 'many parish records ceased to be kept systematically'.¹⁵ Parliamentary victory in the civil war caused a dearth of accounts in known royalist areas and means that the surviving sample for the period under investigation also over-represents parishes in parliamentary strongholds. As a result, and in an attempt to counter this, more royalist parishes were surveyed during the course of this research. Nonetheless, regardless of local allegiances, the uncertainty of civil war and regime changes made less systematic and less detailed accounts a safer option for all; an approach aided by the end of visitations and thus the end of the episcopal check and balance on accounts.¹⁶

Nevertheless some parishes did continue to keep detailed accounts and these are essential for assessing the reception of prayer days.¹⁷ Indeed, this investigation

¹³ Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts of early modern England and Wales: some problems to note, but much to be gained' in K. French and G. Gibbs (eds.), *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (Manchester, 1997), p. 77.

¹⁴ Despite the number of parishes per region being uneven in this period, the south (and south-west in particular) are over-represented in the surviving accounts. Similarly, there are more urban than rural parish accounts. For while only around seventeen percent of parishes were urban in the early modern period, in the surviving sample they make up eighty-seven percent. While the greater proportion of towns in the south explains this in part, it is also likely to be connected to the better social status of urban churchwardens. The accounts of wealthier parishes were more likely to survive, with parishes worth more than twenty-six pounds making up thirty percent of existent records while only thirty-five percent of all parishes in the early modern period were worth more than five pounds per annum. Naturally, there was a vested interest in preserving the records of wealthy parishes but patronage may also have played a role since forty percent of surviving accounts had ecclesiastical institutions or university colleges acting as patron. See Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts', pp. 77-84.

¹⁵ Carlson, 'Origins', p. 185.

¹⁶ Therefore, the parliamentary order to prevent bishops requiring any churchwarden to make 'any corporal oath whereby [they] may be charged or obliged to make any presentment of any crime or offence or to confess or to accuse [themselves] of any crime, offence, delinquency or misdemeanor' may have affected record-keeping as well as the punitive role of the churchwarden. See 17 Car. I c. 11 § 2 as quoted in Carlson, 'Origins', p. 175.

¹⁷ This is even more significant given the lack of alternative sources. This was an issue Morrill also commented on: 'puritan non-conformity before 1640 is recorded in the voluminous church court records while the comparable [Anglican nonconformity] records of the 1640s, the County

found that in most cases where detailed records survive for the whole period, parishes that recorded observation of nationwide days of prayer in 1640 continued to do so through the civil war and interregnum. Despite survival trends, there is ‘much to be gained’ from the analysis of churchwardens’ accounts, and this, supported by additional sources, challenges the prevailing historiographical view of the unpopularity of nationwide prayer days in this period.¹⁸

Often accused of boring historians, the repetitive nature of churchwardens’ accounts allows the unusual to be detected.¹⁹ Craig convincingly argued that the unusual within the ‘thick layer’ of the mundane was ‘indicative of other allegiances’ allowing one ‘to identify some of the underlying concerns reflective more of local initiatives than of deference to authority’.²⁰ While he focused on the selling of organs and purchases of the Geneva bible, the same may be said of the observation of prayer days in the parishes.²¹ For a parish that observed both royalist and parliamentary occasions could use the traditional means of celebration to demonstrate loyalty to one side, but also to preserve its local cultural heritage when called upon to observe the prayer days of the other.

Thus, the key issue is one of interpretation. How should we interpret the items of expenditure in the accounts? If we can see that people were spending money voluntarily on prayer days, surely this is a good indication of observation? Indeed, spending does appear to be a good indication of commitment and appears to be the best solution to the historiographical problem of how to measure belief. Thus, expenditure on prayer days is the most determinative measure of observation. The purchasing of forms, bell ringing, bonfires or receipt of collections are the clearest actions that allow us to identify reception of prayer

Committee papers do not survive’. See John Morrill, ‘The Church in England, 1642-9’ in idem. (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-1649* (London, 1982), pp. 90-91.

¹⁸ Foster, ‘Churchwardens’ accounts’, p. 74.

¹⁹ John Morrill stated ‘churchwardens’ accounts tell us – very boringly in the main – about ordinary daily parish business and obedience’, Morrill, ‘The Church in England’, *Reactions*, p. 91. Similarly, Craig noted that they ‘simply do not possess the same immediacy and appeal of other sources. They do not express the ‘authentic’ voice of parishioners’, Craig, ‘Co-operation’, p. 370.

²⁰ Craig, ‘Co-operation’, p. 372.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373.

days in communities. Nevertheless these are still problematic and these items of expenditure (particularly forms of prayer) could be ordered to be purchased rather than reflecting a free choice by a community (and thereby their support of an occasion).²²

In the context of this investigation, how can we know whether an individual or community observed a prayer day out of genuine religious motivation?

Ultimately, both historians and contemporaries recognised the impossibility of seeing into men's souls; the most determined members of the godly, given their opportunity to rule in the 1650s, acknowledged the difficulties of assessing belief in another. They prioritized behavioural reform such as punishing swearing, drinking and Sabbath profanation. Even the Major-General Edward Whalley commented that he hoped for 'a very good outward reformation' in November 1655, believing that a godly society would encourage true faith.²³ Godly magistrates were forced to consider men's actions as a better indicator than what they professed to be their faith with words. This is not to say that these magistrates did not value oaths and religious confessions, but that they realized that the insincere found it far easier to make false statements than to explain false deeds. Similarly, reformation historians have noted the inherent difficulties of extrapolating the faith of individuals or local communities from churchwardens' accounts (or even spiritual diaries) to the whole nation.²⁴ These problems equally apply to attempts to identify the motivations for observance and non-observance of prayer days. The historian, like the godly magistrate, is bound by the limits of what is doable, and action (unlike belief) can be measured.

Despite these issues in many cases it is possible to discover what an individual did on a particular occasion and whether at least some parishioners observed a

²² Furthermore, historians such as Andrew Foster and Katherine French have noted the difficulty of the nature of record-keeping 'and the ways in which parish communities often subverted the intentions of those who imposed record-keeping upon them'. Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts', p. 85.

²³ Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's major generals: godly government during the English Revolution* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 154-155.

²⁴ For example, see Alec Ryrie, 'Counting sheep, counting shepherds: the problem of allegiance in the English Reformation', in Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *The beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge, 2002); Christopher Marsh, *Popular religion in sixteenth-century England* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 9-10.

particular prayer day. Spiritual diaries, like that of Wallington, confirm that many did attend nationwide occasional prayer days (and other optional local occasions too).²⁵ Diaries kept by ministers, such as Ralph Josselin, comment on the level of observance and service attendance at particular occasions, though usually in a negative tone.²⁶ The papers of the committee of scandalous ministers, while containing, perhaps, suspect refutations of ministers who claimed that they had observed all the prayer days, also reveal statements from ministers (such as Thomas Rawson of Hoby, Leicestershire) that they did not observe them, either deliberately or through some practical difficulty.²⁷ Whether the local minister was enthusiastic or reluctantly compliant in carrying out his duties on the day is more difficult to discern. Even eye-witnesses might hear different implications in his tone of voice when giving his sermon or making announcements depending on their own viewpoint and motivations in attending.²⁸ For both contemporaries and historians, reasons of practicality ensured that the action of attendance prevailed over the motivation of observers as the determinative measure of national prayer day reception.

The lacuna between the actions and beliefs of the nation over prayer days leads to the five key points of this chapter. First, that there was a considerable gap between what people were supposed to do and what they actually did. The English people on a nationwide prayer day included the highly committed, the mocking saboteur and the completely ignorant. Second, that this gap does not necessarily indicate unpopularity with the concept of prayer days. Indeed, the reverse is demonstrated from the sources highlighting a third finding. The concept of nationwide prayer (especially during intense times of crisis such as the 1640s and 1650s) was highly significant to the many members of the population, as was reflected in the strength of traditional prayer day observation.

²⁵ David Booy, (ed.), *The notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654 : a selection* (Aldershot, 2007).

²⁶ For example, 'Sept. 25 [1644] Was a day of publique humiliacion; it would make a man bleed to see how regardless people are of the same, nothing moves them; a load of wool was passing upon the road, our men stopt the same; oh that men would give outw[ar]d reverence to the w[orshi]p of the Lord', E. Hockcliffe (ed.), *The Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (London, 1908), p. 19.

²⁷ In Rawson's case the reason was deliberate defiance, as will be demonstrated below.

²⁸ John Morrill cites the deposition of Mr. Fisher whom was accused of reading royalist declarations 'audibly and distinctly' and Parliamentary ones 'with a low voice'. See John Morrill, 'The Church in England', *Reactions*, p. 102.

Most significantly, the continued use of customary methods of marking these occasions as special within localities, such as bell ringing and bonfires, demonstrates the popularity of the concept of nationwide prayer days. Fourth, despite their popularity, practical issues prevented nationwide prayer days reaching their maximum potential in terms of participation, for even the very enthusiastic failed to observe on occasion. These could range from poor communication from central authorities to the mood of the individual on that particular morning. Finally, prayer days in the 1640s and 1650s were a series of negotiations between state authorities and the English people. Each sought to utilise these occasions to their advantage and a variety of responses can be discerned from contemporary sources. Communities and individuals negotiated the reception of nationwide prayer days, particularly during unpopular occasions (such as the parliamentarian monthly fast day in royalist heartlands). In doing so, they adapted local customs and thus ensured the survival of traditional means of practicing nationwide prayer days within their collective memory. This was so successful that nationwide prayer days returned in their traditional guise incredibly quickly at the Restoration, even without a functioning episcopacy.

I

The question of to what extent the nation participated nationwide prayer days in this period is made more problematic by the uncertainty surrounding what constituted prayer day observation. In 1640 at a basic level a consensus existed over the essential actions of prayer day participation. These were attendance at a church service dedicated to the occasion and participation in the prayers offered there. Preaching and hearing the word of God were also central parts of prayer day services. Yet beyond this, due to the ambiguity of instruction, there remained considerable flexibility within prayer day orders as to how occasions ought to be observed.

The general distinction between the celebratory nature of thanksgiving days and the more sombre mood of fast days was firmly established in 1640 and continued throughout this period. Given the required solemnity of fast days, their orders included more direction than those for thanksgivings. The royal proclamation for

the monthly fast on the last Wednesday of each month echoed the language of earlier fast day proclamations; commanding that the fast be kept ‘publikely, and solemnly ... by abstinence from food, as by publike Prayers, Preaching, and Hearing of the Word of God, and other Religious and Holy duties’. This was to occur in all churches ‘upon paine of such punishments as may justly be inflicted upon all such as shall contemne or neglect so Religious a work and duty’.²⁹ However, even with the greater direction given in fast day orders, ambiguity remained. For example, and as highlighted in chapter one, precisely what constituted ‘abstinence from food’ and ‘other Religious and Holy duties’ outside of church was open to interpretation.

Instructions for observance (especially outside of the local church) on traditional thanksgiving days were even more ambiguous. The proclamation issued on 22 January 1626 for services on 29 January (within London and the surrounding area) and 19 February 1626 (for the rest of England and Wales) to prayer for the retreat of plague is a typical example. The proclamation itself directed people to the prayer day form composed by the bishops for further instructions regarding ‘the manner and forme’ of celebrating the occasion. The form was designed so ‘that all His [Charles I’s] louing Subiects shall take notice, and religiously, with that deuotion which appertaineth to so pious a Worke, shall solemnize the same.’³⁰ Yet the form of prayer only instructed ministers and lay servers on how to conduct the service, detailing items, such as prayer and sermons, which were to take place within church services. There were no further directions for parishioners concerning how to spend the time outside of church. This lack of clear instruction within thanksgiving day orders continued on the brink of civil war with the parliamentary ordinance of 27 August 1641 that declared that ‘by Prayers, Reading, and Preaching of the Word in all Churches ... We require a carefull and due observance’.³¹ When war broke out, again the only additions

²⁹ *By the King. A Proclamation for a general fast thorowout this Realm of England* (London, 1641; Wing C2582). For an example of an earlier proclamation for nationwide fasting echoing this language see *By the King. A Proclamation for a publike, generall, and soleme Fast* (London, 1625; STC 8787).

³⁰ *By the King. A Proclamation for a generall and publike Thankesgiuing to Almighty God, for his great mercy in staying his hand, and asswaging the late fearefull Visitation of the Plague* (London, 1625; STC 8821)

³¹ *An Ordinance of Parliament for a day of publike Thanksgiving for the Peace concluded between England and Scotland* (London, 1641; Wing E1797), observed 7/9/1641

made to orders were in terms of expected behaviour within services, such as on parliamentary occasions when the reading of narratives of victory or discoveries of plots were added to the expected elements of thanksgiving services.³²

The most likely cause of this vague generality in orders for thanksgiving days was that the means of demonstrating celebration were common knowledge as they had been established for decades. The Lords referred to bell ringing as ‘usual Expressions of Joy’ and there were frequent orders from both sides for bell ringing and bonfires throughout the civil war to mark thanksgiving days (as well as to mark celebrations of the causes of the occasions such as victories).³³ St Martin’s, Oxford, ‘paid for a Bonfire by order from the King for the victory at Newarke’ in 1644 and ‘for ringinge by Com[m]aund for a victory in Wales’ in 1645/6.³⁴ Similarly, St Martin cum Gregory, Micklegate, paid for ringing for the parliamentarian victory over the Scots in 1648 both by order of the Major on the day the news reached York and on the official thanksgiving ‘ordered p[er] p[ar]lem[en]t’.³⁵ Other means of celebrations endorsed as acceptable by both sides throughout this period were thanksgiving dinners and a interesting parallel occurred on 20 February 1657 when, following the thanksgiving service, members of parliament dined with Cromwell in the Banqueting House at Whitehall - the same location where the ritualised dinner ceremonies of Charles I had occurred.³⁶ Indeed, so keen was parliament on thanksgiving dinners that the Lords ordered the sermons for the thanksgiving for Naseby to be over by noon

³² *The vote of both Houses of Parliament; upon the discovering of the late designe. Or, A narrative of a seditious and Iesuiticall practice upon the Parliament, and city of London, lately discovered; and some observations upon it by Mr. Soliciter. Die Sabbathi, 20 Ian. 1643. It is this day ordered by the Lords and Commons, that the 21. day of this instant January, being the Lords day, be kept as a day of publique thanksgiving, for the great deliverances which God hath given to the Parliament and city, from the severall plots and designes against them; and more particularly, in discovering the late designe: and that the vote of both Houses upon the late designe be printed, and read in the churches* (London, 1644; Wing E2433), parliamentary order for the thanksgiving for the discovery of a plot against parliament and London held on 21 January 1644 in England and Wales. This directed that ‘the late Designe be printed, and read in the Churches.’

³³ *LJ* 16/12/1642.

³⁴ Oxfordshire CRO, PAR/207/4/F1/1, St Martins Churchwardens’ accounts, fos. 183r, 185r.

³⁵ Borthwick Institute, PR Y MG/19, St Martin cum Gregory Churchwardens’ accounts, p. 244.

³⁶ For further discussion of the significance of ritualised dining at the court of Charles I and the banqueting hall at Whitehall see, Nile Blunt, *The Chapel and the Chamber: Ceremonial Dining and Religious Ritual at the Court of King Charles I*, PhD thesis, University of Illinois (2011), p. 79.

because their dinner was at the Grocers' Hall 'which is far off from the Church'.³⁷

Similarly, with respect to fast days there may also be a link between ambiguity in orders and the existence of a common consensus over expected behaviour. Indeed, it can be argued that when parliament first attempted to ensure 'better observation' of the monthly fast in August 1642, it sought to formalise the status quo rather than radically reform behaviour. This would indicate an initial moderate consensus between parliamentarians and royalists over how prayer day instructions ought to be interpreted and how fast days ought to be observed.³⁸ As well as abstinence from food and church attendance, people were to 'forbeare to use all manner of Sportes and Pastimes whatsoever, and their ordinary Trades and Callings'.³⁹ All shops and taverns should close, no wagons ought to be driven, and no wine, beer, ale or victual should be sold (except in cases of extreme necessity). This consensus was dependent upon one considerable caveat: these restrictions were only 'till the publike exercises, and religious duties of that day in the respective Cathedrals, Collegiate, Parish Churches, and Chappels be past and over'.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, the extent to which royalists, including Charles himself, felt that the sombre mood of fast day services ought to be continued outside of church is difficult to discern. The question of whether royalist leaders felt all activities outlined in the book of sports should be allowed on a nationwide fast day remains unanswered.⁴¹ However, there is clearly a tension between the total abstinence from food some royalists felt was required and vigorous exercise after the afternoon service. Sir Humphrey Mildmay noted in his diary entry for the nationwide fast on 25 May 1642 'The fast. All the day at church and no eating.'⁴² It is difficult to imagine him spending the late afternoon and early evening

³⁷ *LJ* 18/6/1645.

³⁸ 'An Ordinance for the better observation of the monethly Fast', was passed by parliament on 24/8/1642. See *A&O*, vol. I, pp. 22-24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ The book of sports outlined acceptable sports on Sundays and holy days. However, it should not be assumed that activities allowed on holy days were also acceptable on extraordinary prayer days due to their heightened special status.

⁴² Philip Ralph, *Sir Humphrey Mildmay: Royalist Gentleman* (New Brunswick, 1947), p. 168.

playing sport. Though there is no direct evidence to support this, it suggests that games, sports and other pastimes acceptable to royalists on Sundays were discouraged indirectly by many on royalist nationwide fasts, though not banned. Thus, once the thorny issues of episcopacy (and therefore forms of prayer for prayer day services) were laid aside, there was considerable potential for consensus between how parliamentarians and royalists felt fast days ought to be observed.

The moderate view expounded in the parliamentary ordinance is a good indication of how many felt fast days should be observed. The initial similarity between parliamentarian and royalist fast days is further underscored by Charles' actions. Even when Charles attacked parliament's usurpation of the monthly fast in his proclamation of October 1643, it was the use of services by the rebels as 'a Principall Engine to work their own designes', rather than any instructions for behaviour on fast days that he objected to.⁴³ The parliamentary ordinance for the 'better observation' of the monthly fast even drew upon the original royal proclamation as the foundation for its authority. The ordinance outlined that Charles, having declared a nationwide fast day after consultation and advice from parliament, distributed a proclamation 'to the end that all persons might the better take notice thereof (and to leave such without excuse as should not duly keep and observe the same).'⁴⁴ Though surely a concept the authors of the ordinance wished to emphasise, the notion that there was agreement between parliament and king in 1642 over the importance of reverent fast days observance (and broadly what this consisted of) should not be dismissed. This adds further weight to the idea of an early modern consensus over how nationwide fasts ought to be observed as a means of explaining the absence of instructions for observation in the orders for the occasions.

However, greater distinction between royalists and parliamentarians seems to have been evident in the observation of thanksgiving days. Indeed, it is the actions of parliamentarians that largely indicate how traditional, and thereby

⁴³ *By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2583).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

royalist thanksgivings, were observed. In November 1645 London ministers requested clarification from parliament that the games and sports forbidden to be played on the Sabbath were also forbidden on fast and thanksgiving days since they ‘seem not to be censurable’ on prayer days.⁴⁵ This hints at the ways some people and royalist leaders felt thanksgivings could be spent. With the order of the previous year to improve Sabbath observance and burn all copies of the book of sports, parliament had banned wrestling, shooting, bowling, bell ringing ‘for pleasure or pastime’, masques, wakes, church ales, dancing, games, sports and other pastimes on Sundays as well as the selling of wares, travelling and worldly labour.⁴⁶ Offenders over fourteen faced a penalty of a five shillings fine or three hours in the stocks if an offender could not pay or remained without ‘distress’. The ministers’ request suggests that by encouraging these activities on Sundays, the ‘book of sports’ had indicated that they were acceptable upon traditional thanksgiving days. The level of concern of some London ministers, to the extent that they petitioned parliament for an extension of the Sabbath day legislation to include fast and thanksgiving days, combined with the entertainment value of these activities suggests that such merry-making made these occasions (and the royalists who continued to celebrate them in this manner) popular with the nation.

The key turning point dividing parliamentary and royalist prayer day occasions occurred in January 1645 with the issue of the Directory. This greatly increased the demands of parliamentary fast days. There was to be:

total abstinence, not onely from all food ... but, also from all worldly labour, discourses and thoughts, and from all bodily delights, (although at other times lawfull) rich apparel, ornaments ... and much more, from what ever is, in the nature or use, scandalous and offensive; as garish attire, lascivious habits and gestures, and other vanities of either sex.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *LJ* 20/11/1645.

⁴⁶ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 420. This passed parliament on 8 April 1644. ‘Wakes’ here refers to ‘the Feasts of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly called Wakes’, see *The King's Majesty's declaration to his subjects concerning lawful sports to be used* as detailed on <http://www.constitution.org/eng/conpur017.htm>.

⁴⁷ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 604.

The demands of the parliamentary fast started early: before church each family and individual was to 'prepare their hearts' for the fast and then arrive early at the service, which was to consist of readings, preaching, psalm singing and prayers. Furthermore, the Directory firmly denied the earlier caveat of maintaining solemn behaviour on fast days only until the end of services, which had been the foundation of the potential consensus between parliamentarians and royalists. Indeed, on fast days the minister was to admonish the people 'with all importunity, that they work of that day doth not end with the Publique duties of it, but that they are so to improve the remainder of the day, and of their whole life'.⁴⁸

The celebratory nature of parliamentary thanksgivings did not mean that the people could focus on merry-making. Private preparations were still to take place in the home, and the minister was to 'make some pithy narration of the deliverance obtained, or Mercy received, or of whatever hath occasioned that assembling of the Congregation, that all may better understand it, or be minded of it, and more affected with it.'⁴⁹ The service continued with preaching, reading, psalm-singing and prayers of thanks. The morning service was to end with a blessing, to be followed by 'some convenient time for their repast and refreshing'. Even with the uplifting opportunity for refreshment, the minister was to take care 'solemnly to admonish them to beware of all excess and riot, tending to gluttony or drunkenness, and much more of these sins themselves, in their eating and refreshing, and to take care that their mirth and rejoicing be not carnal, but spiritual ... that both their feeding and rejoicing may render them more cheerful and enlarged further to celebrate his [God's] praises'.⁵⁰ As on fast days, at one or both of the services a collection was to be taken for the poor and the congregation were 'to be exhorted at the end of the latter meeting to spend the residue of that day in holy duties, and testifications of Christian love and charity towards one another'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 605.

⁴⁹ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 606.

⁵⁰ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 606.

⁵¹ *A&O*, vol. I, p. 607.

The Directory was not parliament's only attempt to improve the means of the observation of prayer days. While parliamentary orders for thanksgivings did not specify what constituted acceptable behaviour, the considerable amount of legislation devoted to both fasts and thanksgivings filled this gap. While the initial attempt to achieve 'better observation' of the monthly fast lacked legislative teeth, by the time the republic emerged considerable penalties existed for those found flouting the order for nationwide prayer.

In 1642, despite parliamentary clarification over expected behaviour, precisely what the penalties were for non-observance remained unclear and the lack of legislative power for punishing offenders was further highlighted. The ordinance for the better observation of the monthly fast was dependent entirely on the minister, who was 'earnestly' to exhort and persuade his congregation to keep the fast on the two preceding Sundays. Furthermore, it was up to the minister to persuade the people to follow parliament's stricter instructions for fast day observance. The names of any ministers refusing to exhort their congregations were to be returned to the knights of the county, but the ministers themselves were powerless to enforce the methods of observance put forward in the ordinance among their congregations.

By 1650 the situation had changed considerably. On 19 April 1650 a further act for the better observation of the Lord's Day, Days of Public Humiliation and Thanksgiving was passed.⁵² This act reinforced previous ordinances and increased the penalties for failed observance. It drew particular attention to forbidding the sale, showing or crying of goods on Sundays, fast and thanksgiving days the penalty for which was to have the goods seized.⁵³ Travel on these occasions by boat, horse, coach or sedan was forbidden except to church 'upon pain of ten shillings'.⁵⁴ The same penalty was forfeited for being in a tavern, inn, ale-house, tobacco-house or shop (unless the individual lived or lodged there 'or be there upon some lawful or necessary occasion').⁵⁵ The ten shillings fine was imposed for every offence of 'dancing, prophanely singing,

⁵² *CJ* 19/4/1650.

⁵³ *A&O*, vol. II, p. 384.

⁵⁴ *A&O*, vol. II, p. 385.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

drinking or tipling' in any of the above location or for grinding corn.⁵⁶ Any JPs who failed to impose these measure were subject to a five-pound fine, and constables risked one of twenty shillings.⁵⁷ Failure to pay resulted in seizure of goods and if this was not possible or 'where distress is not to be found' the offender was to be set 'in the Stocks or Cage for the space of six hours'.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, despite the development in legislative penalties for non-observance of parliamentary occasions between 1642 and 1650, there remained a considerable gap between what people were supposed to do and what they actually did.

II

Prior to the outbreak of military engagement, nationwide prayer days appear to have been observed by many people throughout England. Almost every set of churchwardens', college and company accounts surveyed contained reference to one or both of the nationwide fasts for plague in July and November 1640 and the vast majority also referred to the thanksgiving for peace between England and Scotland and the fast for Ireland (that became the monthly fast).⁵⁹ St Lawrence Jewry in London kept particularly detailed accounts with reference to all of these occasions. The account for 1640 noted 'Paide for Two Bookes for the Fast ... Paide For Two Bookes for the Second Fast'.⁶⁰ The following year, the churchwardens recorded that the parish 'Paid for Ringers vpoon the days of Thankesgivinge between vs and the Scotts ... Paid vnto M[aste]r Howgrave for Two Service Bookes for the Fast dayes'.⁶¹ Thus, for occasions occurring in 1640 the receipt of forms of prayer was a useful indication of prayer day observance,

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *A&O*, vol. II, p. 386.

⁵⁹ Examples include, 'It[e]m for 2 prayer bookes for the fast kept 8th July 1640 – 2s' and 'It[e]m paid for one prayer booke for the fast kept the 8th of december 1640 – 1s 2d' Borthwick Institute, PR Y/HTG/12, Holy Trinity Goodramgate Churchwardens' accounts, p. 375. Christ Church Bristol spent six shillings on 6 September 1641 'for ringing the bells beinge a day of solemne thancksgivinge for the peace conclud w[i]th the Scotts' and a further four pence 'To Towey for the order for that day', Bristol RO, P/xch/chw/16, Christ Church Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 6r.

⁶⁰ GL, 2593/2, St Lawrence Jewry Churchwardens' accounts, pp. 11-12.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

as well as demonstrating that the ecclesiastical network achieved their widespread distribution.⁶²

Nonetheless, following the outbreak of war there is still considerable evidence of the population doing what they were supposed to do. Methods of observance highlighted in local accounts include records of payment for preaching. In some parishes, payments demonstrate visiting preachers delivering special (and costly) sermons, as in the case of All Hallows the Less who paid ten shillings ‘to a Minister for preaching on the Fast day’ on 6 June 1649 and the same payment was made the following year ‘for a thanksgiving Sermons’ on 30 January and ‘for a humalacon Sermon’ on 13 March.⁶³ Alternatively, evidence of the regular minister preaching can be found in payments for refreshment after lengthy sermons were delivered, as occurred at St. Michael’s Queenhithe where the parish spent eight pence on 27 January 1645 ‘for a pint of Canary & a Rowle to Refresh the Minister the fast day’.⁶⁴

Some were highly dedicated to the observance of prayer days, even if they were not always in the right mood. The notebooks kept by Wallington show his various reactions to prayer days, although he is always firm in his conviction of their importance. In general he is enthusiastic, ‘the profite and Benifet that I have had... in keeping these days of humiliation’.⁶⁵ Yet at times he is less than keen ‘I was sicke but for that day And I take notis of my own base filthy heart in that I could be content to have bin longer sicke that it might have exsempted me from the house of God and so from keeping the fast day’.⁶⁶ Josselin also felt ‘dull’ and reluctant on prayer days on occasion, though he observed the monthly fast ‘virtually every month during the seven year period between February 1642 and February 1649’, only very occasionally prevented by illness, absence in town and in February 1648 following the death of his new-born son Ralph.⁶⁷ Their belief in

⁶² For example, Cambridgeshire CRO, P30/4/2, St Mary the Great Churchwardens’ accounts, p. 41.

⁶³ GL, 823/1, All Hallows the Less Churchwardens’ accounts.

⁶⁴ GL, 4825/1, St Michael Queenhithe Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 71v.

⁶⁵ The entry continues ‘besides what I have said in filling my heart full of joy and comfort and sending ease in times of sorrow[.] But also it stirs me up and puts more life in duty: and more inabled to keepe covenant and promise with my God...’ See Booy, *Notebooks*, p. 180.

⁶⁶ BL, Additional 40883, fo. 26v.

⁶⁷ Durston, ‘Humiliation’, p. 138.

nationwide prayer meant that, regardless of their mood, Wallington and Josselin followed the call, unless it was almost impossible for them to do so.

Collections ought to have been a typical indication of parliamentary occasions since parliament frequently ordered collections to be taken on particular occasions for specific purposes, such as for the relief of an area suffering from the aftermath of royalist attack or from the plague.⁶⁸ However, records of collections of money received are relatively unusual in this period. Where they do occur they are far more heavily concentrated in the London parishes. Given that, within London, the traceability of this money would have been considerably easier, and failure to produce the anticipated collection was more likely to result in prosecution, it is likely that location in the capital prompted more careful recording of the moneys received by those parishes. Even so, these details remain atypical among surviving London parish records for this period, and, where they are found, they appear to indicate a local custom rather than a keen response to orders from the government. The parish of St. Bride's Fleet Street has detailed receipts of collections at the church doors. Wednesday prayers, Sabbath and communion services, and even an ordination occasion are included among fast, thanksgiving and humiliation collections. The vast majority of the collections were designated for the poor of the parish, 'for o[u]r poore' is even mentioned specifically on occasion.⁶⁹ The payments for individual occasions do not seem to indicate any particular preference of occasion to inspire charitable giving.⁷⁰ St Bride's is typical of communities where collections were part of local custom in that the largest payments occurred at the beginning and end of the period of investigation. The reasons for this are probably two-fold: reflecting periods of both greater political stability and general levels of wealth prior to the civil war and at the close of the 1650s. There is no indication that collections for the parish poor were preferred to collections for those in need further from home.

⁶⁸ A collection was ordered to be taken at the 12 September fast, half of which was to relieve Lancashire from its recent 'Spoil, Rapine, and unheard-of Cruelties, lately committed by the Enemy', *CJ* 11/9/1644. Money was also raised in this way for the plague epidemic in Chester in 1647. See *CJ* 3/8/1647; GL, 6552/1, St Bride's Fleet Street Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 171v.

⁶⁹ GL, 6552/1, St Bride's Fleet Street Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 181v. Note that the original foliation is inconsistent.

⁷⁰ This contradicts David Underdown's findings in Dorchester where thanksgivings do not seem to have been affected by the state of the economy, see David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion* (Oxford, 1985), p. 234.

While many parishes responded obediently to orders for prayer days, some went above and beyond the call of duty. Though throughout this period the national calls for prayer days stipulated particular methods of observance, such as preaching, they were not exclusive. Many orders even carried clauses allowing for ‘other sacred duties’ or accustomed traditions. As such, though national days of prayer were state-inspired rituals and their observation was partly directed, there remained scope for individual and community adaptations and additions within the parameters of what was ordered by the state. It is possible to discern some sense of identity among individuals and communities from their reactions to orders for these occasions from these adaptations and additions.

Despite rarely being mentioned in prayer day orders, bell ringing was the most prominent indicator of observance occurring to mark prayer days in almost every parish known to have a bell. In the case of Christ Church, Bristol, six shillings was spent on ‘ringinge the bells beinge a day of solemne thancksgivinge for the peace concluded with the Scotts’.⁷¹ Though on occasion bell ringing was ordered either by central or local authorities, ‘Item p[ay]d for ringing the bells by M[aste]r Mayors order’, these instances appear to have been rare and were usually explicitly recorded as ‘by order’ by churchwardens.⁷² Thus the vast majority of payments for ringing on prayer day were the result of the decision of the local community.⁷³ The same appears to have been true of bonfires. Christ’s College, Cambridge, was typical in that the bonfires burnt were the decision of the community financing them. For example, they celebrated the thanksgiving for the victory over the Scots at Worcester with a bonfire: ‘Bonefire octob[er] 24 [1651]– 2s 6d’.⁷⁴ Conversely, references such as ‘Item paid for a Bonefire by order from the King for the victory att Newarke – 3s’, which potentially indicate

⁷¹ Bristol RO, P/xch/chw/16, Christ Church Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 6r.

⁷² Oxfordshire CRO, PAR/207/4/F1/1, St Martins Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 201r.

⁷³ Examples of this amongst others are St Nicholas Newbury in Reading, Christ Church in Bristol and St Mary the Great in Cambridge. See Berkshire CRO, D/P 89/5/1 [Microfilm consulted 97112/A], St Nicholas Newbury, Churchwardens’ accounts; Bristol RO, P/xch/chw/16, Christ Church Churchwardens’ accounts; Cambridgeshire CRO, P30/4/2, St Mary the Great Churchwardens’ accounts. Trinity College Cambridge also shows a similar adaptation in their payment allocation for bonfires, Trinity CCA, Wren Library, JB1/1/4-5, Junior Bursar’s accounts.

⁷⁴ Christ’s CCA, B.1/10, Account book.

imposed bonfires, are rare.⁷⁵ In the majority of cases the use of bonfires and bells by local communities were a mark of the continued use of traditional means of marking occasions as extraordinary.

A further key way in which communities might go beyond orders from authorities was by locally enforcing observance. At a meeting on 20 April 1648 in the vestry of St Bride's, London the decision was taken to chose 'some fitt persons... to be Sup[er]viso[e]rs for theyeare ensueinge to goe abroad on the Sabbath dayes and Fast dayes to see they be duely observed they being of late much neglected'.⁷⁶ Thus when enthusiastic individuals held authority within a community they sought to improve prayer day reception and observance. One such individual was John Arrowsmith who became Master of St John's College Cambridge on 11 April 1644, following the ejection of the royalist Dr. Beale by the Earl of Manchester.⁷⁷ Arrowsmith faced a 'persistent and troublesome royalist faction among the college's fellows', though he was successful in introducing parliamentary prayer day observation.⁷⁸ The college's accounts have no records of payments for any expenditure related to nationwide prayer days between 1639/40 and 1643/44. However, from the point at which Arrowsmith became master entries for prayer days appear under 'expensai necariae'.⁷⁹

Arrowsmith's success in persuading the college fellows and members to observe these occasions may have been as a result of his approach to the observation of thanksgivings. Including wine in the hall at dinner was sure to be popular: 'It[e]m for 6 Quartes of Clarett ine in the Hall at dinner vpon the day of Thancksgiving for the rowting of the L[or]d Gorings Forces at Langport, Iuly 22 1645 - 4s 6d'.⁸⁰ Other entries highlight the strong association wine at dinner quickly held with thanksgivings: 'for wine Jun 26 [1649] it being a day of Thanksgiving'.

⁷⁵ Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 183r.

⁷⁶ GL, 6554/1, St Bride's Vestry minutes, fo.61r.

⁷⁷ See Bod., Walker C 4, fo. 45r and St John's CCA, C5.1, Orders Book, fo. 12r.

⁷⁸ John Twigg, 'John Arrowsmith', *ODNB*.

⁷⁹ St John's CCA, SB4.5, College Rentals.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, fo. 283v.

Wine also helped to identify the new parliamentary thanksgivings with other traditional occasions, such as 5 November and the college's election day: 'It[em] to M[aste]r Wells for wine for the Hall on the Thanksgiving day 12s 8d and at the Election in the Audit Chamber & in the Hall on the Powder Treason day 11l 18s 7d – 2li 11s 3d'.⁸¹ Arrowsmith was a gently persuasive individual able to gain the respect of those who differed from him theologically, such as Benjamin Whichcote who wrote of him: 'I have scarcely either spoken or thought better of a man; in respect of the sweetness of his spirit, and amiableness of his conversation'.⁸² Arrowsmith's nature made him an apt negotiator for prayer days in the tense political and religious divisions of the college.

Enthusiastic supporters of prayer days who were not in the privileged position of formal authority nevertheless tried to encourage and support others in prayer day observation. Oral morality tales concerned with the importance of prayer day observation circulated to encourage participation. Some of these were recorded by Wallington, though he admitted to his 'Christian reader' that he did not have much first-hand experience of them: 'Now I know but few of these myselfe, but I did here of them very credibly by those that are honest, or else I should be loth to take notice of them'.⁸³

In Wallington's notebooks of these 'true' stories illustrating the importance of godly behaviour, he recounts the story of a Mr Budore. He ignored his wise daughter's advice about riding to hear a sermon on the fast day of the 12 September 1644, answering 'no girle I must goe to London about other bisnesse'. His plan was thwarted as all the shops were closed and so he headed into an inn where he proceeded to get drunk. At night he insisted on riding home, yet 'he had not ridden aboue a quarter of amile but he fell off his Horse and broke his skole'. Two days later he was dead.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid., fo. 371r.

⁸² S. Salter, 'Preface', in B. Whichcote, *Moral and religious aphorisms* (London, 1753), p. 7 as cited by John Twigg, 'John Arrowsmith', *ODNB*.

⁸³ BL, Sloane 1457, fo. 3r.

⁸⁴ BL, Sloane 1457, fo. 28r.

This morality tale rendition highlights the importance of correct conduct on fast days to Wallington, especially when viewed in conjunction with his many diary entries of enthusiastic response to fasting.⁸⁵ However, what appears more striking is the volume, circulation and purpose of these tales; one can also hear puritans relating them on the street to any passer-by who would listen. The use of storytelling to capture the attention of the uncommitted and to persuade them to change their ways was an excellent attempt to improve prayer day attendance and observation by ordinary, enthusiastic men and women.

Naturally, even in the early period of peak observance (1640 to 1641) some individuals and parishes failed to participate, particularly if their minister refused to observe a particular occasion. When Robert Levit of Chouely was investigated by the committee of scandalous ministers, evidence of his non-observance of prayer days dated back to 1641: ‘That the King and Parlyament appoynted a day of thankes=giveing vpon the pacification with the Scotts he did negligently or willingly omitt the solemnizing of the same’.⁸⁶ Even members of parliament failed to keep the strict rules imposed. Having been absent for some time, three MPs (Masters Kinge, Whittacre and Davies) were seen riding on the third monthly fast and subsequently failed to return to the Commons and explain themselves.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, such instances of non-observance appear to be the acts of a very small minority prior to the outbreak of war.

However, from 1642, there were increased instances of people engaging in precisely the activities that they were not supposed to. This was in order to sabotage nationwide prayer days and resist parliamentary claims to authority. Despite the attempts by the state and enthusiasts, there remained an active royalist opposition to parliamentary occasions often led by clergymen as natural leaders of local communities.⁸⁸ Mr George Holmes, rector of Clowne in Derbyshire, was proven by the committee of examinations to have been ‘averse to Parliament Orders not using the Directory not keeping the monthly fasts, but

⁸⁵ Booy, *Notebooks*.

⁸⁶ BL, Additional 15672, fo. 10v.

⁸⁷ *CJ* 28/4/1642.

⁸⁸ It seems likely that there would have been active parliamentary opposition in royalist areas to occasions ordered by Charles during the civil war but clear evidence of this has not been forthcoming.

using the Comon-Prarer and Cross in Bapistme long after they were abolished and observing the Kings Fryday Fast, with a New prayer Book for the Purpose'.⁸⁹ Furthermore, it was proved by his accusers 'That he usually prayed for the Earle (afterwards Marq[uis]s & Duke) of Newcastle good success Ag[ains]t the Parliaments Forces & gaue thanks For the Advantage w[hi]ch the Earle gained ag[ains]t them before Yourke'.⁹⁰ Holmes' personal loyalty to the royalist cause was further demonstrated by his willingness to assess money for the Earl of Newcastle but dragging of feet when commanded to assess on behalf of parliament.⁹¹

Other ministers were even more defiant and not only refused to observe parliamentary fasts and thanksgivings but took a rebellious tone in answering the committee that was to convict them, using their trial as a platform for their royalist agenda. Thomas Rawson of Hoby in Leicestershire baldly stated 'that he neuer observed any of the parliam[en]t fast dayes since the[y] were Inhibited by the kinge[s] Com[m]and And that he never tooke the Covenant nor ever shall doe'.⁹²

There is also some evidence that royalist ministers indirectly encouraged traditional activities for royalist thanksgivings, such as bowling and football, on parliamentary fast days. Brought before the committee for scandalous ministers, Stephen Nettles, minister of Lexden was accused of fairly typical 'crimes', namely not beginning morning service on parliamentarian fast days until eleven o'clock, restricting it to an hour, going home to dinner and inviting others to join him before heading to the tavern or for drinks at another's house.⁹³ However, more unusually he was also accused of having 'suffred Bowling and Football in his owne yard on the fasting day', even crossing the yard while it was happening.⁹⁴ Nettles obeyed the parliamentarian orders for prayer days to the

⁸⁹ Bod., Walker C 5, fo. 52v.

⁹⁰ Bod., Walker C 5, fo. 53r.

⁹¹ Bod., Walker C 5, fo. 53r-v. The committee also proved his use of the common prayer book to marry couples and slanderous words against a Master Carl of Harrisworth. Carl's support of parliament against Newcastle drove Holmes to state that he deserved to be hanged and it was only Newcastle's mercy that preserved him.

⁹² Bod., Walker C 11, fo. 34v.

⁹³ BL, Additional 5829, fo. 49r.

⁹⁴ BL, Additional 5829, fo. 50r.

absolute minimum, yet in turning a blind eye to the use of traditional (and royalist) means of celebration on a fast day, he was perceived as encouraging its sabotage.

Others sought openly to mock parliamentary occasions with outrageous behaviour. William Morice, curate of Wickham in Kent, responded to one parliamentary fast day by getting drunk in an ale-house, kissing the landlady, and, along with other royalists, drinking a health to Prince Rupert.⁹⁵ Similarly Thomas Wake, minister of Burrow Green, not only refused to observe the parliamentary fast ‘by reason where of his parishioners goe to plow, and Cart on these dayes, and doe other servile workes not fitt to be done on that day’ but on the monthly fast day in April 1644 ‘had many drinking at his house, and made divers drunke, and they drunke out all the beere he had, and afterward he sent and borrowed more’.⁹⁶

Some royalist ministers rebelled by utilising the tools of their trade and giving anti-parliamentarian prayers or sermons on their fast. Daniel Faulcover, parson of Aldham in Essex, was brought before the committee for scandalous ministers amongst other things for desiring ‘some of his p[ar]ish to pray for the King and the Company with him, for they were his good Councello[u]rs : But the Parliam[en]t were drawn away by the People.’⁹⁷ Clement Vincent, rector of Danbury, was held to ‘play the brave man’ by Mildmay in his preaching on 26 October 1642 (a monthly fast day).⁹⁸ The contents of his sermon have been lost, but Mildmay’s comment suggests that it was far from supportive of the parliamentary cause.

⁹⁵ ‘Articles exhibited to the Committee for Plundered Ministers against William Morice, curate of Wickham, Kent, that he is a swearer and drunkard; has drunk Prince Rupert’s health in an ale-house with malignants on a fast day and kissed the mistress of the house; has neglected to read the ordinances of parliament, &c’, HMC, *Appendix to the Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, p. 181. See also I.M. Green, ‘The persecution of ‘scandalous’ and ‘malignant’ parish clergy during the English Civil War’, *English Historical Review* (1979), p. 511.

⁹⁶ BL, Additional 15672, fo. 54v.

⁹⁷ BL, Additional 5829, fo. 46r. Underlining is in the original.

⁹⁸ Ralph, *Mildmay*, pp. 101-102.

Mildmay himself came to seize eagerly upon the opportunity of monthly fasts to demonstrate his loyalty to the royalist cause. Initially, he had observed the monthly fast for Ireland with good grace: ‘25:[th of Maij Anno 1642] The faste all the day att Church and noe eateings’.⁹⁹ Yet later he came to scorn the occasion seeing it as usurped by parliament and referred to it in his diary as ‘the fast of Master Pym and the five good ones’, ‘the dogs’ fast’, ‘the damned fast’.¹⁰⁰ Mildmay’s scorn did not remain expressed privately. On 21 July 1643 Mildmay’s diary records, ‘This day Mr. P[ym] kept fast. I dined with Sir John at the “Cocks” and supped at home’.¹⁰¹ Not only did Mildmay fail to observe the fast day, but he also scorned it publicly by dining in a tavern.¹⁰²

Given his prior observance of the monthly fast on the last Wednesday of every month and continuing observance of ‘His Majesty’s fast’ days from October 1643, Mildmay was not simply an irreligious man. He was a staunch royalist making the most of the opportunities afforded by both royalist and parliamentary prayer days to demonstrate his loyalty.¹⁰³ Other opportunities to demonstrate his support came through visiting and attending the services of sequestered and detained royalist clergymen at Ely House and Lord Petre’s house in Aldersgate Street.¹⁰⁴ These services attended by Mildmay regularly in 1643 must have been similar to masses in the homes of Catholic members of the nobility – an open secret.¹⁰⁵ John Evelyn records a similar service occurring on 3 August 1656 when ‘Dr. Wild preached in a private house in Fleet-street, where we had a great meeting of zealous Christians, who were generally much more devout and religious than in our greatest prosperity’.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ BL, Harley 454, fo. 50r.

¹⁰⁰ Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168.

¹⁰¹ The Commons Journal reveals that this occasional prayer day was ordered on the 19 July 1643 following a petition ‘of divers Ministers of Christ, in the Name of themselves, and of sundry others; desiring a special Day of Humiliation, and Reformation of sundry and divers crying Sins, and Enormities of the Church.’ It was ‘to be observed by both Houses, the Cities of London and Westminster, and the Suburbs of them both, and the other Places adjacent within the weekly Bills of Mortality’. *CJ* 19/7/1643. Also see Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168.

¹⁰² Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168. Similarly, on 10 March 1647 Mildmay ‘dined with good company at Mr. Emerson’s’ and referred to the day as ‘the Presbyterian fast’, Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168.

¹⁰³ Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁴ Ralph, *Mildmay*, pp. 170-171.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ William Bray (ed.), *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn* (London, 1854), vol. 1, pp. 316-317.

It was not only parishes and individuals who made such defiant acts of royalist opposition, particularly after the turning point of the regicide. King's College Cambridge not only celebrated the king's accession day in 1648 from within a parliamentary stronghold (as did many other parishes who had kept their ringing silent on this occasion in previous years), but celebrated Charles' famous return from Spain on 5 October in 1649: 'Elargit pulsantibus campanas quinto die Octobris reductione Regio ex Hispania redit [gap in manuscript] solemniter celebrato – 1s 6d'.¹⁰⁷ There is little doubt that King's was keen to make a statement following the regicide.

Royalist opposition to the government in the 1650s was frequently expressed on prayer days through public dining and the drinking of healths in taverns on state prayer days as well as provocative sermons.¹⁰⁸ Naturally, pro-royalist activities were not restricted to prayer days and they became increasingly linked with consumption in the 1650s. It is hardly a co-incidence that coffee houses (known hotbeds of political activism) first opened in Oxford in 1650, or that formal county feasts, which often had a close association with royalism, developed largely from the mid-1650s.¹⁰⁹

Interestingly, despite the regicide and the loss of the royalist leadership some individuals appear to have continued to observe the royalist monthly fast through the 1650s and it appears to have been particularly well observed on the eve of the Restoration. Evelyn recorded that on 9 December 1659 (the second Friday of the month), 'I supped with Mr. Gunning it being our fast-day, Dr. Fearne, Mr. Thrisco, Mr. Chamberlain, Dr. Henschman, Dr. Wild, and other devout and

¹⁰⁷ King's CCA, KCAR/4/1/1, Mundum book, vol. 28, 1649: 'Paid for ringing bells on the fifth day of October for the return of the king from Spain, celebrated solemnly – 1s 6d'. The translation is my own. I am unsure whether there is any significance in the use of 'reductione' as well as 'redit'; perhaps the writer intended to add something in the gap he left in the manuscript.

¹⁰⁸ On the significance of the drinking of healths, see Angela McShane, 'No Kings Rule the World but though Love and Good Drinking': Political and Material Cultures of Drinking in 17th Century England', paper delivered at Northumbria University on 16 March 2011.

¹⁰⁹ On county feasts see Newton Key, 'The Political Culture and Political Rhetoric of County Feasts and Feast Sermons, 1654-1714', *Journal of British Studies*, 33 (1994) especially pp. 236-237; idem., 'The Localism of the County Feast in Late Stuart Political Culture', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1995). On consumption and coffee houses (including Evelyn being possibly the first man to record coffee consumption in Oxford in the 1630s) see Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (London, 2002), especially pp. 141, 277.

learned divines, firm confessors, and excellent persons. Note: Most of them since made bishops.’¹¹⁰ This gathering marks an innovative use of the royalist monthly fast as a means of mobilising royalist opposition amidst preparation for Charles’ arrival.

Other groups held acts of defiance within London throughout the period of parliamentary rule. Not all London companies followed the trend of adherence to parliamentary orders; some made the most of the opportunity for merry-making on fast and thanksgiving days. Utilising the chance to bond and preserve their communal identity, the Armourers’ had no issue with spending fasts and thanksgivings in the pub. For example, on the fast ordered for 28 March 1656 the Armourers’ spent one pound, fourteen shillings and nine pence ‘at Nages head’.¹¹¹ The choice of a pub may be due to the practical issue that they lacked a company hall in which to conduct dinner, but it appears to be more than this as thanksgiving dinners (and fast day gatherings) were not essential.

Between 1640 and 1656 the Armourers’ show a clear preference for spending both fasts and thanksgivings at the Nags Head. Another pub occasionally frequented in this period was the Robin Hood. In 1656 there was a brief preference for the Swan on fifth street, but from 1657 to the 1659 the Armourers’ changed their location for fasts and thanksgivings and found a new favourite, the Greyhound. The Restoration marked another change in pub preference on prayer days and the records for 1660 show the Armourers once again at The Swan, or, if not, The Green Dragon. Regardless of parliamentarian or royalist central authorities, the Armourers’ were keen to make the most of their days off.

The fact that the Armourers’ were able to find open pubs on prayer days highlights that some landlords interpreted parliamentary orders to close to all but lodgers and those meeting for lawful or necessary occasions quite freely.¹¹² The act of the Armourers’ company entering a pub on a prayer day (presumably in

¹¹⁰ Bray (ed.), *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn*, vol 1, p. 334. The following day, perhaps having been persuaded to do so at dinner the previous night, Evelyn met with Colonel Morley, an old school friend and the Lieutenant of the Tower about delivering it into the hands of the King.

¹¹¹ GL, 12.065/3, Armourers’ Company Renter Warden accounts, fo. 253r.

¹¹² *A&O*, vol. II, p. 385.

full livery if they had attended the official services) for a non-essential gathering was a bold statement, if not technically illegal, given parliament's decree to close taverns and their own position as representatives of the City. While they could claim the excuse of not having a hall and were therefore holding a 'lawful' gathering, a fair retort would be that they did not need to gather as a company after church, many other companies did not, and that the gathering was far from 'necessary'.¹¹³

Given the barrage of legislation in the 1650s designed to close taverns on prayer days and the Sabbath, the use of pubs by the Armourers on fast days in particular was surely provocative (and perhaps their regular change of pub reflects the difficulty of finding one open). Many larger and wealthier companies did not meet together after the service at Paul's on fast days, and it is difficult to find any reason why such a meeting in a tavern was necessary for the Armourers. It seems simply to have been used as an ideal opportunity to meet together and have fun; perhaps it was even 'pitched' as a reward to the livery for sitting through the sermons at Paul's.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Other London companies often attended the service at St Paul's on fast and thanksgiving days and paid for particular seats: 'for our seates at Paulls on a Fast day – 7s'. See GL, 5255/1, Barber-surgeons' Company Wardens' accounts and audit book, 1646-1647. While the Barber-Surgeons appear to have been relatively keen to attend, many other companies were not, such as the Cutlers. In a mayoral precept relaying the order for a public thanksgiving on 29 August 1649, Ralph Sadler, mayor of London, commented that 'my selfe and my brethren the Aldr[m]en takinge notice of a great neglect of the Companyies in their appearance formerly vpon like occasions'. Due to the requirement placed upon the livery to wear their gowns on occasional prayer days, a company's absence was easily noticed, especially if they were one of the twelve great companies. This neglect resulted in Sadler feeling the need to write to each individual company. See GL, 7153, Cutlers' Company Mayoral Precepts, fo. 209r. Nonetheless, the wearing of livery was part of a company's communal identity and some companies chose to utilise prayer days as a means of further reinforcing this sense of community by treating their livery to dinner on thanksgiving days. The reaction of the Grocers' court of assistants to 'a pr[e]cept from the Lord Major requiring the Livery ... to appeare att Paules church att a Sermon on Thursday next being appointed a day of Thankesgiving' was efficient and ensured the livery would be rewarded for their attendance with a company dinner. They 'agreed that the Livery shalbee accordingly warned And alsoe that a dynner shalbee p[ro]vided by Stewards att this hall for the s[ay]d Company.' See GL, 11588/4, Grocers' Company Order of the Court of Assistants, p. 263. Dining together on prayer days was an effective way of persuading reluctant members of the company livery to attend these occasions and appears to have been a key point of negotiation. Despite the Court of Assistants for the Grocers' concluding on 5 July 1642 that 'the pr[e]sent troubles ... [mean] there is no fitting opportunity for publick feasting & exhilaracon', they continued to celebrate thanksgiving days regularly with a dinner. GL, 11588/4, Grocers' Company Order of the Court of Assistants, p. 53. However, other days that were marked traditionally with dinners, such as election day, were adapted to 'a repaste of wyne and cakes', *ibid.*, p. 99. The austerity of the court ruling did permeate the occasions though, for the meal was usually only 'a mod[e]rate

Other communities chose to give lip service to commands to hold religious services or ring bells, but largely avoid orders for fasts or thanksgiving having an impact upon them. For example, the commons books of Peterhouse Cambridge show that there was no change in diet for national fast days - whoever ordered them. Even the most united national occasion, the fast for plague held on 8 December 1640, suggested by parliament and ordered by royal proclamation, did not alter the diet of the members of Peterhouse who spent their meals that day consuming their usual quantity of mutton.¹¹⁵

III

Reactions to prayer day orders were diverse. As demonstrated above, there was a considerable gap between what people did and what they were supposed to do. Furthermore, prayer days were observed in the vast majority of local communities in 1640 and 1641, but instances of non-observance and resistance increased with the onset of war. Should we assume, along with current historiography, that this indicates a lack of popularity?

While the mechanical changes to national days of prayer during this period, such as alterations in the ordering and distribution processes, probably did not affect the vast majority of the population a great deal, the change in frequency and

dynner w[i]thout any second corse' GL, 11588/4, Grocers' Company Order of the Court of Assistants, p. 237. Nonetheless, the puritan influences on the Grocers' celebrations were relatively short-lived, lavish dinners soon returned in the latter 1650s. However, expenses for 'triumphs' do not appear to have returned. Triumphs appear to have occurred when a member of the Grocers' was elected Lord Mayor and the company processed through the city in livery with trumpeters and drummers. The 'Charges of Triumphs' (GL MS 11590) runs from 1613 to 1641 when it ends abruptly. It is possible that the sense of collective identity felt on prayer days within the Grocers' extended to the institutions where they were patrons. At the Grocer's visitation to Oundle school in 1650, the visitors even recorded the school's observance of the nationwide fast on 13 June. This was the fast for prevalent sins and for a blessing on parliament and the forces. 'The next day, being humiliac[i]on day they repaired to the Church (attended by the Almes folk, in their gownes as M[aste]r wardens gave order where they heard M[aste]r Rosbury the Minister preach morning & afternoone & distributed their charity amongst the poore.' GL, 11588/4, Grocers' Company Order of the Court of Assistants, p. 243.

¹¹⁵ Peterhouse CCA, N.3.2-5, Commons books. Nevertheless, Peterhouse was a royalist college and lost its master Dr Beale on 13 March 1643, for a copy of the ejection see Bod., Walker C 4, fo. 45r.

intensity of what was required must have been significant.¹¹⁶ Like earlier religious changes in the sixteenth century, the response of the people to these changes varied. Some were enthusiastic, some actively resisted and rebelled, but many chose a practical path of partial obedience.¹¹⁷ On some occasions the majority willingly attended services as a source of comfort; if, for example, the enemy army were nearby. For example, the monthly parliamentary fast on 28 June 1648 saw Ralph Josselin preach to ‘the greatest audience, I had many days before’.¹¹⁸ For Josselin this was too rare an occurrence and probably had far more to do with the movement of soldiers into the locality of Earls Colne than any efforts on Josselin’s part who had not been inclined to preach that day at all.¹¹⁹ The efforts of Arrowsmith and Wallington amongst others to improve prayer day observance are surely clear evidence that from 1642 parliamentary occasions at least were poorly observed?

Yet, the case for unpopularity outlined in the historiography is challenged by communities, such as Trinity College Cambridge, which observed prayer days for both sides with optional additions. Their bonfires burned brightly for both sides in 1646 marking 5 March (parliamentarian thanksgiving for victories including at Chester and Torrington) and 27 March (Charles’ coronation day), 16 April (parliamentarian thanksgiving for Fairfax’s victory in the West), 29 May (probably a royalist thanksgiving for the removal of new model army from Oxford, as well as the birthday of Prince Charles), 22 September (parliamentarian thanksgiving for reducing of several castles and garrisons). Even in 1648, a bonfire burned on 27 March, though from the regicide to the restoration bonfires only marked authorised parliamentary state occasions, such as the thanksgiving for victory in Ulster: ‘To M[aste]r Everett for a thanksgiving

¹¹⁶ For further discussion see chapter 1. The parliamentary abandonment of forms of prayer may have been keenly felt by the congregations of certain parishes. This would depend on the reaction of the local minister. Many may have simply recycled and adapted old forms, though evidence of this is elusive. Parishes with puritan but conformist ministers would have felt a distinct shift in prayer day services in the absence of a prescribed form. A change in the actual minister through sequestration would have had a far greater impact on a congregation, this will be discussed further in the conclusion to this thesis.

¹¹⁷ See Christopher Marsh’s discussion of this ‘compliance conundrum’ in *idem.*, *Popular religion*.

¹¹⁸ Hockliffe (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 52.

¹¹⁹ Hockliffe (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 52. See also Durston ‘Humiliation’, p. 141.

fire – 6s'.¹²⁰ These are not the actions of a community that had lost interest in prayer days, regardless of whether fear or enthusiasm caused them to support both sides.

Given that these optional additions to the standard vocabulary of bonfires and bells were enjoyable, it is possible that such communities were happy for any excuse either to make merriment or to make a fast as enjoyable as possible. Unless a defiant act of opposition can be identified (as with King's College Cambridge), it is rarely possible to prove beyond all doubt a community's allegiance to either side through its prayer day expenditure, though purchases above and beyond what was necessary are highly suggestive. Thus, the expenditure of Trinity College on prayer days at least raises the possibility that prayer days did not diminish in popularity from 1642.

The most significant challenge to the notion that prayer days declined in popularity during this period is the explosion of prayer day observance in 1660-61. As with the prayer days ordered in 1640, evidence of celebrations at the restoration including thanksgivings were found in almost every churchwardens' account surveyed. Holy Trinity Goodramgate, York, was far from the only parish to provide drinks to add to the thanksgiving celebrations in 1660: 'pd for Ringing vpon ye day his Ma[jes]tie was proclamed, vpon his comeing to London, & seu[er]all other publick daies of thanksgiueing & for drink'.¹²¹ In St Aldate, Oxford, the parishioners spent two shillings and sixpence on 'ringing on the thanksgiveing day for the fare return of the Kinges Ma[jes]tie'; while St Bride's Fleet Street recorded collections on thanksgiving days on 10 May and 28 June, demonstrating that even keen supporters of parliamentary occasions responded to the call to prayer at the restoration.¹²²

How then can we reconcile diminishing prayer day observation and increasing public resistance to the call to nationwide prayer in the 1640s and 1650s with the

¹²⁰ Trinity CCA, Wren Library, SB1/1/5-6, Senior Bursar's book, fos. 93r, 109r. Trinity CCA, Wren Library, JB1/1/4-5, Junior Bursar's accounts, fos. 63r, 112r, 155r.

¹²¹ Borthwick Institute, PR Y/HTG/12, Holy Trinity Goodramgate Churchwardens' accounts, p. 468.

¹²² Oxfordshire CRO, PAR Oxford St Aldate b.18, St Aldate Churchwardens' accounts, (1660); GL, 6552/2, St Bride's Fleet Street Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 289r.

popularity evident in 1660? Perhaps the answer lies in the distinction between the popularity of nationwide days of prayer as a concept and the demands of particular occasions. Sir Humphrey Mildmay had observed the Wednesday monthly fast conscientiously before the outbreak of hostilities, but as a royalist came to view these occasions with disdain and publicly mocked them. Nevertheless, it was not the notion of public fasting that caused him to refer to 'the damned fast' or 'the dogs' fast' in his diary (nor to dine publicly in a tavern on parliamentary fast days), only the parliamentary usurpation of it. Indeed, Mildmay was a diligent observer of the royalist Friday fast once it was established.¹²³ Furthermore, actions of mockery on parliamentary fasts underscore popular belief in the value of the concept of nationwide prayer. By inverting the demands of a traditional fast (by the excessive drinking, dining and playing of sport outlined above) individuals like Mildmay were both perpetuating core communal values and criticising those in authority.¹²⁴

Therefore, the combination of an increase in mockery of 'new' occasions and approaches to prayer days with the increase in attempts by central parliamentary authorities to enforce the new methods throughout the 1640s and 1650s suggests that many members of the population believed in the concept of nationwide prayer day and yet were unwilling to conform to the new parliamentary ideal. If so, we would also expect to see considerable efforts to continue the traditional means of observing these occasions in the local communities, as indeed proves to be the case.

IV

The concept of nationwide prayer, especially during intense times of crisis, was highly significant to many members of the population, as was reflected in the strength of traditional observation of prayer days. Most significantly, the continued use of customary methods of marking these occasions as special

¹²³ Ralph, *Mildmay*, p. 168.

¹²⁴ This is similar to the use of carnival in the early modern period. Natalie Zemon Davis notes that 'festive life can on the one hand perpetuate certain values of the community (even guarantee its survival), and on the other hand, criticize political order'. See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule' in idem., *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), p. 97.

within localities, such as bell ringing and bonfires, demonstrates the popularity of the concept of nationwide prayer days.

Cressy argues that the development of bonfires on 5 November ‘involved the application of an established festive form (the celebratory bonfires) to a new festival occasion sponsored by the state’.¹²⁵ Gradually, over the course of the early seventeenth century this occasion came to be synonymous in the national collective consciousness with freedom from popery. So successful was its establishment as a national occasion that bell ringing and bonfires on 5 November continued throughout the 1640s and 1650s and beyond. It appears to be the only annual thanksgiving that continued without pause or alteration despite the political changes.¹²⁶ It was a unifying distinctly English occasion for most as it celebrated an act of providence that had protected both the king and parliament. Neither side would ignore it.

Thus, as will be demonstrated further below, tradition and continued belief in providence were highly significant to the English people, who were reluctant to abandon long established methods of prayer day observation. Generational turnover and the eventual fading of particular ideas, individuals and memories from the collective conscience of a local community were often necessary before cultural changes became accepted (whether religious or political in nature).¹²⁷ These limits on the speed of change in collective memory applied to alterations to national prayer day observance. In many communities, a considerable period of time (two or three generations) was needed before national prayer day

¹²⁵ David Cressy, *Bonfires & Bells: national memory and the protestant calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Stroud, 2004), p. 82.

¹²⁶ Almost every churchwarden account surveyed for this project continued to record payments connected with celebrations on 5 November if it had done prior to 1640. See also Cressy, *Bonfires & Bells*, p. 84. However, this should be tempered with the fact that the other annual thanksgivings, Accession day and Gowrie day, were either unofficial or had never secured widespread observance. While its statutory status aided the establishment of the thanksgiving for the gunpowder plot, had it been unwillingly observed it would have been easy for the public to abandon it amidst the turmoil of the 1640s.

¹²⁷ This is further emphasised by the legal standing of unwritten custom in this period and the regular calling of elderly members of the community to solve local disputes over the rights of tenants and boundaries lines. Frequently these elderly men and women would call upon previous the memory of prior generations citing their own parents and grandparents as those who had explained the custom to them. See Adam Fox, ‘Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing’ in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (London, 1996).

innovations, such as parliamentary abandonment of forms, could have become truly accepted as the status quo. The rule of the godly in government was simply too short to make this possible.

As seen above, most communities remembered all too well how to celebrate a traditional nationwide occasions and did so with enthusiasm at the Restoration in stark contrast to their dragging of heels to prayer day changes in the 1640s and 1650s. Even in parliamentary heartlands, such as Cambridge, the return to traditional methods and causes for celebration was immediate. The churchwardens of St Mary the Great in Cambridge diligently recorded payments in 1640 ‘to the parator for 2 prayer bookes for the fast – 1s 8d’, ‘to the paritor for a prayer for the King when hee went into the north – 2d’, ‘for a bonn fier and to the ringers at the Birth of the ducke of Lanckester – 2s 6d’ and ‘to mr Philly Scarlett for 2 prayer bookes for the 27th of march [Charles’ coronation day]– 1s’ and similar records are found until the end of 1642. A marked shift is seen as these traditional entries were replaced by clearly parliamentary ones in 1643, ‘payd for parchent and writing the Covenant – 3s’, ‘pd for Ringers on a thanksgiving day – 1s’, ‘pd for ringing ye bell for a sermon for ye Earle of Manchester – 7d’.¹²⁸ Further payments are occasionally made for ringing on occasions other than 5 November including nationwide thanksgivings in 1649, 1650, 1652, 1653 and 1657 though the records are more sparse in detail and in some cases ringing is ‘by M[aste]r Maiors command’. This is in stark contrast to the account of 1660 where there were payments, ‘Given to the ringers at the voting in of the King May 3^d – 5s’, ‘To the Ringers att the thanksgiving of the L^d Monck – 2s 6d’, ‘To the Ringers att the Kings coming into Inland. May 29 – 2s 6d’, ‘To the Ringers att the thanksgiving for the King’s restaurac[i]on – 2s 6d’, ‘To Seacoales man for reading the Proclamation for the Kings thanksgiving – 6d’, ‘for a Common Prayer Booke for the Clark – 4s, ‘ffor a prayer booke for the 5th of November – 6d’, ‘for a Fast Booke – 1s’, ‘Item for two Commonprayr

¹²⁸ Interestingly, despite the increased significance of the Eastern Association and Cambridge as its ‘capital’ (the association’s treasury was based there from 1644), there was a significant reduction in ringing for prayer days or other significant events from 1644 to 1649 (aside from the 5 November which as in most other parishes continued to be celebrated throughout this period).

Bookes follio'.¹²⁹ Without a fully functioning (or even legal) episcopacy in 1660, enforced bell-ringing or purchasing of forms or prayer books is unlikely.

Like the vast majority of other parishes, Cambridge enthusiastically celebrated and supported the return of monarchy, partly through nationwide prayer. These accounts are typical in revealing a community that held on to its collective memory of how special days of prayer and other nationally significant events were marked traditionally. This memory had been reinforced by the continued use of the bells during the nationwide prayer days of the civil war and interregnum. Furthermore, the spontaneous re-emergence of the traditional methods of celebrating these occasions at the Restoration indicates that these occasions as a concept were popular with many members of the population.

The rapid return to the traditional celebrations in St Mary the Great at the Restoration was typical of the action of communities throughout England. Due to the slow nature of the erosion of collective memory of what had been, and the messy negotiations of the religious and political turning points of the 1640s and 1650s, there was always a greater level of continuity than change in the mind of the average English individual. Indeed, continuity was the measuring rod of change. People could identify the changes wrought on their daily lives and particularly their church by the parliamentarians because they could remember what had been there before 1641, and in many cases before any Laudian innovations had been installed.

Within a local community, such as a parish, this collective memory was strong. By seeing the continuities, such as the fundamental structure of the church, its outward appearance, and in many cases the minister himself, the stark changes were visible - such as the loss of forms and the book of common prayer. For as John Morrill noted, 'if there was a normal death rate of ministers in the 1640s, then between three-fifths and two-thirds of all parishes had the same ministers in 1649 as they had had in 1642'.¹³⁰ However, this was still the local church where the community came together for worship as they had done and would do for

¹²⁹ Cambridgeshire CRO, P30/4/2, St Mary the Great Churchwardens' accounts, pp. 41-191.

¹³⁰ John Morrill, 'The Church in England', *Reactions*, p.100.

generations to come. The function and significance of the church had changed very little. It remained central to life in the local community and ritually marked the movement of individuals from one life stage to the next as well as the developments of the nation as a whole through calls to prayer, even if the motions of those rituals required adaptation.

This collective memory also resided in institutions such as companies and colleges.¹³¹ The Skinners' company in London traditionally celebrated thanksgivings with a dinner in a tavern for the assistants and the livery, as they did in 1641 to the cost of two pounds and sixteen shillings.¹³² Following the outbreak of the civil war this practice was abandoned, with the dinner often replaced by wine and cakes.¹³³ While the later 1640s and 1650s saw payments to dinner returning to the receipt and payment book, it is only late in 1659 that the company returned to stating that money was spent in taverns on fast and thanksgiving days: 'Paid sepnt by the M[aste]r and Wardens and others of assistants the 29th of december being fast day att the Naggs head -9li 7s 6d'.¹³⁴ By 1660 dinners in taverns on thanksgivings were once again for the whole company: 'Paid October vith for a dynner att the Greene dragon in the old chaingee for the company being thanksgiving day – 3li 7s'.¹³⁵

In this way, the collective memory of communities functioned on national and local levels reflecting their members' multiple identities of country, county and parish. The language of bell ringing appears nationwide. Even areas without bells (or where the bells were not working for a considerable period) responded with instant fluency when they were able to ring.¹³⁶ However, other actions (such as the use of trumpeters) was far more localised. Thus regionalism was a key

¹³¹ Some Oxbridge colleges, such as St. John's College Oxford, appear to have associated trumpeters with occasions ordered by the monarch only. Used in 1641-42 records of their use then disappeared until the restoration when payment was made 'to seuerall setts of Trumpeters – 15s' in 1660 and the King's Trumpeters themselves in 1662. See St John's COA, ACC.I.A , Annual accounts, p. 39-40.

¹³² GL MS 30727/6, Skinners' company Receipt and Payment book, p. 781.

¹³³ For example, wine and cakes were served on 22 July, 22 August and 2 October 1646. GL MS 30727/6, Skinners' company Receipt and Payment book, pp. 926-927.

¹³⁴ GL MS 30727/7, Skinners' company Receipt and Payment book, p. 515.

¹³⁵ GL MS 30727/7, Skinners' company Receipt and Payment book, p. 585.

¹³⁶ For example see Berkshire CRO, D/P 118/5/1 (microfilm MF 274), Stanford in the Vale Churchwardens' accounts, and D/P 96/5/1 (microfilm MF 221), St Giles Churchwardens' accounts.

influence on collective memory and identity at the grass roots level. It played a significant role in the choice of methods for observing fasts and thanksgivings (as well as the more obvious influences of theology and political allegiance). Wine and cakes were indicative of fast and thanksgiving day observations in London, but seemingly not outside it (except for within some university colleges). The Grocers frequently celebrated thanksgiving days with wine and cakes, often also supplementing these with beer, ale sugar and spice.¹³⁷ These additions to their celebrations are not surprising given the nature of their trade.

V

Given the popularity of the concept of prayer days and the desire of many to perpetuate the traditional means of observance, what prevented prayer days in the 1640s and 1650s reaching their maximum potential participation levels?

I did intend this evening to prepare for the provincially Fast in the humbling my soul in fasting and prayer which was the next day But word being broght that I should have 3 load of wood brought me tomorrow it did much trouble me because it will hender me that I cannot be at the fast which my love and purpos was to it, but however my heart shall be their in lifting up a prayr with them though my body cannot.¹³⁸

The failure of the puritan Nehemiah Wallington to observe a local fast on 19 July 1654 due to the very practical problem of a wood delivery (upon which, as a turner, his livelihood depended) leads us to question what other practical issues may have hindered the observance of other occasions. His solution – by praying so he could observe the occasion spiritually if not in person – raises the question of how other individuals and communities respond to such problems of practicality. Conversely, did other issues of priority, such as the proximity of enemy forces, increase attendance?

For most individuals and their communities, practicality triumphed in the majority of decision-making regarding actual attendance at a particular occasion (as opposed to an individual's intention to observe a prayer day, which would

¹³⁷ GL, 11571/12-13, Grocers' Company Quires of the Wardens' Accounts. For example, 'Item paid for wine & cakes att the hall in the morning for Compa[nie] on that day [the thanksgiving on 7 September 1649]', 11571/13, fo. 46v.

¹³⁸ This extract is from Wallington's diary entry on 18 July 1654 as cited in Booy, *Notebooks*, p. 311.

still indicate support and popularity). The role of practicality does not devalue the religious or political significance of the occasions (or the motives of the people), but rather highlights the difficulties and necessary negotiations of daily life in this turbulent period of early modern history. These challenges could affect the most ardent supporters of prayer days, such as Wallington.¹³⁹ Separating practical difficulties and deliberate non-observance among the individuals and communities who failed to hold a particular prayer day is not an easy task.¹⁴⁰ The limits of possibility shaped and defined these occasions whether in their ordering, for example through the practical limitations of the potential speed of printing and distributing orders, or in their reception, for example whether the minister received the order in time and whether people were willing and able to take the day off work.

Practicality presents itself as a key influence on prayer days and their reception. This forces one to question what practical issues encouraged or hindered prayer day observation? How did individuals and communities respond to these? While it is not possible to identify comprehensively every practical factor affecting prayer day reception, this investigation has identified five significant issues: communication, employment, proximity of military engagements, the mood of individuals and illness.

¹³⁹ Booy, *Notebooks*, p. 311.

¹⁴⁰ Indeed, it is often impossible to tell why an individual failed to attend particular prayer days even when quite detailed evidence about them is available. For example, James Master was a Fellow-Commoner at Trinity College Cambridge who kept an expense book from the period shortly following his matriculation in October 1646. He appears to have been of puritan inclinations and a parliamentarian supporter, for among other pamphlets purchased on 11 February 1647 Master bought a prayer day sermon given by Stephen Marshall for six pence. Master was a regular attendee at national days of prayer at times and he recorded his contributions to the collections in his expense book allowing us to chart his attendance. He usually contributed one shilling, though on 9 December 1646 only six pence was given, possibly due to the purchase of 'Virgill's Georgicks in English' for six pence on 7 December coupled with the loss of three shillings 'at cards' on 3 December. Master also gave money to the nationwide prayer day collections on 25 November 1646, 9 and 30 December 1646, 27 January 24 February 1646. However, there are then there are no payments for monthly fast collections until October 1647. There is also no indication that he had left college early that year, for there are still regular payments for his chambers and purchases for college items such as books. Perhaps Master was a negotiating individual who attended and gave to the collection at fast and thanksgiving occasions only when it suited him. However, for the evidence available we simply cannot tell why he failed to attend fast days between March and September 1647. See Mrs. Hamptons and Cannon Scott Robertson (eds.), 'The Expense-Book of James Master, Esq., A.D. 1646 to 1676', *Archaeologia Cantiana being transactions of the Kent Archaeological Society*, 15 (1883).

The most important factor was communication. As highlighted by chapter four, prayer days were constantly limited by the practical concern of effective communication from central authorities. A keen keeper of fasts, Lady Brilliana Harley wrote to her son of her uncertainty as to when the fast was, ‘My deare Ned... I am glad you had a day of fast, which is a spirituall feast. I heare that the parlament had granted to them a day of fast, but I cannot tell when it was...’¹⁴¹ Similarly, Ralph Josselin describes the lack of communication for the fast of 19 April 1649: ‘This day by act was sett apart for a day of humiliation but was not kept in most places by reason the act was not divulged abroad, wherby ministers and people might have timely notice to prepare for the same.’¹⁴²

It was not only the godly who recorded the practical communication problems that prevented their attendance at prayer days in their diaries. The parliamentarian Thomas Mainwaring, ‘a political and social conservative’, noted his own absence from the fast day for a blessing on the forces going to relieve Ireland on 1 August 1649: ‘That day there was a Fast at Baddeley, but I not knowing of it till 9 of the clocke that morning was forced to go to Namptwich where I met my cozen wright, Namptwich Hundred being appointed that day to meete before us.’¹⁴³ It seems that despite considerable improvements in distribution by parliamentarians, the orders for prayer days were not reaching some local authorities who were still ordering meetings on fast days.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Lady Brilliana Harley to Edward Harley, 9 May 1640, as quoted in Thomas Taylor Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan* (London, 1854), p. 94.

¹⁴² Hockcliffe (ed.), *Josselin*, p. 65. The issue of poor communication from central authorities was a regular reason given by ministers brought before the committee of scandalous ministers who had failed to observe prayer days. See for example the statement of Thomas Hill, parson of Langston, who claimed that he had observed the fast days for the previous four years, but because he lived ‘in a Small Country towne hath neuer rec[eive]d any order from the Com[m]ittee of Leicester or any other for the keeping of such dayes of thanksgivinge’, Bod., Papers of the Leicester Committee of Examinations, Walker C 11, fos. 26r-27r. This was a difficult retort to dismiss and perhaps communication problems are one reason why non-observance of public fasts and thanksgivings tended to be a charge of lower priority (and further down the list compared to others such as refusal to take the vow and covenant) of articles presented against ministers at examination hearings.

¹⁴³ Cheshire CRO, DDX 384/1, Diary of Thomas Mainwaring of Over Peover, p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ Mainwaring held many local offices. He was JP in 1649 and was to be sheriff in 1657-58. He also sat as a commissioner for assessment, the militia and the regulation of ministers, see Hans Norton, ‘Mainwaring, Sir Thomas’, *ODNB*.

Conversely, effective communication and ‘advertising’ could play a part in increasing attendance and even collections on nationwide prayer days. At St Dunstan in the West the majority of collections were a few pounds. However, a huge ten pounds, seven shillings and two pence was collected on the thanksgiving for successes in Wales on 2 November 1645 ‘for the poore families in Plymouth’. This rise from the average payment (presumably the result of a combination of an increased congregation size as well as generous giving from regular attendees) was credited to the persuasive pamphlet produced by the assembly of divines to encourage charitable giving. The churchwardens’ account even specified that the collection was ‘vpon the recom[m]endac[i]on of the Assembly of divines by a printed pap[er] vnder diu[er]s of their hands will appeare; and likewise by the spetiall directions of M[aste]r Perne & m[aste]r Francis Allein.’¹⁴⁵ These ministers were evidently influential in directing the collection and persuading parishioners to part with their money for this cause.

Other practical issues regularly affecting large numbers of potential participants in the 1640s and 1650s were the need to work and the presence of the military in the vicinity. Resentment naturally arose from those who could not afford the loss of income from the closing of shops and taverns for entire days by parliamentarian authorities, and even Wallington remarked upon ‘the hindrance in my shope’ of attending a fast on occasion.¹⁴⁶ As discussed above, the movement of soldiers into Earls Colne greatly improved Josselin’s congregation numbers on the monthly fast on 28 June 1648, yet the proximity of forces could have the opposite effect. When the parliamentarians feared that Charles would march on London in November 1642, they excused all able-bodied persons from observing the monthly fast on 26 November so that they could help to fortify the lines of communication and other defences around the city.¹⁴⁷

As demonstrated above, there were strong limits of practicality surrounding every prayer day, regardless of who ordered it. Practical problems of

¹⁴⁵ GL, 2968/4, St Dunstan in the West Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 11r.

¹⁴⁶ BL, Additional 40883, fo. 61r; Booy, *Notebooks*, p. 178.

¹⁴⁷ See *CJ* 25/10/1642, *LJ* 25/10/1642. See also Victor Smith and Peter Kelsey, ‘The Lines of Communication: The Civil War Defences of London’ in Stephen Porter (ed.), *London and the Civil War* (London, 1996).

communication, the need to work, immediate military threats, and genuine sickness prevented even enthusiastic individuals from participating in prayer days. While individual moods and ties of loyalty may have led them deliberately to reject particular occasions, we cannot assume automatically that they shunned all prayer days. More significantly, one should not presume that absences from prayer day services are necessarily a mark of their unpopularity. Prayer days, with their use of bell ringing and bonfires, were malleable tools of religious and political change, yet they remained constrained within the practical limits of their traditional uses and place in collective memory. Despite the authority for these occasions resting with the state, the apparatus for observation remained firmly in the hands of local communities. This placed considerable negotiating power in the hands of local communities, something they were keenly aware of.

VI

Despite intriguing examples, open and active royalist opposition to the prayer days of the Interregnum governments was the pursuit of the minority and the regicide is a notable turning point in prayer day observation. Most individuals and communities chose a path of negotiation rather than rebellion in response to the call to prayer as will be demonstrated below through an analysis of the key turning points of prayer days observation during the 1650s. Most notable is the increase in observation and expenditure on the prayer days that marked the restoration. This leads us to two key questions. First, what was the cause of these increases? Second, what might cause those who had been parliamentary supporters in the 1640s and for most of the 1650s to celebrate occasions that sought and celebrated the restoration?

As with earlier reformation changes most communities found practical solutions to enable religious continuity in changing circumstances and these were not confined to parish level. For example, as many companies had 'simply converted one form of memorial expense into another' in the sixteenth century, similar

adaptations were utilised for prayer day observance.¹⁴⁸ These adaptations reflect the strength of the desire by communities to continue their religious traditions in their communal observance of prayer days. Communities, such as Christ's College, Cambridge, who had clung to royalist occasions as late as 1648 but then finally admitted defeat further underlines this. Indeed, Christ's played the political game by celebrating parliamentary occasions too (for example Christ's had bonfires both for the king's coronation day and for the routing of the Scots by parliamentary forces in 1648). They now utilised their traditional methods of observance, such as bonfires for thanksgivings, only on the occasions authorised by the new state regimes.¹⁴⁹

This wish to preserve traditional aspects of nationwide prayer days is most notable in sources relating to the 1650s. With the end of civil war, there arose a keenness to return to normality alongside an initial acceptance (though a begrudging one in royalist heartlands) of the new parliamentary state. Royalist opposition for most of the 1650s appears to have been in the form of quiet avoidance. Naturally, there is little firm evidence of this in most royalist areas, but the significantly less detailed churchwardens' accounts in parishes such as St Werberge, Bristol, and St Mary on the Hill, Chester, are highly suggestive. While the accounts for these parishes were very detailed in the 1640s, those for the 1650s are very brief and would not have given unwelcome officials any indication of whether the prayer days were observed or not.¹⁵⁰

Therefore, the regicide acted as a watershed. In areas where strong divisions had been bubbling beneath the surface of a community, it acted as a catalyst for action against those who had been loyal to Charles. Frequently, the parish minister fell victim to the feud that highlighted the breakdown of his community as factions struggled for control. In this struggle the zealous sometimes used the non-observance of prayer days to their advantage as occurred in St. Clements,

¹⁴⁸ Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: religion and cultural adaptation* (Oxford, 2001), p. 87.

¹⁴⁹ Christ's CCA, B.1/10, Account book. Yet, the college's continued allegiance to the Stuarts is indicated by their regular support throughout the 1650s of men in want who were formerly employed by the king either as servants or commanders.

¹⁵⁰ Bristol RO, P/St W/ChW/3/b, St Werberge Churchwardens' accounts; Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, 1644.

Sandwich. Divided between royalist and parliamentary supporters throughout the 1640s and with a royalist sympathiser holding the benefice, the parliamentary supporters waited until June 1649 to strike. They petitioned the committee for plundered ministers for the removal of their rector, Benjamin Harrison. The evidence against Harrison was largely hearsay, and the petition attests to the prolonged division in the parish. Harrison was accused amongst other things of associating with convicted enemies of the state and making ‘sundry hintes’ against the state in several sermons. It seems likely that the committee members pointed out to those seeking to oust Harrison that this was insufficient for them to act on. Therefore, a further statement of accusation was physically attached to the end of the original petition with the signature of two witnesses, Thomas Villsen and John Paine:

That the said Harrison to discover him amalignant newer since the late proceedings of the state prayes either for parliament or army nor obserues either dayes of fasting or thancksgiving in his parish (through his disafection to this present government) that we can heare of.¹⁵¹

This proved to be Harrison’s undoing. He was sequestered on 1 August 1650:

for nott keeping of daye of Publique Humiliation or Thanksgiveing, & for not publissing the Acts, Orders, or declatations of Parleym[en]t, being enioyned and directed thevnto, by Authority of the same, haveing had due notice of the same, the w[hi]ch you cannot deny but you haue had & doth farther appeare by Examination (vppon late) of seuerall Wittnesses, concerning the same./¹⁵²

Thus while some communities used the opportunity of prayer days to preserve communal identity and strengthen the ties of fellowship, others sought to use them to strengthen their own position in local political power struggles.

Following the regicide, whether through reluctant acceptance or enthusiasm, most parishes observed at least some of the prayer days ordered by the interregnum regimes. Yet there is a marked increase in observance across the

¹⁵¹ Bod., Walker C 4, fo. 234r.

¹⁵² Bod., Walker C 4, fo. 249r.

nation in 1660 with very few parishes observing any of the three state prayer days in 1659. Indeed, outside of London research for this project did not unearth a single definitive example. St Mary the Great, Cambridge, is typical with no references to prayer day observance in 1659 but celebrations for ‘the thanksgiving of the L[or]d Monck’ and ‘the thanksgiving for the King’s restaurac[i]on’ and additional payments for ringing ‘at the voting in of the King May 3[r]d’ and ‘att the Kings coming into England. May 29’.¹⁵³ Whereas Yarnton parish in Oxfordshire highlighted its enthusiasm with a large bold heading ‘RESTORATION’ at the top of its accounts for 1660 and extra purchases of bread and beer ‘w[he]n the King was Proclaymed’.¹⁵⁴

National collective memory came to be utilised in the struggle between the fading protectorate regime and the people. Interpretations of providence were fought over in the late 1650s with the memory of monarchy unifying many members of the population against the government. Key events, such as Cromwell’s death, the end of the second protectorate, the return of the Rump, the defeat of Booth’s rising, Monck’s arrival in London and the ensuing restoration, all identified God’s hand at work. However, it was becoming increasingly difficult for officials to convince the population that God still supported the parliamentary cause. The order for the nationwide fast day for the death of Cromwell explained that the sins of the nation were the cause for God taking the protector.¹⁵⁵ Yet as these providential acts rained down against the government (particularly in 1659) many people, including long-standing parliamentary supporters, began to ponder whether God’s support had left them, or worse whether the divine had been on the side of the royalists all along.¹⁵⁶ The frequency of these acts of providence in 1659 and 1660, the tense political atmosphere and desire for stability called the nation to prayer. Encouraged by royalists, highly aware and fearful of the political crisis, and equipped with the

¹⁵³ Cambridgeshire CRO, P30/4/2, St Mary the Great Churchwardens’ accounts, p.189.

¹⁵⁴ Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 303/4/F1/1, Yarnton, Churchwardens’ accounts, fo. 55.

¹⁵⁵ *By the Protector. A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Publique Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1658; Wing C7181)

¹⁵⁶ This is also the view of Geoffrey Browell, ‘The Politics of providentialism in England, c. 1640-1660’, PhD. thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury (2000), see chapter 7, especially pp. 244-45.

knowledge of how to observe prayer days in a traditional manner, the nation flocked to nationwide prayer days as the restoration became a distinct possibility.

The understandable enthusiasm of long-standing royalist supporters (such as those in Yarnton), the horror of the regicide, and the general conservative leanings of the English political nation, combined with this reinterpretation of the standing of the interregnum regimes in the eyes of the Almighty, was powerful. Together these factors account for the marked increase in prayer day observation and expenditure in 1660. Even those with religious principles of independency, who doubtless must have known that their consciences would suffer under a Stuart, came to support the restoration. Such men are central to explaining how a nation that had fought a civil war, with significant numbers risking their lives to fight their king, observed nationwide prayer days that celebrated his defeats, came to welcome back his son with open arms and celebrate prayer days for the restoration.

A rare glimpse is afforded into one such man in the diary of Sir Thomas Mainwaring of Baddiley and Over Peover, a socially conservative individual with puritan leanings. The diary is very dispassionate with the most emotional entry perhaps being that for 30 January 1649. Mainwaring describes that he was 'at Baddeley [one of his country estates] that day king charles the first was murdered'.¹⁵⁷ It seems that the execution of the king was a step too far for Mainwaring, though he had long found Charles I objectionable and untrustworthy. Mainwaring was not an ardent royalist but Hans Norton notes that 'as a political and social conservative he came to dislike even more the godly regime which replaced [the Stuarts]'.¹⁵⁸ It may be that Mainwaring felt that the regicide was illegal (he had sound knowledge of the law from his training at Gray's Inn) but perhaps his distaste was simply moral outrage at the murder of one God had placed above all others as fit to rule.

In his diary there are hints of the inherent tensions when religious persuasions and socio-political beliefs conflict. It is the diary of a man with clearly puritan

¹⁵⁷ Cheshire CRO, DDX 384/1, Diary of Thomas Mainwaring of Over Peover, p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ Norton, 'Mainwaring, Thomas', *ODNB*.

religious leanings, but whose independency principles cut both ways. It appears that Mainwaring did not feel that the state should meddle in the church, nor matters of the church tear apart the fabric of society. Puritan persuasions could not convince him that the regicide was acceptable. Nevertheless, despite his distaste for the regicide, he attended the parliamentary monthly fast the following day.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Mainwaring continued to attend some parliamentary occasions even with his increasing dislike of godly government, perhaps due to his commitment to the ideal of nationwide prayer. His diary records his attendance at the thanksgiving day for the victory over Ormond's forces at Rathmines on 29 August, and the fast for prevalent sins, and a blessing on parliament and the forces on 13 June 1650.¹⁶⁰

Mainwaring appears to have negotiated his own theology to some extent, combining conservative traditions with puritan beliefs. He clearly saw value in fasts and thanksgivings, holding a private thanksgiving at Baddeley for his wife's recovery from small pox and attending a private fast voluntarily at Nantwich on 13 February 1650 where he 'heard M[aste]r Jackson preach, they having a fast there that day as a preparation to the receiving of the sacrament'.¹⁶¹ Yet he and his wife appear to have continued some customs the godly would not have approved of, such as Mainwaring's wife's churching on 19 June 1650.¹⁶² Norton describes Mainwaring as holding 'lifelong leanings towards Independency' and his attendance at private fasts and thanksgivings do appear to indicate puritan persuasions. Furthermore, in 1680 when Charles II attempted to remove puritan sympathizers from local government, Mainwaring was removed from the commission of the peace, presumably for this reason.¹⁶³

Mainwaring negotiated puritan leanings and social conservatism creating a theology that valued social customs (such as churching) and the traditional societal hierarchy, while encouraging more puritan activities such as private fasting and thanksgivings. For him, religion was largely separate from politics

¹⁵⁹ '31 [January 1649] Being the monethly fast at Baddeley', Cheshire CRO, DDX 384/1, Diary of Thomas Mainuaring of Over Peover, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 44.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶² Cheshire CRO, DDX 384/1, Diary of Thomas Mainuaring of Over Peover, p. 45.

¹⁶³ Norton, 'Mainuaring, Thomas', *ODNB*.

and the state. Ultimately, the regicide and the godly governments that followed were too disruptive to Mainwaring's conservative societal mindset. Despite his religious inclinations towards independency, and general disinclination to be involved in the politics of the centre, Mainwaring supported his friend and kinsman George Booth in the rising of 1659. Though an uneasy series of negotiations between socio-political conservatism and religiosity had occupied Mainwaring in the 1640s and 1650s, ultimately conservatism triumphed. It seems likely that these same struggles, tensions and ultimately conservative triumphs occurred throughout the English nation.

VII

In conclusion, four points justify further highlighting. First, the concept of nationwide days of prayer was popular. The responses of the English to prayer day orders demonstrates that the ideal of nationwide days of prayer mattered to them and was worth fighting for, regardless of whether they were supportive of particular occasions ordered by particular authorities. Thus, these occasions were far more than state-sponsored propaganda efforts. They held genuine religious value for many participants and their reception of them was highly significant in a culture where it was widely believed that only God could end the civil war and keep the peace in England. The authorities were dependent upon favourable reception by the people and careful observance of the occasions they ordered. The people were not unaware of this power and many individuals used prayer days to make statements of conscience whether religiously or politically motivated.

The second theme emerging from this analysis of prayer day reception is the incredible strength of collective cultural memory, particularly the nationwide multi-faceted language of bell-ringing. While the purpose, ordering processes and content of prayer day services could be adapted to religious and political changes, these occasions remained constrained by their methods of observance within the localities. The traditional uses and place in the collective memory of actions such as bell ringing tied these occasions to their cultural heritage. This

issue has far wider implications in the context of a national church, which will be discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

Third, practical issues such as communication problems, necessary duties of employment, the proximity of enemy forces, illness and even the mood of individuals had a considerable impact on the reception of every prayer day. Furthermore, these issues should not be automatically presumed to be the excuses of the irreligious or non-committed, as exemplified by the occasions of non-observance by Nehemiah Wallington and Ralph Josselin.

Finally, the importance of prayer days to the people identifies them as a representation of normality and stability. People fought for the symbols of orthodoxy such as nationwide prayer days and the ringing of bells because they realised the value of continuity and recognized the attachment of the average English person to the established norms of religious worship. Control of traditional symbols was a practical, common sense means of increasing influence utilised by both sides in the civil war. Once secured, the scope of their meaning could be gradually expanded. This is particularly evident in the rich source base of the printed polemics of intellectual elites, but appears partly lacking in the knowledge of those attempting to establish a godly nation.¹⁶⁴ For where was the annual national merry thanksgiving for freedom from the tyranny of Charles I to rival that of its natural companion the anniversary of freedom from popery on 5 November?¹⁶⁵ When the restoration proved a distinct possibility, the nation responded, utilising and supporting nationwide prayer days devoted to the cause with an enthusiasm beyond the orders of the centre. The prayer days of 1660 demonstrated the survival of traditional methods of observance as well as the popularity of the concept of these occasions. Whereas the godly regimes of the 1650s had misinterpreted the needs of the nation in terms of prayer days in their plans for the national church; the collective memory of the people was so strong that in 1660 they were able to respond (almost spontaneously) to traditional calls

¹⁶⁴ On the manipulation of symbols of orthodoxy in printed polemic see Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant thought* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 542.

¹⁶⁵ This will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter. A similar point was made by Morrill in 'The Church of England', *Reactions*, p. 114.

to nationwide prayer, even without a formal return to the episcopal structure of the Church of England. It is to this question of the relationship between nationwide prayer days and the concept of a national church that we now turn.

Conclusion: A national church?

The providential return of the monarchy clearly called for a nationwide day of thanksgiving. The occasion was ordered and authorised by royal proclamation on 5 June 1660 following a very humble parliamentary petition in which the Lords were once again distinctly the ‘Upper House’.¹ The issue of a form of prayer symbolised the role of the (as yet not formally re-established) episcopacy.² The purpose of the occasion was so significant that even before the thanksgiving had been held on 28 June 1660, a bill for an annual thanksgiving had already had its first reading in the Commons.³ Despite the proposed occasion being the epitome of regularised, set, enforced prayer, it was uncontroversial and its popularity ensured rapid authorisation. Indeed, the *Act for a perpetuall Anniversary Thanksgiving on the twenty ninth day of May* was one of the first four parliamentary bills to gain royal assent and be ratified.⁴ Thus, the summer of 1660 saw a very deliberate return to the traditional model of ordering nationwide prayer as outlined in chapter two and it signalled the re-establishment of the Church of England in almost precisely the same mould as it had been in 1640. As in the aftermath of the religious settlement of 1559, some would lament this as a lost opportunity for reform, while others were keen to highlight the triumphal return of the Church of England as providential. This final chapter utilises the conclusions of this thesis to consider what prayer days can tell us about some of the shifts in the nature of the national church in England and its relationship with the English people before and after the restoration. In doing so it demonstrates some of the ways in which this project contributes to wider scholarly debates on the relationships between crown, church, parliament and people, the nature of authority, and England’s long reformation.

¹ *By the King. A Proclamation for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn and Publick Thanksgiving Throughout the Whole Kingdom* (London, 1660; Wing C3426).

² *A Form of Prayer, with Thanksgiving, to Be Used of All the Kings Majesties Loving Subjects. The 28th of June, 1660. For His Majesties Happy Return to His Kingdoms* (London, 1660; Wing C4170).

³ *CJ 27/06/1660*.

⁴ John Raithby (ed.), *Statutes of the Realm* (London, 1819), vol. 5, 315.

Recent research, such as that by Ann Hughes, has highlighted the relative success of the Interregnum Church.⁵ This leads us to question why the restoration failed to prompt a reform of the Church of England, which instead was re-established as almost a carbon-copy of its pre-civil war self, excluding the majority of Presbyterians. Surely the increased diversity within the ‘spectrum of belief’ in England by 1660 ought to have prompted further reform, or at least a long process of re-establishment fraught with factional tensions? Rather, the vision of a comprehensive church based on a moderate settlement, as foreshadowed in the Breda Declaration and sketched out in the Worcester House Declaration, surrendered to the far narrower Act of Uniformity.⁶ Subsequently, as Jonathan Scott has identified, the religious tinderbox of 1637-42 was re-run in 1678-83 as a second crisis of popery.⁷ In hindsight, this seems highly likely if not inevitable, for we might also see the restoration settlement as a re-run of the Elizabethan religious settlement, with both attempts failing to incorporate those of moderate reforming tendencies within the body of the national church. In the medium to long term, such failings made religious tensions a fuelled pyre requiring only a political spark. Despite a rapid and largely unopposed return to the traditional church at the restoration, by the end of the 1670s bitter disagreements over what the nature of the Church should be were evident. Furthermore, they were exemplified amidst anxieties over the security of the Church of England and Protestantism in Europe as a whole. As had occurred with the settlement of 1559, many of those seeking moderate reform had believed that the Restoration settlement was the first step, rather than the last, towards reformation. By the 1670s, this had proved to be a false hope.

In 1660 Charles II returned to a land with a largely functioning church created in a piecemeal fashion by local lay and clerical individuals, albeit a headless one of dubious legal standing. For historians focused on the view from the dioceses, such as Anne Whiteman, the monarchy and episcopacy were subsequently grafted on following almost irrelevant debates at Whitehall and Westminster.

⁵ Ann Hughes, “‘The public profession of these nations’: the national Church in Interregnum England”, in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006).

⁶ John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (London, 1991), pp. 29-36.

⁷ Jonathan Scott, ‘England’s Troubles: Exhuming the Popish Plot’ in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990).

While these debates struggled to suppress and exclude the majority of Presbyterians and other non-conformists from the national church, the lack of central direction made it ‘inevitable that the old system, with its weaknesses as well as its strength, would be restored, and with it all the vested interests which made change so difficult.’⁸ The puritan fire appeared to have dampened to a smouldering glow of embers in 1660, leading some scholars, such as Michael Finlayson, to conclude that puritanism cannot possibly have been as important to Englishmen prior to the civil war as the historiography of that period would suggest.⁹ Seemingly, the only other possible alternative is that puritanism was far more important to restoration Englishmen than it appears in the sources – in which case why was the Church of England not reformed? Yet such a dichotomised view rather misses the point. Harris, Seaward and Goldie are convincing in their interpretation that ‘whether or not the Civil War began as a war of religion, its legacy was a generation of people locked into a religious cold war, whose thinking on matters of authority and obedience was constantly filtered through the fragmented glass of English Protestant sensibilities’.¹⁰ This suggests that the very experience of the period between 1640 and 1660 had changed the rules of engagement and multiplied uncertainties. While later clashes between the monarch, episcopate and parliament revisited many old battlefields, it was now well known how high the stakes could rise.

Nationwide fast and thanksgiving days are a useful way into these debates due to their politico-religious nature. As seen in chapters one to three, there was greater continuity than change in these occasions between 1640 and 1660 and yet they also demonstrated the hardening of theological distinctions as different colours of the religious spectrum became associated with the politically divided groups of parliamentarian and royalist. This was particularly evident over understandings of the roles of providence, prayer and fasting in English government.

⁸ Anne Whiteman, ‘The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1955), p. 130.

⁹ Michael Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism, and the English Revolution: the Religious Factor in English Politics Before and After the Interregnum* (Toronto, 1983).

¹⁰ Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie in idem. (eds.), *The Politics of Religion*, p. x.

One problem inherent in prayer days, specifically with the ordering of prayer, was that people forced to pray might do so ‘badly’ and anger God further. In many cases, it was safer for a few, select individuals to pray on behalf of the rest. Yet, for truly nationwide disasters, as at Nineveh, a nationwide response of turning to God was required. Prayer days were very specific flashpoints that highlighted alternative understandings of the national church – was it made up of all English subjects, or was it a community of true believers? The findings of chapter three in particular suggest that royalist and parliamentary interpretations of providence, prayer and fasting developed during the 1640s and 1650s partly in response to the circumstances of war, persecution and the responsibilities of government. In this way examination of prayer days enlightens us as to the theological shifts within the rival national churches amidst their immediate political contexts.

However, most significantly, prayer days required almost immediate decisions from central authorities, whether royalist or parliamentary, in order to be authorised and disseminated. Thus, in one sense they provide a snapshot of the views of government at a particular point; in another, they provide an indication of what many felt was acceptable as a temporary or ‘one time only’ nationwide religious action. This is particularly helpful for looking at the re-establishment, for, in the parishes at least, it had to be done with expedience. Furthermore, the providential restoration (as with the providential accession of Elizabeth) provided a desire for compromise and a spirit of charity that glued the settlement together. However, this glue could not withstand the vibrations of political crises, particularly once the later Stuart monarchs’ personal preferences for “ungodliness”, or worse, Catholicism, became clear.

I

This thesis has challenged the notion that nationwide prayer days were synonymous with puritanism. In examining the frequency of fast and thanksgiving days between 1640 and 1660, civil war rather than godly inclinations was found to be the more significant factor, particularly since most of the increase in frequency was caused by thanksgivings rather than fast days

(traditionally the handmaiden of puritan parliamentarians). Rather, this research has further underlined the association between these occasions and traditionalism, conservatism and monarchy. These associations are strengthened when viewed from the early modern period prior to 1640 and even the medieval. As demonstrated above, this was equally true for the occasions ordered at the restoration and royal proclamations returned with the monarchy as the predominant means of ordering occasions for subsequent seventeenth-century events.¹¹

The link between extraordinary days of prayer and the monarchy was exemplified both in the authorisation and official content of traditional prayer days. Chapter two in particular noted the significance of royal authority in the traditional ordering process and how the very notion of authority became, in part, tied to the continuation of the traditional model of ordering as a symbol of stability and legitimacy. It is somewhat remarkable that a nationwide prayer day was not ordered without some tangible link to royal authority until February 1643.¹² Prayer days were ‘symbols of orthodoxy’ worth fighting for.¹³ Both sides utilised these occasions to construct an official narrative of legitimate authority and even the parliamentarians adapted rather than utterly rejected the traditional model. In the 1640s parliament chose to utilise ordinances to ‘borrow’ the power of the crown to order occasions rather than attempt to separate it from the ordering process.¹⁴ It seems the link between English Protestantism and the royal supremacy was too strong to break while the monarch lived.

Similarly, while the content and structure of prayer day materials altered in response to the struggles of civil war and the birth of subsequent government regimes initially highlighting parliamentary innovations; in time, orders and

¹¹ For a more detailed account of nationwide prayer days after 1660 see Alasdair Raffé, Natalie Mears, Stephen Taylor and Philip Williamson, with Lucy Bates (eds.), *National Prayers. Special Worship since the Reformation: vol. 1: Fasts, Thanksgivings and Special Prayers in the British Isles 1530s-1870* (forthcoming, 2013).

¹² This was the nationwide thanksgiving for the success of parliamentary forces in Yorkshire held on 5 February 1643. For further details on its significance, see chapter two.

¹³ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and reformed: the Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 542.

¹⁴ On the difficulties of distinguishing between orders and ordinances, and their relation to royal authority, see chapter two.

declarations began to imitate traditional forms of prayer. Chapter three demonstrated the rise of propagandistic elements within authorised prayer materials as military engagement increased. As royalists sought to enhance the appeal of the traditional form and improve the public image of the king, parliamentarians imitated the purpose of traditional forms, creating uniformity of worship across the nation, via orders and declarations. The familiarity of traditional prayer day materials aided a public image of government stability, bolstering notions of legitimate authority. However, in seeking to strengthen claims to authority, both sides also invoked notions of their own spiritual responsibility for the nation. As shall be demonstrated below, this had considerable implications for the concept of the national church and the personnel responsible for leading it. The royal supremacy had wedded the crown to the church and created a mantle of monarchical responsibility for the salvation of the English people. This weighty responsibility was not one willingly taken up by parliament or protectors and ultimately was to become a permanent casualty of the civil war despite restoration attempts to salvage it (though it would take until the Toleration Act (1689) for this to be accepted by most contemporaries).

This thesis has demonstrated that, despite alterations and altercations between royalists and parliamentarians, the principal motives for nationwide fast and thanksgiving days were theological. These occasions were not political weapons cloaked in religious acts. Proclamations, ordinances, declarations, forms, set or *ex tempore* prayers and sermons were all founded upon a sincere desire to seek divine aid for earthly national concerns. As seen in chapter three, while political and military contexts did affect the religious motivations and elements of these occasions, they did not create them. For example, a series of defeats may not prompt only a nationwide fast but also stricter regulations for observance. Both sides experienced a need to explain why their occasions had not achieved the aims of those ordering them in the 1640s. Yet, in the 1650s this was compounded for both sides, with the royalists needing to explain why God had abandoned them and parliamentarians needing to explain how God could now allow English suffering, as exemplified in their defeat at Hispaniola, with a godly government ruling his chosen nation.

Practicality was a key factor in observation of prayer days. As chapter four demonstrated, for the royalists in particular, the absence of reliable communication channels severely affected the possibility of effective nationwide prayer days and the distribution of official royalist messages and national propaganda more generally. For if the people could not receive the order to pray, they could not observe the occasion and this may even anger the Almighty further. For parliamentarians, the desire to create clerical accountability for unobserved occasions caused them to ask questions of the receipt of prayer day orders within local communities, even if it did not in and of itself lead to a better postal service. Though brief because of limitations of space, chapter four's examination of the practical implications for distribution of official prayer days materials through royal or quasi-royal messengers and the post network has wide-reaching implications for early modern historiography, particularly for scholars working on print culture. While recent research has examined the production of printed materials, the likely readership of such materials and key printers such as John Day and the royal printers under James I, the circulation of official printed materials has received relatively little attention when compared to politically-motivated, commercial or illicit works.¹⁵ In the 1640s in particular, the relative inability of the royalists to disperse their official printed orders and forms for prayer surely also helps to explain why talented writers of persuasion, such as Hyde, were not more successful in recruiting members to the royalist cause via printed propaganda.¹⁶

This thesis has challenged the prevailing view that these occasions were fundamentally unpopular with the English people, particularly in the 1650s.¹⁷ While some were uncommitted or even mocked these occasions, these were not the only causes of non-observance, for even godly individuals like Wallington

¹⁵ For example, see Elizabeth Evenden, *Patents, pictures and patronage: John Day and the Tudor book trade* (Aldershot, 2008); Graham Rees and Maria Wakely, *Publishing, Politics, and Culture: The King's Printers in the Reign of James I and VI* (Oxford, 2009); and Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004).

¹⁶ It also provides an explanation for McElligott's statement that 'the vast majority of royalist propaganda produced during the later 1640s was printed surreptitiously in London' as those closest to the king saw little reason to produce works that they could not widely distribute. See Jason McElligott, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge, 2007) p. 34.

¹⁷ For predominant historiographical views, see the introduction.

and Josselin failed to observe on occasion. Rather, the concept of nationwide prayer remained popular, helping to explain why these occasions survived into the twentieth century.¹⁸ These occasions held genuine religious value for many, including those of non-puritan persuasions, as they were built upon belief in providence, which transcended religious divisions. Those in authority were dependent upon the people to observe the occasions, a power some individuals utilised to make political and/or religious statements. Thus, some did challenge particular occasions, or particular authorities, yet for many the notion that divine assistance for the nation in crisis could be sought through prayer was a fundamental belief.

Chapter five also highlighted the strength of cultural memory with respect to prayer day observation. The considerable continuity of these occasions throughout the early modern period is closely linked to the methods by which they were observed in the localities. Collective memory and custom constrained the extent to which new regimes could innovate occasions and, as will be explored below, this has wider implications for the survival of the traditional elements of England's national church.

The survival of traditional methods of observing these occasions, such as bell ringing, is testament to the status of fast and thanksgiving days as symbols of orthodoxy and representations of stability amidst crisis. Both sides sought to draw upon established norms of religious worship such as prayer days to secure divine aid and as a means of increasing influence and legitimising their authority. It was here that godly governments made the fatal error of failing to harness traditional English customs and means of observing occasions and incorporate them fully into the Interregnum Church.¹⁹ John Morrill's contention that the lack

¹⁸ See Philip Williamson, Stephen Taylor, Alasdair Raffe and Natalie Mears (eds.), *National Prayers. Special Worship since the Reformation: vol. 2: Worship for National and Royal Occasions in Britain since 1871* (forthcoming, 2013).

¹⁹ Some confusion exists concerning whether the parliamentarians set aside a monthly thanksgiving to replace the lost 'holy days'. For example, Morrill holds that 'they set aside the second Tuesday of every month as a day of Thanksgiving' citing *A&O*, vol. I, p. 905. See John Morrill, 'The Church in England, 1642-1649' in idem., *The nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 174. However, this appears to be erroneous typographically as well as in substance. Morrill seems to intend to refer to the additional ordinance for days of recreation passed by both houses on 28 June 1647 (which outlined accepted behaviour, supplementing the

of an annual thanksgiving for freedom from the tyranny of Charles I was a grave parliamentary error is convincing. While theologically one can appreciate the puritan rejection of regularised prayer as identified in chapter one; and even the political fear of a backlash against perceived rejoicing over the regicide; the failure to attempt to incorporate the collective memory and traditional methods of worship into the national church left the majority outside of it. As we shall see, this is a key reason for the spontaneous return of the traditional Church at the restoration, even before the religious settlement was debated in Whitehall and Westminster.

II

The Church of England had been established in the 1530s on a foundation of royal supremacy and parliamentary endorsement. From Henry VIII, Tudor and Stuart monarchs had held control over church law, convocation, the appointment of bishops via *conge d'elire* (though other bishops consecrated them) and ecclesiastical taxation (such as First Fruits).²⁰ Through injunctions they could regulate English worship and through general proclamations they could suspend the Book of Common Prayer – as occurred for every nationwide prayer day prior to 1642.

During the 1640s, for the first time, the Church of England was divorced from the monarchy. Despite claims of martyrdom, Charles I abandoned his church in 1648 when he agreed to give the Presbyterian system a three-year trial. His son followed suit in linking the English crown with Scottish Presbyterianism through an alliance. Yet, even headless, the Church of England (if we accept this term for

original ordinance ordered on 8 June 1647). This ordinance is within Firth and Rait, volume one, but commences on page 985 (making p. 905 an easy typographical error). Nonetheless, these days of recreation should not be confused with thanksgivings. These were public holidays on which no church attendance was expected. Furthermore, research for this thesis has found no evidence for a monthly thanksgiving (on any day) within the localities. This actually further supports Morrill's overall contention of the lack of attempt by godly regimes to incorporate elements of popular culture into their national church further.

²⁰ For further discussion of the significance of the royal supremacy both before and after the restoration see Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The politics of the Royal Supremacy* (Cambridge, 2011).

the illegal yet traditional church in the 1650s) survived and started to develop its Anglican identity.²¹

This was largely through the acts of highly committed individuals. Recent work by Ken Fincham and Stephen Taylor has highlighted the courageous and essential (though illegal) ordinations carried out by a handful of bishops in the 1650s. This allowed the continuation of the uninterrupted line of episcopal succession as well as highlighting the continued popularity of traditional ordination among ordinands, even those keen to serve in the Interregnum Church.²² However, while certain bishops ordained and corresponded with one another, and many clergymen illegally continued to use the Book of Common Prayer (so frequently that, famously, John Evelyn hardly ever found it difficult to hear a Book of Common Prayer service), this was largely an uncoordinated effort.²³ The ordaining bishops, such as Robert Skinner, bishop of Oxford, and Thomas Fulwar, bishop of Ardfert in Ireland (who ordained a staggering 34 percent of all ordinands between 1646 and 1660), as well as those keeping their heads down but who would return at the restoration, like William Juxon, appear to have shied away from attempting to establish leadership of the persecuted church, even temporarily in the absence of the true monarch.²⁴

One contributing factor for this may have been the dubious hierarchy between episcopacy and monarchy over the spiritual leadership of the church. For while kingship denoted headship (or supreme governorship) the monarch remained a member of the laity without the sacerdotal qualities necessary to ensure salvation for their subjects.²⁵ For example, Alexander Nowell was keen to deny that the

²¹ See Morrill, 'The Church in England'; Judith Maltby, 'Suffering and surviving: the civil wars, the Commonwealth and the formation of 'Anglicanism', 1642-60' in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006); John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, pp. xiii-xiv. In line with Maltby, I have refrained from using the term Anglican prior to 1660 as it implies 'the multi-denominational character of English Christianity after 1660 as a foregone conclusion', see Maltby, 'Suffering', p. 159.

²² Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, 'Vital Statistics: Episcopal Ordination and Ordinands in England, 1646-60' *English Historical Review*, 126 (2011).

²³ However, Maltby does note that Evelyn failed to find a prayer book service on Christmas day in 1652. Maltby, 'Suffering', p. 163.

²⁴ For the substantial role of three Irish bishops (Robert Maxwell, Henry Tilson and Thomas Fulwar) in ordaining minister between 1646 and 1660, see Fincham and Taylor, 'Vital Statistics'.

²⁵ See Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship*, chapter one for contemporary writers' views on this.

supremacy in any way implied a priestly monarchy.²⁶ Jacqueline Rose has noted how reactions to James II's Catholicism and the first Anglican schism in 1689 were fuelled by uncertainty as to how far bishops were subordinate to their royal supreme governor, thus locating the restoration as a distinct phase of England's long reformation.²⁷

Extraordinary prayers and prayer days are a window into this confusion for the bishops' own perceptions of their power to authorise occasions, or material to be used on already authorised occasions, allows us to glimpse at this shifting hierarchical tension. Within his jurisdiction, John Aylmer, bishop of London, ordered a prayer in response to weather and other punishments in 1585.²⁸ Yet Archbishop Parker in 1563 was firmly committed to the idea of his own subordination to Elizabeth's governorship of the church, believing that he did not have the authority to authorise occasions, even within his own diocese.²⁹

The Elizabethan settlement, like that of the restoration, was a thwarted attempt at compromise between ever-fracturing Protestant groups. In each case, a temporary solution was found, but it was unsustainable, and crucially left outside of the church the majority of moderate reformers. Furthermore, the birth of each settlement was marked by divergence between the crown and the episcopate. However, as we shall see, there was one crucial distinction between these settlements. In 1559, the crown created a religious settlement without Protestant bishops (the creation of a Protestant episcopate did not begin until Parker's consecration on 17 December 1559). In developing the settlement without Protestant bishops (though some Catholic ones remained) the queen subjugated their leadership below that of the monarchy and prevented any episcopal attempts at a more radical settlement.³⁰ In 1662, the bishops gained the upper hand over the crown and ensured the crown's more radical desires of 'liberty for tender consciences' were kept in check. In 1662 the seeds were sown for the

²⁶ Alexander Nowell, *The Reproffe of M. Dorman ... continued* (1566) fo. 101r, as cited in Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship*, p. 50.

²⁷ Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship*, p. 2.

²⁸ See Raffé, Mears, Taylor, Williamson and Bates (eds.), *National Prayers*, vol. 1., 1585-E1.

²⁹ This will be discussed further below.

³⁰ Norman Jones, *Faith by Statute: Parliament and the settlement of religion, 1559* (London, 1982), especially p. 79. I am very grateful to David Crankshaw for clarifications of this point.

episcopal domination over the Church of England, which would be fought out between Tories and Whigs in the 1670s and 1680s. Somewhat ironically, while in the decades following the Elizabethan settlement, the crown utilised the supremacy confirmed in parliamentary statute to counter moderate puritan pressure for further reform, in the decades following the restoration settlement, the episcopate utilised parliament and their own claims of spiritual leadership over the church to counter the crown's attempts at toleration and reform.

In 1559, the supremacy of the crown was emphasised by clause XIII of the Act of Uniformity (among other instances):

- a) Provided always and be it enacted that such ornaments of the church and of the ministers thereof shall be retained and be in use, as was in the church of England by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, *until other order shall be therein taken by the authority of the queen's majesty*, with the advice of her commissioners appointed and authorized under the great seal of England for ecclesiastical causes, or of the metropolitan of this realm.
- b) And also that, *if there shall happen any contempt or irreverence to be used in the ceremonies or rites of the church by the misusing of the orders appointed in this book, the queen's majesty may by the like advice of the said commissioners or metropolitan ordain and publish further ceremonies or rites as may be most for the advancement of God's glory, the edifying of his church*
- c) *and the due reverence of Christ's holy mysteries and sacraments.*³¹

It is not unreasonable to assume that those keen for further reform read part a) of the clause as implying that further reforms would follow the settlement, due to the limited temporal sense of the word 'until'. This understanding was further enforced by b). Moderate puritans understood 'irreverence' and 'misuse' to be inevitable and 'the advancement of God's glory' was surely an indication of further reformation. They had already found the first prayer book (1549) ornaments to be abused by popish ministers, leading to the creation of the revised Book of Common Prayer in 1552. However, part c) can be seen as appealing to conservatives in a similar way to the wording of the Eucharist of first prayer book being added to that of 1552 for the Elizabethan version of the Book of Common Prayer. Essentially, the wording allowed a great proportion of the 'spectrum of belief' to read into the clause what they would like to find there, ensuring the clause passed with the bill, and that Elizabeth achieved almost

³¹ C. Cross, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabeth Church*, (London, 1969), p. 135. Layout and italics are my own.

complete freedom over ornaments and ceremonial aspects of the Church. Elizabeth could use this clause to stop any unwanted discussions in parliament over religion.³²

This clause was highly significant for nationwide prayer days. For the ‘ornaments’ of the church and the ‘orders appointed in this book’ were to ‘always ... be of use’ unless other orders were given ‘by the authority of the Queen’s majesty’. Thus, royal authority was essential for even the temporary suspension of the Book of Common Prayer services as established in the settlement. It is also significant that the clause made no provisions for the bishops about to be created; while they could be made commissioners for ecclesiastical causes this too required the authority of the crown.

Once again, in the injunctions, the subordination of the bishops to the authority of the crown is clear.³³ While clergymen entering new cures acknowledged ‘the Queen’s Majesty’s Prerogative and Superiority of Government of all States, and in all Causes, as well Ecclesiastical as Temporal, within this Realm’, the bishops made certain interpretations of the injunctions beneficial to their own authority (though these were without authoritative status in and of themselves).³⁴ In *Interpretations and Further Considerations* (1560), Cox, supported by Parker, held ‘that every particular Church may alter and change the Publike Rites and Ceremonies of their Church, keeping the Substance of Faith inviolably, with such like’.³⁵

³² As was implied in Sir Christopher Hatton’s address to the parliament of 1589. See Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethans* (London, 2003), p. 66.

³³ It is natural to assume, along with Bowers, that this clause was pushed through by the Queen and in advance of her issuing the later Injunctions. In this way, Elizabeth clawed-back ground lost by issuing the injunctions after parliament had been dissolved. The injunctions are not as conservative in nature as Bowers makes out. Indeed, it appears that on balance the injunctions are more concerned with control than conservatism, particularly articles 4, 29, and 46. While there are conservative elements, such as articles 49 and 52, there are also more evangelical progressions (articles 3,7,47). Therefore, while the Injunctions were a reaction by the Queen following the opposition she faced from both sides over the settlement, their primary motivation was to demonstrate the Royal Supremacy and the Queen’s authority. See Roger Bowers, ‘The Chapel Royal, The first Edwardian Prayer Book, and Elizabeth’s Settlement of Religion, 1559’, *HJ*, 43 (2000), especially p. 321.

³⁴ John Strype, *Annals of the reformation and the establishment of religion; And other various Occurrences in the Church of England; During the First Twelve Years of Queen Elizabeth’s Happy REIGN* (London, 1725), p. 218.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 213.

For Parker therefore, the distinction appears to have been between the particular and the general. He had the authority to order alterations to a ‘particular’ church, but not churches in general (whether inside or outside of his jurisdiction).

Therefore, the purpose of a prayer day was highly significant. Whether it was to take place only within a certain area, or nationwide, if the purpose of the prayer was divine aid for the nation it came under the queen’s ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the prayer text in particular required her authority. However, this denial of the authority of bishops to order and compose prayers for the nation’s benefit was still a matter of interpretation, and one Grindal rejected (perhaps unsurprisingly given his later reaction over prophesyings). As demonstrated below, Grindal had no qualms with composing and ordering prayers for plague on his own authority in 1563, which was surely a nationwide concern, though he restricted himself to his ‘own cure’.³⁶ We can take this to mean his diocese, given his direction to Archdeacon Molins to distribute a notification to all London curates.³⁷ In another instance, despite his suspension, he was authorised by the privy council to order the nationwide special prayers ‘for the turning of God’s wrath from us’ following the earthquake in 1580.³⁸ Furthermore, while the episcopacy, the crown and the church remained aligned, any debate on the nature of the Church of England’s spiritual hierarchy remained within the realms of hypothetical discussion.

The differing views of the two men played out in 1563 over the nationwide prayers and fasting days for plague and war. Partly in response to ‘the people watinge ther necessarie prouision’, as well as his own consideration of the severity of the calamities facing the nation, Parker organised special prayers and

³⁶ The plague was already a serious concern in both Canterbury and London, as seen by the actions of Parker and Grindal below, and spread rapidly across southern England. See Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1985) p. 61.

³⁷ This notification outlined concern for the spread of plague that might be caused by great assemblies at Christ’s church to justify using the prayer in all parish churches. The use of the term ‘common prayer’ is common to both this notification and Grindal’s reply to Cecil’s letter regarding the nationwide fast. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in his notification Grindal meant his special prayer, and not simply the litany. See Rev. William Nicholson (ed.), *The Remains of Edmund Grindal: successively Bishop of London, and Archbishop of York and Canterbury* (Cambridge, 1843) pp. 77-79.

³⁸ See LPL, Grindal’s register, I, fos. 198v-199r, 234v as cited in Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (California, 1979), pp. 269-270.

preaching in the cathedral and parishes within the city of Canterbury utilising a slightly re-worded version of the form of prayer for the queen's safety from 1560 (which therefore had already been authorised).³⁹ Parker did not extend this provision to the rest of his diocese or province 'for want of sufficient warrant from the prince or councell' and 'lest he might otherwise run into some transgression of the laws.'⁴⁰ In writing to Cecil to request such a warrant, Parker felt it necessary to defend his course of action in not having ordered the prayers to be said more widely. He felt that some might object that he and the rest of the episcopacy 'by our vocation shoulde haue speciall regarde of suche matter'.⁴¹ In defending himself for not issuing injunctions for special prayers and fasting outside of the city, Parker outlined the limits of episcopal power:

we be holden within certen lymitts by Statutes we maye stande in dowte howe it wilbe taken if we shoulde geue order therin. And therefore do not charge the reste of my diocese with Iniunction, as leaving them to ther owne libertie, to followe vs in the citie for common prayers, if they will. If I had your warrant, I wolde directe my precepts as I thinke verie necessarye to exercise the saide publique prayers.⁴²

Why was Parker so very keen to 'cover his back'? The answer seems to lie in the political context of the early months of 1563, for in 1560 his precepts to use a prayer for unseasonable weather contain no evidence of a similar fear of overstepping the boundaries of his authority.⁴³

It seems that opportunity had now knocked for those men thwarted at convocation earlier that year. Between January and April the unsatisfactory nature of the settlement had been revealed, yet an accommodating convocation, able to mediate compromises for reform, was quashed by Elizabeth and the

³⁹ BL, Lansdowne 6/62, fo. 154r. In this letter to Cecil, dated 23 July 1563, Parker confirmed his actions in ordering local prayers, 'I thought it good vpon my priuate consideracion to calle upon the Mayer and his Comynaltie on fridaye laste to mete with me at the cathedral churche where I did my self exhorte *them* vnto prayer, &c And for hereafter haue apointed them frydayes to be vsed with prayer and preachinge Mundayes and Wednesdayes in ther parrishe churches, prescribing that common prayer, that was apointed in the Gwises tyme (alteringe a fewe wordes in the same.' My thanks must go to Natalie Mears for supplying me with this transcription.

⁴⁰ BL, Lansdowne 6/62, fo. 154r; John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker: The first Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 1, (Oxford, 1821), p. 259.

⁴¹ BL, Lansdowne 6/62, fo. 154r.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ On the issuing of the 1560 form, see Strype, *Annals*, p. 179. According to Strype, Parker also wrote to Grindal to cause London to use the form.

supremacy.⁴⁴ Still, the split between Protestant bishops over the images controversy in 1560, which pitted the likes of the more conservative Parker and Cox against the more reformist Grindal and Jewel, had not been forgotten. The responsibility for composing the nationwide prayer came to Grindal on Cecil's recommendation after he had gained the consent of the queen. The purpose of the prayer shifted slightly to being 'chiefly for the judgement of the plague then lying upon the nation'. Grindal had already been busy composing a prayer and commissioning the puritan Alexander Nowel, Dean of St. Paul's, to write a homily 'for his own cure'.⁴⁵ However, we may suspect that Grindal had already been primed for this by Cecil. The vagueness of the term 'cure' means it is impossible to ascertain whether Grindal intended his form to be for St. Paul's, the city or the whole London diocese, and this was probably intentional. In any case, the form was quickly sent back to Cecil who made some additions before sending it to Canterbury for 'the Archbishop's last review'.⁴⁶

As chapter two identified John Williams attempting in 1641, so Grindal appears to have intended to utilise the form as a means of pushing for further reform – in particular the end of the use of chancels for services, including prayers and, significantly, communion. Perhaps he even hoped to ensure that any royal repercussions that might result would be directed at his old images adversary Parker. As research by David Crankshaw demonstrates, the bishops had been thwarted by the queen in the early months of 1563 in their attempt to establish the position of the table for communion in the nave in front of the chancel door when the chancel was too small or when there were too many communicants.⁴⁷ Despite their failure, Grindal now seems to have attempted to establish a precedent for communion in the body of the church, regardless of the size of the chancel or the number of those intending to receive. In his original composition

⁴⁴ For further discussion see David Crankshaw, 'Preparations for the Canterbury provincial Convocation of 1562-63: a question of attribution' in S. Wabuda and C. Litzemberger (eds.), *Belief and Practice in Reformation England* (Aldershot, 1998).

⁴⁵ Nowell had also led a campaign to end the use of the table 'altarwise'. See Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 41-42.

⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that Grindal suggests that Cecil use 'one of Jug the printer's men' to send the form to Canterbury 'speedily'. Richard Jugge is one of the Queen's printers.

⁴⁷ See Crankshaw 'Preparations'. I am grateful to David Crankshaw for informative correspondence on this matter.

for the form, Grindal implied that the whole service (including communion) was to take place ‘in the midst of the people’ – i.e. in the body of the church.⁴⁸ This interpretation, which is in line with Parker’s own (as demonstrated below), holds that since the form directed the litany to be read in the body of the church and proceeded immediately to ‘then shall follow the ministration of communion’, without any intervening rubric regarding location, the whole service was to occur ‘in the midst of the people’. This is strengthened by the rubric of the communion service in the Book of Common Prayer, which only gave direction for the minister to ‘return’ to the table after delivering the sermon or homily – i.e. after the litany he remained at the table for communion.⁴⁹ Therefore, if the litany was spoken in the body of the church it implied that that was where the table ought to be. Given that Cecil had made additions to the form, prior to it passing back to Parker, he cannot have been unaware of this form’s potential.⁵⁰

Parker certainly was not. After deliberating for about a week he made some alterations ‘not yet in substance and principall meanyng, but in the circ[u]mstancys’, more than aware that prayer days could be used to set a precedent for religious reform:

because I see offence growe by newe Innovations: & I dou[b]t w[h]ether it wer[e] best to change the established forme of prayer ap[p]oynted already bi Lawe: in this alteratio[n] of prayer for a tyme: as the formular wo[u]ld Infferre all the [w]holl s[er]vice in the body of the churche, w[hi]ch b[e]yng onye [ie once] in this p[ar]ticular order devised, we do abolishe all chancells, & ther[e]for[e] the Letanye w[i]th the newe psalmys, lessons & collectes, maye be sayd as Letanye is already ordered, in the myddst of the pe[o]ple; & to be short, I haue no otherwise altered the boke, but to make yt drawe, as nye as ca[n] be, to the publike boke & orders used, &c.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See Nicholson, *Remains*, p. 84.

⁴⁹ WKC *BCP*, p. 105.

⁵⁰ Cecil’s role in this episode would appear to align the Secretary with those of more reforming tendencies, such as Grindal and Jewel by 1563. Similarly, among his papers of 1565 is a report from an investigation that ‘some say the service and prayers in the chauncell, others in the body of the church’ – clearly two years later the matter was still of some interest to Cecil. See BL, Lansdowne 8, fo. 16. Interestingly, BL, Lansdowne 6, fo. 15r has details of ‘Mr Secretaryes diet’ on flesh days and fish days.

⁵¹ BL, Lansdowne 6/66, fo. 162r. Strype also notes ‘But the other parts, containing a second service [i.e. communion], he approved to be celebrated in the chancel.’, see Strype, *Parker*, p. 261. Parker also resented the length of the service, which had been designed that ‘the people might continue in prayer till four in the afternoon, and then to take one meal’. As noted in chapter five, lengthy prayers were a hallmark of puritan piety, yet it appears to have been fear of ‘cold devotions’ or the lack of readiness of all the nation for such displays of reformed piety (‘all things agreed not every where’) which alarmed Parker most. Strype, *Parker*, p. 262. Parker may also have had in mind the danger of keeping people together for long periods of time during a plague outbreak.

Special forms of prayer were an obvious means by which to attempt to harness royal authority via the back door, for authorisation usually preceded the composition of the form. Yet once an occasion had happened with innovations, a precedent had been set imbued with the power of the supremacy to alter the settlement as per clause XIII.

The nature of special prayer threw into relief the boundary between monarchical and episcopal authority. Royal authority was necessary for nationwide observation. Parker felt that he ‘required the application of [Elizabeth’s] authority for the better observation thereof among the people’ and received authority to ‘prescribe and publish ... the universal usage of prayer, fasting and other good deeds’ on 1 August 1563.⁵² However, the composition of prayers was firmly within the remit of the episcopate. The tension between bishops in 1563, as it had been so many times before, was essentially over rubric. Yet, as archbishop and (supposedly) with the power of the final edit, Parker chose the safest course of the status quo.⁵³

The parliamentary passage as well as the wording of the Elizabethan Settlement reinforced the idea of the submissive role of the bishops to the crown, and the circumstances of a convocation cowed by the queen in early 1563 only furthered this view. Parker’s care not to overstate his authority over nationwide prayer supports this. However, by the time of Grindal’s election as archbishop in 1575, any intimations of further reform within the settlement had long proven to be false. In the clear absence of reform emanating from the crown, indeed, with it

⁵² Strype, *Parker*, p. 262.

⁵³ The ‘factional disputes’ between Grindal and Nowell (perhaps backed by Cecil) against Parker and Cox which had become clear over images in 1560, continued to play out in the thanksgiving ordered for the end of the plague. Grindal wrote the form authorised for use on 22 January 1564, yet Cox chose to use his prerogative of power over his own ‘cure’ and composed and circulated an alternative. See Strype, *Parker*, pp. 268-69. Interestingly, Parker’s emphasis on communion being in chancel when this form was used did not make it into any rubrics in the final form issued. See *A Fourme to Be Used in Common Prayer Twyse a Weke, and Also an Order of Publique Fast, to Be Used Euery Wednesday in the Weeke, Durying This Tyme of Mortalitie, and Other Afflictions, Wherwith the Realme at This Present Is Visited* (London, 1563; STC 16506.3) and WKC, pp. 479-502. This might give additional weight to the possibility that Parker did not resent the idea of communion in the body of the church, but was keen to leave a paper trail proving that he had sought to prevent such an innovation without the queen’s expressed consent given her reaction early that year.

actively suppressing attempts at further reformation of the church (as demonstrated at the convocation of 1563 and the queen's fiery reaction to the *Admonition to Parliament* in 1572), the sacerdotal leaders of the church saw fit to safeguard her future as well as that of their own authority. This became all the more essential in the face of Catholic threats in the 1580s and 1590s and as an ever-increasing moderate puritan group found itself unable to remain within the national church. While Catholicism remained a national and international threat, it was essential to maintain a unified Protestant front with Englishmen identified as chosen by God to fight for true religion in works such as the daily prayer designed for use by the army while in France.⁵⁴ However, during the 1590s, Calvinist theology within England became more extreme due to continental influences combined with a perceived reduction in the threat of Catholicism both at home and abroad. Nicholas Tyacke has demonstrated how Arminianism grew from this point hardening against moderate Calvinists and puritans and flourishing under Charles I.⁵⁵

III

Nationwide fast and thanksgiving days support Morrill's view that 'in 1640 there was a broad consensus that the Laudian experiment had to be halted and reversed, but no agreement whether to attempt to restore "the pure religion of Elizabeth and James" or to make a fresh start. By 1642 most of those who joined the king were committed to the former, most of those who stayed at Westminster to the latter.'⁵⁶ Alterations to the royalist form in 1643 reflect a royalist stepping away from enforced Laudianism and seeking of a more inclusive Church of England in the period of 1642 to 1646. These individuals were forming a religious tradition loyal to the Church of England, particularly in terms of liturgy and episcopacy, but were keen to move away from the Laudian reforms of the 1630s.⁵⁷ Whereas, in the same period, parliament moved towards a more

⁵⁴ *A Forme of Prayer thought fitte to be dayle used in the English Armie in France* (London, 1589, STC 16521), sigs. B1v-B3r. See also Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 4.

⁵⁵ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*.

⁵⁶ Morrill, 'The Church in England', p. 148.

⁵⁷ Maltby, 'Suffering', p. 159.

reformed, yet still uniform, national church that abandoned set prayer, episcopacy and endorsed the Directory.

However, in the debates of 1646-7, the recommendations of the Presbyterian system for the new national Church, were so distasteful to those of an Independent mindset, that this significant minority demanded that it be optional. Examination of the ordering of nationwide prayer confirmed a directional shift between March and August 1647. In March, under the dominance of the political-Presbyterians, a nationwide fast day had been held due to concerns over non-conformity. As highlighted in chapter two, this was the only occasion ordered by this group. Despite renewed attempts to broker a settlement with the king in May (particularly after the parliamentary reading of the king's letter of 12 May) and the political-Presbyterians' pro-peace inclinations, no fast was ordered for this purpose. While demonstrating a keenness to return to stability, this reduction in the frequency of occasions also demonstrates common theological ground between traditionalists and moderate reformers, which could have eased an inclusive settlement at the Restoration. However, by August, under the increasing influence of the army as well as the Independents, the frequency of occasions rose once again. In creating options for the Independents, the new national church was really an established church in all but name. The parliamentary endorsement of some form of toleration meant that the religious choice of Protestant individuals could be divorced from their political views of legitimate national authority (in the same way that English Catholics had maintained for over a century).

Therefore, by 1647, there were two national churches based on rival political state authorities, the Church of England and the Presbyterian English Church, and a group of legitimate (from a parliamentarian perspective) 'opters-out', as well as illegal sects (whether Catholic or radical sectarians). Whether Presbyterian or Independently minded, leading parliamentarians were united in their desire to eradicate the traditional Church of England, which was irredeemably tainted with Laudianism, episcopacy and 'that man of blood'. Yet, this does not appear to have been the view of the majority of English men and women.

Judith Maltby's research on Prayer Book Protestants and John Morrill's conviction that 'the greatest challenge to the respectable Puritanism of the Parliamentary majority came from the passive strength of Anglican survivalism' bear testament to the popularity of traditional methods of religious worship.⁵⁸ Significantly, it was traditional worship, rather than necessarily royalist sympathies, which appear to have been behind most passive acts of resistance (though the two were not mutually exclusive).⁵⁹ For example, the majority of parish records surveyed for this thesis, such as St. Michael's, Spurriergate, demonstrate traditional methods of observing parliamentary prayer days rather than attempting to observe royalist occasions.⁶⁰ This might suggest that, had the royalists been able to capitalise better on this traditionalist religious sentiment through better methods of distribution of official printed material, they may have been more successful in canvassing support in this period.

Yet, the picture of parliamentary attacks on the Church of England between 1641 and the close of 1644 (and even beyond) is one of more bark than bite. Attacks on the episcopacy did not result in its abolition until 1646. Rhetorical tirades against the Book of Common Prayer did not result in its ban until January 1645 (indeed, parliament still used it in its own services until early 1644).⁶¹ The Elizabethan Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy upon which the old Church was founded were not formally revoked until 27 September 1650.⁶² The cause of such delay appears to be linked to a fundamental tension within parliament: as a body of laymen they were not qualified to lead the church – that was the vocation of clergymen. However, they were unwilling to relinquish control of their

⁵⁸ Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2000); John Morrill, 'The Church in England', *Reactions*, p. 90.

⁵⁹ This contrast slightly with the views of David Underdown and Judith Maltby who see clear links between Christmas celebrants and Prayer Book Protestants and royalists, see Maltby, 'Suffering', p. 165 and David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985).

⁶⁰ Borthwick Institute, PR Y/MS 5, St Michael's parish Spurriergate, Churchwardens' accounts. The same appears to have been true for the schoolboys of Eton College who observed the thanksgiving for Worcester with traditional celebrations in the hall. See Sir Henry Churchill Maxwell-Lyte, *A History of Eton College* (London, 1877), p. 249.

⁶¹ Morrill, 'The Church in England', p. 152.

⁶² *A&O*, vol. II, p. 423.

legislative role within national religion as enshrined in the 1530s, particularly given how difficult it had been to wrestle political power from the bishops. Perhaps also having learnt from their error in 1641, the Commons did not move to attack statute law and the royal supremacy directly while the king lived. Delegation to what was in effect a religious committee – the Westminster Assembly – only served to increase delays and alternative options for the new settlement.⁶³

Prior to the ordinances establishing the Presbyterian system in 1645, the parliamentary approach was to oversee rather than destroy the lower end of the traditional church system.⁶⁴ With processes for trying and ejecting ministers who were religiously or politically objectionable (county committees, and to some extent parish congregations if they appealed to parliament, had this power prior to the official establishment of the Commissioners for the Approbation of Public Preachers and passing of the ejection ordinance in 1653), parliament allowed much of local parish life to continue. This proved highly significant for the survival of traditional forms of English worship such as bell ringing on nationwide prayer days, as demonstrated in chapter five. Morrill rightly notes the irony that puritan parliamentarians who sought to create a less centralised mode of church government were also empowering those parishes that wanted to continue to use the Book of Common Prayer and traditional religious customs to resist them.

The hesitancy in challenging the royal supremacy and Act of Uniformity was even more significant than it first appears for it allowed considerable confusion (pretended or genuine) and continuation of ‘the old ways’, such as bell-ringing, bonfires and drinking on prayer days, even within clearly parliamentary areas.⁶⁵

⁶³ The Westminster Assembly was even divided over the concept of set verses ex tempore prayer with some moderate Presbyterians keen to reform rather than reject the Book of Common Prayer, though ultimately those of a more radical disposition won out in the Directory. See Maltby, ‘Suffering’, pp. 160-161. Forthcoming work from The Westminster Assembly Project led by Chad Van Dixhoorn and John Bower will develop our understanding of the Assembly considerably. For details of the project see <http://www.westminsterassembly.org>, last accessed 11/07/2012.

⁶⁴ George Yule, *Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament 1640-1647* (Appleford, 1981), conclusion.

⁶⁵ On the reception of prayer days in the localities, see chapter five.

This further strengthened collective cultural memory during a time of deep crisis when it mattered most. Furthermore, the legal loophole provided by the continued existence of the Act of Uniformity allowed some traditionalists to prosecute ministers for not using the Book of Common Prayer, even after it was banned. For example, in 1648, Cornelius Cushing, Minister of Denver, was prosecuted at the Norfolk sessions for not administering the sacrament according to the Book of Common Prayer, as prescribed by the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity amongst other statutes. When the Committee for Indemnity reviewed the judgement against him on 22 February, it could only conclude that it appeared that the statutes had been repealed:

It appearinge to this Com[m]ittee that all the said Statutes upon which the said Mr Cushing standes indicted touching administrac[i]on of the Sacrament are by an Ordinance of Parliam[en]t dated the third of January 1644 for the takinge away of the bookes of Com[m]on prayer and puttinge in the execuc[i]on the directory are vtterly repealed and made void.⁶⁶

This was one problem for the interregnum regimes that just would not go away. Even as late as 1658, Richard Cromwell attempted to use protectoral proclamation to protect godly ministers from being prosecuted for not using the Book of Common Prayer.⁶⁷

However, while one might accuse the parliamentarians of failing to implement decisively a new system and overturn the legal foundation of the Church of England early enough, the royalist religious leadership did not fare much better. Charles appears to have had his own anti-Laudian reaction harkening back to his earlier more Calvinist vision of his church and continued the monthly fast along royalist lines. Fast days had always been a matter of difference between Laud and Charles. The king began well, nominating eleven Calvinist bishops between 1641 and 1643 and promoting John Williams, Laud's archenemy, to the archbishopric of York. Where Charles failed, as Morrill highlighted, was in advising his loyal subjects how to respond to the parliamentary ordinances.⁶⁸ However, as chapter four demonstrated, it was very difficult for Charles to get

⁶⁶ TNA SP 24/1, fo. 187r.

⁶⁷ See Morrill, 'The Church in England', p. 168.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

his message heard after 1643 – perhaps he hoped his bishops would step in. As Fincham and Taylor demonstrated, most did not.⁶⁹ Where was the network of secret royalist prayer conventicles that stretched across the nation co-ordinated by the bishops? Maltby also refers to the lack of episcopal leadership in this period as ‘striking’ and notes that English bishops ‘ignored repeated requests from the exiled court in the 1650s to consecrate more of their order to make up diminishing numbers’.⁷⁰ Indeed, only around a third of bishops survived the civil war and interregnum periods to be restored to their sees (or promoted). Perhaps this reflects an episcopate still hesitant to move beyond their traditional lines of authority and create new bishops or order prayers while their Supreme Governor remained uncrowned and overseas?

Inevitably, for the godly rulers of the 1650s, the creation of a godly nation was not forthcoming. Yet, as Ann Hughes has highlighted, for much of the 1650s (and especially under Oliver Cromwell’s protectorate) in practice the Church worked well:

A very broad range of puritans, including the most ‘rigid’ of Presbyterians, acquired better maintenance and enlarged preaching opportunities. They could participate freely in the structures established for the approval of the public ministry, and through lobbying and petition they could exert significant control over local patronage and ecclesiastical resource.⁷¹

It seems that the lack of enforced settlement created a highly inclusive English Interregnum ‘church’, a network of communities linked by clergymen willing to work together. While fundamental differences prevented agreements in principle between Independents and Presbyterians and other significant puritan minorities within government, these ‘never prevented renewed efforts to achieve unity, and never halted practical cooperation over Church affairs’.⁷²

Nationwide prayer days are indicative of this. The thanksgiving for naval victory over the Dutch on 25 August 1653, a very traditional cause for nationwide

⁶⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

⁷⁰ Maltby, ‘Suffering’, p. 168. See also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

⁷¹ Ann Hughes, “‘The public profession of these nations’: the national Church in Interregnum England” in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), *Religion and Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 109.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 108.

prayer, saw the fifth monarchist, John Simpson, and Baptist friend, Henry Jessey, leading the thanksgiving service on board *The General* as it lay off the coast of Suffolk.⁷³ Nationwide prayer days in the 1650s were occasions that saw Prayer Book Protestants worshipping simultaneously with Baptists and Fifth Monarchists, and individuals everywhere in between on the spectrum of belief. It appears, that in failing to have an Act of Uniformity, in some instances, the Interregnum Church was able to create uniform English worship, in practice if not in principle.

A subset of this uniformity of worship on prayer days was the importance of preaching. Protestants from across the religious spectrum saw sermons as a fundamental part of nationwide prayer days and thus these occasions were a significant preaching opportunity. While the belief that preaching was an essential vehicle for salvation remained a point upon which those at opposite ends of the spectrum would not agree, the importance of preaching, particularly when the nation sought divine aid, was a point of commonalty. Elliott Vernon has noted the importance of preaching to Presbyterians, citing the example of Christopher Love, Minister of St Lawrence Jewry, from March 1649, who was expected to preach on every fast day.⁷⁴ His view is that ‘the real measure of the success of their [Presbyterians’] missionary activity during the English Revolution was the major contribution it made to the resilience and vibrancy of Restoration non-conformity.’⁷⁵

Yet, the preaching mission of the Presbyterians also emphasises the lost opportunity of their inclusion in the restoration settlement and the areas of commonality that might have been built upon in a broader national church. Arnold Hunt’s recent work highlighted that while preaching and sermon culture were ‘to a considerable extent, a puritan culture ... its influence extended far

⁷³ See TNA SP 18/39, fo. 137v. Stephen Wright, ‘Henry Jessey’, *ODNB*, and Richard L. Greaves, *Saints and Rebels: Seven Nonconformists in Stuart England* (Macon, 2009), p. 110. Furthermore, Jessey, who seems to have kept a better relationship with the parliamentarians than Simpson, had been officially commissioned to work on a new translation of the Bible along with John Owen and John Row in 1652. See Stephen Wright, ‘Henry Jessey’, *ODNB*.

⁷⁴ Elliott Vernon, ‘A ministry of the gospel: the Presbyterians during the English Revolution’ in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 120.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

beyond the godly community.’⁷⁶ Nationwide prayer days exemplify this; they were occasions upon which ‘an almost universal sense of the importance of the word preached’ would have been felt across the nation.⁷⁷ As nationwide prayer days continued to be a significant part of English religious life throughout the seventeenth century, so did the preaching associated with them, though the style of preaching was to alter (for example preaching by reading from notes or a script became the norm).⁷⁸

The continuity of prayer days was not lost on contemporaries. For some Church of England loyalists in the 1640s and 1650s, like Elizabeth Newell, the permitted continuation of some traditional annual thanksgivings, such as for the discovery of the Gunpowder plot, were somewhat ironic given that other, more theologically significant, annual occasions, such as Christmas, were banned.⁷⁹ Yet those of traditional persuasions also had to account for the failure of the royalists in the 1640s and their current ‘exile’ experience as a persecuted church. As chapter three highlighted, as the war continued royalists had to account for the failure of their prayer days. In doing so, some moved from a position of emphasising that man could not know the ways of God, to a more ‘puritan’ position of highlighting the moral failings of their own side. In the 1650s, even for some moderate men, like Clement Spelman (a Norfolk gentleman), the providential punishment of their church became synonymous with the failings of the Tudor and Stuart monarchies. Spelman was firm in his conviction that England was being punished for the crown’s greed in seizing church property in the sixteenth century in much the same way that early parliamentarians had linked the civil war to the lack of a public humiliation for the Marian martyrs.⁸⁰ Many individuals struggling to continue to worship within the Church of

⁷⁶ Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 390.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, conclusion.

⁷⁹ Maltby, ‘Suffering’, p. 164.

⁸⁰ ‘And when wee observe gods method in our punishment, wee have reason to believe that, that Sacriedge drue on us this punishment, for the same order the King & Kingdome tooke to Robb god and the Churchm the same methode god observes to punish the King and Nation.’ Similarly, ‘The Kinge makes use of a Crumwell to Dissolve the Monastries, and god of a Crumwell borne in a dissolved Monastrie to punish the Kinge, thus our punishment sprang from our Sinnes’, Durham University Archives, Cosin LB 1b, no. 94 as cited by Maltby, ‘Suffering’, p. 171. On the link between the civil war and the Marian martyrs see *LJ 15/2/1643* and chapter three.

England (or who lead local traditionalist congregations) understandably felt abandoned to a large extent by their spiritual leaders. It is, therefore, not surprising that they displayed ‘real ambivalence towards the monarchy and the Supreme Governorship of the Church of England’.⁸¹ The Stuarts, and the royal supremacy they represented, had proved to be rather bittersweet.

IV

There are two opposing stories of the creation of the Restoration settlement. From a bottom-up perspective, most localities saw the good ‘old church’ return spontaneously, largely unscathed, in 1660, though it took a little time for those at the centre to iron-out its legislative backing and graft on the top-section of its hierarchy (namely the monarchy and episcopacy). From the point of view of those concerned with ‘high politics’, the settlement represented ‘payback’ for those oppressed by the parliamentary regimes. The return to the good old days of traditional episcopacy was a hard won battle fought with political ingenuity against attempts at toleration and inclusion of those of moderate reformist tendencies, by the crown and all those puritan groups responsible for the recent persecution of the true Church of England.

The early 1660s saw political reconciliation between the new king and all but a handful of his subjects intimately involved with the regicide. Political Presbyterians and ‘constitutional royalists’ were both to be found on the new Privy Council.⁸² The former were men who desired ‘moderated’ episcopacy and who could find significant areas of agreement with the latter, who though they had fought for Charles I had also sought to curb his abuses of the royal prerogative.

No such diplomatic overtures between previously divided groups can be seen in the religious settlement of 1662. The Restoration Church had been re-established by parliament ‘and it was protected by parliamentary laws: not only by statutes

⁸¹ Maltby, ‘Suffering’, p. 172.

⁸² David L. Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640-1649* (Cambridge, 2002).

like the Act of Uniformity (1662) and the two Conventicle Acts (1664, 1670), but also by the Corporation Act (1661) and the Five Mile Act (1665), which aimed at destroying the dissenting influence in towns'.⁸³ Whereas the crown had manipulated parliament in 1559 to put through reforms against the will of the then Catholic bishops, in 1662 parliament utilised its legislative power to reverse the reforms of the 1640s and 1650s. In the sixteenth century, parliament had largely been a vehicle for the religiously innovative desires of the crown. Yet, the 1640s had seen it inadvertently gain spiritual responsibility for the nation as it sought to curb the crown's abuse of its power. This was one aspect of the national Church that did not revert to its predecessor of 1640 at the Restoration. Parliament continued to hold great influence in religious legislation. The Cavalier Parliament in particular (1661-1679), with its high-anglican gentry in the Commons supported by the bishops in the Lords, appears to have held itself responsible for protecting the salvation of the English people. It sought to do so through a combination of policies of persecution of dissenters and fiery criticism of any scheme for toleration put forward by Charles II.

Thus, there was to be no flexibility within the Act of Uniformity. All of the 'popish remnants' in the Book of Common Prayer, such as kneeling to receive communion and wearing the surplice, were retained in the new prayer book, much to the horror of even the most moderate puritans. The Act required all clergymen to swear 'unfeigned assent and consent' to the new Book of Common Prayer, to have received episcopal ordination (raising the thorny issue of re-ordination and invalidating prior ministries of many of those appointed in the Interregnum period), and to repudiate the Solemn League and Covenant.⁸⁴ As a result around 2,000 ministers were ejected for failing to comply and were deprived on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1662, which was to become an unofficial annual fast day among some non-conformists.⁸⁵ These 'Bartolomeans' often conformed as laymen to the Restoration Church and offered supplementary

⁸³ Tim Harris, 'Introduction: Revising the Restoration' in Harris, Seaward and Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Many were unwilling to break an oath formally sworn, even if they no longer held fast to its contents. On the significance of oaths in early modern culture, see Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in early modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge, 2006).

⁸⁵ J.B. Williams, *The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry with funeral sermons for Mr and Mrs Henry* (London, 1825), p. 125.

sermons and guidance (for which they could be prosecuted under the same laws as Independents, Baptists, Quakers and other radical dissenters).⁸⁶

Between 1660 and 1662, Charles had tried to aid those with tender consciences in line with his intentions outlined by Hyde in the Declaration of Breda. At Worcester House (October 1660) and the Savoy Conference (April 1661) he brought together traditionalist bishops and Presbyterian leaders to try and initiate a compromise. He sought to make additions to the Act of Uniformity to enable him to override the enforcement of contentious elements. When these attempts failed, he even tried to delay the enforcement of the Act itself. Rose identified four reasons for Charles' failure: constitutional concerns, Anglican power, Dissenting divisions and fears of Catholicism.⁸⁷ Those holding constitutional fears remembered all too well the personal rule of the Charles I and sought to prevent the use of prerogative power to override statute law. Many others opposed any form of dissent on principle as a sin (schism) and as likely to lead to sedition. Added to this, those opposed to the new settlement, just as those who had been unhappy with the Elizabethan Settlement, were unable to reach an accord about what they wanted to replace it with (proving once again that it is easier to unify in opposition over objections than to create unifying propositions). These dissenters were fundamentally divided. Those of a more conservative disposition, who believed in the concept of a national church, sought greater inclusion, particularly of those who would become the Bartolomeans and their followers: why could presbyters not be part of the church hierarchy alongside the bishops? Such promoters of comprehension (or inclusion) alienated themselves from those of Independent persuasions whom could only hope for toleration and had no interest in comprehension (particularly as it would reduce the size and influence of the dissenters). Fears of Catholicism were present in the early 1660s but were destined to grow, not only because Charles II and his brother sought toleration for Catholics, but because of the increasing power of Louis XIV in the 1670s. Popish plots and fears of a Catholic ruler played out in the period 1678-82 (and later in 1688-89). The level of

⁸⁶ See Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England* and Rose, *Godly Kingship*, pp. 6-8.

⁸⁷ Rose, *Godly Kingship*, p. 8.

national anxiety over these issues can be discerned partly through the number of thanksgivings for their avoidance – four within seven years.⁸⁸

The discovery of the Popish plot called for a nationwide fast, which was held on 13 November 1678. Yet, as had occurred in the 1640s, fears of Catholicism close to the crown, combined with a notion that the king himself might be a chief cause of the sin that was leading to divine judgement, led some to utilise the preaching opportunity of the fast day for their own ends. Francis Wells, vicar of Tewkesbury, made not only the general confession required of him, but also a special confession for ‘the sins of Adultery and Fornication’ in which he named the king ‘as deeply guilty of them’ and begged pardon for them on his behalf.⁸⁹ While Dan Beaver is convincing in his notion that this episode played out long held disputes within the locality, it also serves to demonstrate the continuity of providence within early modern culture.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Wells’ extra confession demonstrates the power some felt prayer days could have in a period of national crisis with a supreme governor who seemed to make a mockery of his title. Prayer days with their traditional nature had an enduring quality people put faith in.

If we accept John Spurr’s view that the Restoration Church owed more to desires for stability and the enduring popularity of the ‘old church’ than any high-level Laudian schemes, as this thesis’ examination of nationwide prayer would suggest, an apparent contradiction presents itself. Why did some ‘Laudian’ elements, such as railed altars, return after the Restoration when the majority in 1642 had sought to reverse such innovations?⁹¹ Spurr argued for a gradual movement of the Church of England away from the Reformed and towards the catholic between 1660 and 1689, but with its birth during the 1650s when traditionalists, such as Henry Hammond, had to defend themselves against Catholics but without the assistance of the crown. One might also point to generational turnover, as leading men in parish communities in the 1660s may

⁸⁸ Dates of observation were 4 and 11/2/1674, 13/11/1678, 11/4/1679 and 22/12/1680.

⁸⁹ Dan Beaver, ‘Conscience and context: the popish plot and the politics of ritual, 1678-1682,’ *HJ*, 34 (1991), p. 305.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*.

well have had their formative religious experience amidst railed altars and seen their removal immediately prior to the start of war. Similarly, the first generation of dissenters, especially the Bartolomeans, appears to have been particularly keen to avoid stirring up religious tensions.

However, surely the removal of the moderate puritan voice from within the leadership of the national church was also a key factor? As early as 1660, Laudian rubrics returned with the form of prayer for the thanksgiving for the restoration on 28 June.⁹² This once again included the phrase ‘At the North Side of the Table’, which the royalists had removed in 1643 to increase their appeal.⁹³ It is not known which bishop composed the form, though Sheldon seems a likely possibility, nor can it be ascertained to what extent this direction was followed in the parishes given that the occasion took place prior to the ejections of 1662. However, it seems likely that the practical-level compromise of quietly adapting (and ignoring this rubric) which had become the mainstay in many parishes in the 1650s simply continued.

One solution to the conundrum of the return of railed altars is timing. While spontaneous returns to traditional patterns of worship are discernable in 1660/61, the return of the Laudian altar had its key turning-point with Wren’s rebuilding of London churches in the 1670s and 1680s. The railed altar, according to Tyacke and Fincham, ‘was [only] fast becoming the norm by 1700’.⁹⁴ While Charles achieved a broad range of theological convictions in his new bench of bishops upon his return, ‘Laudians dominated the key positions ... Juxon was elevated to Canterbury, Sheldon to London, Duppa to Winchester, Frewen to York and Cosin to Durham. In 1663-4 both Archbishops died, to be succeeded

⁹² Further research may reveal that this foreshadowed the change in the words of the Communion service in 1662, identified by Fincham and Tyacke as a victory for the Laudians, see *Altars Restored*, pp. 308-309.

⁹³ Compare *A Form... Happy Return* (Wing C4170); *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Eighth of July: On Which Day a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Averting of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God from This Kingdom* (London, 1640; STC 16557) and *A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Solemn Fast Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Second Friday in Every Moneth* (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4111) - the form for the monthly royalist fast where it was removed.

⁹⁴ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 306.

by Sheldon at Canterbury and Sterne at York.⁹⁵ These men were in positions of considerable influence not only at court but in providing patronage to younger clergymen of similar persuasions. Such preferments reflected the personal religion of the king, who despite seeking greater inclusion and tolerance at various points in his reign, remained a Laudian in his own conviction and the chapel royal was refurnished and full of elaborate ritual from the middle of June 1660.⁹⁶

Yet for the most part in the parishes, the bishops chose to ignore or avoid the issue of rails. Fincham and Tyacke argue that ‘the chief reason must be that they had to concentrate on more pressing matters in the 1660s’.⁹⁷ This was compounded with a desire not to open old wounds, the questionable legality of railed altars anyway (since the 1640 canons outlawed by the Commons in December 1640 had not been revived at the settlement), and an episcopate that was vulnerable. The Crown’s support could not be taken for granted and a division within the episcopate over railed altars when dissenters remained a threat was simply foolish. Sheldon appears to have taken this view. He could easily have encouraged promotion of railed altars but, despite his own preference for them, chose not to. ‘Thus, by the early 1680s, twenty years after the Restoration, there was little uniformity of practice over positioning and protection of the communion table’.⁹⁸ Surely, this only serves to further underline the conviction of Spurr and Whiteman that the power of the parishes ruled supreme in the Restoration settlement?

V

In the 1660s, many simply appear to have been keen to return to the status quo. This was either through attachment to those elements of the Church of England identified by Judith Maltby as leading to the formation of Anglicanism (the Book of Common Prayer being particularly prominent), or a commitment to the ideal of a national church (even if it meant sacrificing a preference for a Presbyterian

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324.

structure or renouncing their own clerical positions within it).⁹⁹ While the ‘spectrum of belief’ in England had only widened over the previous two decades, the experience of war had made many committed most of all to avoiding serious disagreements and factional divides. At the very least, this spirit of compromise and charity prevented most from actively resisting and seeking to undermine the new settlement, though many opted out of taking a leading clerical role within the new church.

This spirit of charity had been absent in the preceding decades as political tensions strengthened and cemented religious divisions, distinctions and nuances. In the 1630s relative political stability had confined religious debates largely to the religious sphere.¹⁰⁰ However, the breakdown of traditional government in the early 1640s led to almost a decade of rival governments with both parliament and the crown claiming authority – including that over the national church. This, combined with the experience of the Interregnum Church, irrevocably altered the nature of the Church of England and its relationship with the English nation.

Even before the Toleration Act of 1689, in many ways, the Restoration Church could already be identified as the established church, rather than the national church of the English. This became increasingly obvious once second generation Presbyterians began to hold rival services and refuse to continue with even partial conformity.¹⁰¹ However, even in a world devoid of a national church, nationwide prayer days continued. They continued to be ordered by royal authority and observed in English parishes across, and on behalf of, the nation. By the nineteenth century they would cross not only denominational boundaries, but also those of the different religions.¹⁰² Ultimately, nationwide prayer days demonstrated a truly English religion, albeit a multi-faceted one, but one united

⁹⁹ Maltby, ‘Suffering’.

¹⁰⁰ However, they were part of the public domain through the use of print to slander clerical opponents. See Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*.

¹⁰¹ For discussion of the ‘loyal’ first generation non-conformists keen to stay on good terms with the ministers of the Church of England, see Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, pp. 44-46. On the shift to the second generation ‘who were more mentally attuned to their place outside the Church’ and tired of waiting for comprehension (hence their scheduling of conventicles at the same time as Anglican services), see Rose, *Godly Kingship*, p. 9.

¹⁰² Philip Williamson, ‘State prayers, fasts and thanksgivings: public worship in Britain 1830-1897’, *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), p. 122.

in the common aim of divine assistance for the nation, regardless of religious allegiance. Nationwide fast and thanksgiving days emerged from the period 1640 to 1660 as flexible acts of uniformity.

Appendices:

List 1: Nationwide prayer days, 1640-1660

	Date of order	Parl or Royalist?	Ordered by	Fast, Thanksgiving or Additional prayer	Form of order	Date of observance	Description	Proclamation /Order source	Prayer text source
1	07/06/1640	r	K	F	Proc	08/07/1640	General fast for the averting of the plague and other judgements of God from this kingdom	STC9159	STC16557
2	?	r		A		?	Prayer for the king's expedition against the Covenanters		STC16558
3	11/11/1640	r	K	F	Proc.	17/11/1640 (London, its suburbs and adjoining parishes); 08/12/1640 elsewhere in England and Wales.	General fast for the removing of the plague and other judgements of God from this kingdom	STC9170	STC16559

4	27/08/1641	p	Commons	T	Parl Ordinance	07/09/1641	Public thanksgiving for the peace concluded between England and Scotland	CJ - 27/08/1641	
5	23/12/1641 ; 08/01/1642 then 05/10/1643	p	Order from Commons, by command of King on and with assent of Parliament.	F	Commons order Proc	22/12/1641 (London); 23/12/1641 (Westminster) ; 20/1/1642 elsewhere in England and Wales; then nationwide on the last Wednesday of each month during the troubles in Ireland.	General fast [originally] until troubles in Ireland are over [but continued by Parliament until 1649]	WingE2778; WingC2582, WingC2584 also see WingE1408, WingE1620	
6	16/12/1642	p	Parl	TS	Parl order	18/12/1642	Thanks for victory of parliamentary forces at Winchester	CJ - 16/12/1642, LJ - 16/12/1642	
7	?	r	K	A		??/11/1642	Prayer and thanksgiving for his majesty's late victory over the rebels		WingP319 3, WingP319 5, WingD266 4

8	04/01/1643	p	Parl.	TS		08/01/1643 (London and Westminster)	Thanks for parliamentary victory at Chichester	LJ - 04/01/1643	
9	30/01/1643	p	Parl.	TS		05/02/1643	Thanks in churches for great and good success of the forces in Yorkshire (Fairfax at Leeds)	CJ - 30/01/1643	
1 0	14/03/1643	p	Parl.	TS		19/03/1643	Thanks for deliverance from a plot in Bristol	LJ - 14/03/1643; CJ - 16/03/1643	
1 1	29/04/1643	p	Parl.	TS		30/04/1643 (London and surrounding areas)	Thanks for parliamentary victory at Reading	CJ - 29/04/1643	
1 2	27/05/1643	p	Parl.	T		28/05/1643 (London and suburbs)	Thanksgiving for victory at Wakefield	CJ - 27/05/1643	

1 3	09/06/1643 then 17/06/1643	p	Parl.	T	Parl order	15/06/1643 (prior dates had been 04/06/1643 and 11/06/1643) within London and its environs. 11/07/1643 throughout England and Wales.	Public thanksgiving for the discovery of the late plot [Covenant & oath to be tendered to every man after sermon/prayer]	CJ - 09/06/1643 Wing B4614 - A brief Narrative of the plot. CJ - 17/06/1643	
1 4	?	r	K	T	proclamati on?	23/06/1643	Thanksgiving. Perhaps for Worcester and Chewton Mendip	Cheshire county record office, P51/12/1 St John the Baptist, (1643), P 20/13/1 St Mary on the Hill, (1643)	
1 5	19/07/1643	p	Parl.	F		21/07/1643 (London, Westminster and their suburbs)	Fast for the late discomfiteure of parliamentary forces in the North and West	Wing E1640B	

1 6	?	r		T		25/07/1643	Royalist thanksgiving for relief of Chester	St Mary on the Hill (Chester), P20/13/1 microfilm 237/2	
1 7	15/09/1643	p	Parl.	T		17/09/1643 (London, Westminster, parishes within the Bills of Mortality)	Thanksgiving for the relief of Gloucester	CJ - 15/09/1643	
1 8	23/09/1643	p	Parl.	T		24/09/1643 (London, Westminster and their liberties)	Thanksgivings for the success of the Lord General's army	CJ - 23/09/1643	
1 9	05/10/1643	r	K	F	Proc.	10/11/1643 and subsequent second Fridays of each month.	Monthly royalist fast for the protection of the King [this order also banned the monthly Wednesday fast]	Wing C2583	Wing C4111
2 0	13/01/1644	p	Parl.	T	Parl order	21/01/1644	Public thanksgiving for great deliverances of Parliament and the City from several plots and designs against them	CJ - 13/01/1644	E2433

2 1	02/02/1644	p	Parl.	TS		04/02/1644 (London, Westminster, their suburbs, areas within the Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for parliamentary victory at Nantwich and delivery of the garrison at Nottingham	CJ - 02/02/1644	
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2 2	After 08/03/1644	r	K	T		24/03/1644?	Thanksgiving for royalist victory at Newark	Celebrations occurred for this royalist victory at St Michael's (York) PR Y/MS 5; St Martins (Oxford) PAR/207/4/F 1/1, fol. 183r; St Mary on the Hill (Chester) celebrated the following day perhaps reflecting a delay in communicati on, P20/13/1 microfilm 237/2.	Wing C4179B
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2 3	01/04/1644	p	Parl.	T		09/04/1644 (London, Westminster, Bills of Mortality, Lines of Communication); 14/04/1644 (elsewhere in England and Wales south of the Trent); 28/04/1644 (elsewhere in England and Wales north of the Trent)	Thanksgiving for parliamentary victory at Cheriton	Wing 1858	
2 4	17/04/1644	p	Parl.	T		28/04/1644 (London, Bills of Mortality, Lines of Communication)	Thanksgiving for parliamentary victory at Selby	Wing F121	

25	?	r	K	T	proclamation?	28/05/1644	Royalist victory at Bolton	Cheshire county record office, P51/12/1 St John the Baptist, (1644)	
26	17/06/1644	p	Parl.	TS		23/06/1644 (London, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for relief of Lyme	CJ - 17/06/1644	
27	08/07/1644	p	Parl.	T		18/07/1644 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication); 25/07/1644 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for Marston Moor		L1817
28	09/09/1644	p	Parl.	F		12/09/1644 (Parishes and Chapels within Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality)	Public fast and day of humiliation for defeat of parliamentary forces	CJ 09/09/1644	

29	19/10/1644	p	Parl.	F		22/10/1644 (Parishes within Lines of Communication)	Public fast and day of humiliation for God's blessing on the parliamentary army	CJ 19/10/1644	
30	25/10/1644	p	Parl.	TS		27/10/1644 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication)	Thanks for the Scottish capture of Newcastle	CJ 25/10/1644	
31	27/01/1645	r	K	F	Proc.	05/02/1645	Solemn fast upon the occasion of the present Treaty of Peace	C2585	C4112
32	04/03/1645	p	Parl.	T		12/03/1645 (London and within the Lines of Communication)	Thanksgiving for parliamentary gains at Weymouth, Shrewsbury, Scarborough, the deliverance of Plymouth and victory over Sir John Winter	CJ - 04/03/1644; CJ - 10/03/1644	
33	15/04/1645	p	Parl.	T		20/04/1645 (within the Lines of Communication)	Thanksgiving for defeat of Montrose at Dundee	CJ - 15/04/1645	

3 4	?	r	K	T	proclamation?	16/05/1645	Gerard's recovery of lost royalist territory in Wales?	Cheshire county record office, P/St W/ChW/3/b, St Werberge's, p. 120.	
3 5	14/05/1645	p	Parl.	TS		18/05/1645 (Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for relief of Taunton	CJ - 14/05/1645	
3 6	?	r	K	T	proclamation?	09/06/1645 (Oxford)	? Possibly royalist thanksgiving for end of Fairfax's siege on Oxford (captured 5/6/1645)	Oxfordshire county record office, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's, fol. 185r, PAR 211/4/F1/3, St Michael's, fol. 41r.	

37	?	r	K	T	proclamation?	12/06/1645 (Oxford)	? Possibly royalist thanksgiving for capture of Leicester (31/5/1645)	Oxfordshire county record office, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's, fol. 185r, PAR 211/4/F1/3, St Michael's, fol. 41r.	
38	16/06/1645	p	Parl.	T		18/06/1645 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality); 27/06/1645 (all churches and chapels in counties under parliamentary power)	Thanksgiving for parliamentary victory at Naseby	Wing E2072	

39	12/07/1645	p	Parl.	T	Parl. Ordinance	22/07/1645 (nationwide for areas under parliamentary control)	Day of thanksgiving for Fairfax's victory in the west, and for preserving London from the plague	CJ - 12/07/1645	
40	24/07/1645	p	Parl.	TS		27/07/1645 (Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for mercies and blessings in the west and north, especially at Bridgewater and Pontefract	CJ - 24/07/1645	
41	18/07/1645 amended 23/07/1645	p	Parl.	T		22/08/1645 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanksgiving for parliamentary successes, especially at Bath, Bridgewater, Scarborough, Sherbourne, Pembrokeshire, (Canon-Frome added 23/07/1645)	CJ - 18/07/1645; LJ - 23/07/1645	

4 2	17/09/1645	p	Parl.	TS		21/09/1645 (Lines of Communicatio n and Bills of Mortality); 05/10/1645 (elsewhere in England and Wales under power of Parliament)	Thanks for Fairfax's capture of Bristol and for the Scottish successes against Montrose	Wing C7114	
4 3	?	r	K	T	proclamati on?	02/10/1645	?	Oxfordshire county record office, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's, fol. 185r, PAR 211/4/F1/3, St Michael's, fol. 41r.	

4 4	27/09/1645	p	Parl.	T	Parl ordinance	02/10/1645 (London, Westminster, within the Lines of Communication); 16/10/1645 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for victory near Chester, taking of Bristol & Devizes, success in Pembrokeshire, and mercy in Scotland	CJ - 27/09/1645	
4 5	15/10/1645	p	Parl.	TS		19/10/1645 (London, Westminster , within the Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for the capture of Winchester, Basing- house and Chepstow	Wing C7108C, CJ 15/10/1645	
4 6	20/10/1645	p	Parl.	TS		26/10/1645 (within Lines of Communication); 09/11/1645 (elsewhere)	Thanks for successes in Yorkshire and other parts of the kingdom	CJ - 20/10/1645	

47	27/10/1645	p	Parl.	TS		02/11/1645 (within Lines of Communication and Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for blessings and successes of parliamentary forces in Wales, especially in taking the towns and castles of Carmarthen and Monmouth.	CJ 27/10/1645	
48	?	r	K	T	proclamation?	12/12/1645	?	Oxfordshire county record office, PAR 207/4/F1/1, St Martin's, fol. 185r, PAR 211/4/F1/3, St Michael's, fol. 41r.	
49	09/12/1645	p	Parl.	TS		14/12/1645 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication)	Thanks for the reducing of Latham-house	CJ - 09/12/1645	
50	22/12/1645	p	Parl.	TS		28/12/1645 (Lines of Communication)	Thanks for the success of parliamentary forces under Colonel Morgan and Colonel Birch	CJ - 22/12/1645	

5 1	22/01/1646	p	Parl.	T	Parl. Ordinance	05/02/1646 London and surrounding area; 12/02/1646 England and Wales	Day of thanksgiving for victory at Dartmouth	CJ 22/01/1646	
5 2	06/02/1646	p	Parl.	T	Parl ordinance	19/02/1646 within 10 miles of London for Chester; a further thanksgiving was held in the London area on 12/03/1646 for Torrington and other successes; elsewhere celebrated all victories on 05/03/1646.	Day of thanksgiving for taking Chester. Victory at Torrington in Devonshire also added for the Counties under Parliamentary power in CJ - 23/02/1646	CJ - 06/02/1646	

5 3	21/03/1645	p	Parl.	T		02/04/1646 (London, Westminster, their Liberties, Lines of Communication and ten miles around); 16/04/1646 (Elsewhere in counties under parliamentary control and more than ten miles from London)	Thanksgiving day for the success of Fairfax and parliamentary forces in the west.	CJ - 21/03/1646	
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54	02/05/1646	p	Parl.	T		12/05/1646 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Twenty miles of the City); 19/05/1646 (elsewhere under the power of parliament)	Thanksgiving days for successes in the west, especially Portland, Ruthin, Exeter, Barnstable, the Mount in Cornwall, Dunster castle, Tutbury castle, Aberistwith castle, Woodstock manor, Bridgnorth castle (Newark and Banbury castle were added on 09/05/1646)	CJ 02/05/1646; CJ - 09/05/1646	
55	08/06/1646	p	Parl.	TS		14/06/1646 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for successes at Tudbury, Dudley, Hartlebury, Ludlow and Bostoll house	CJ - 08/06/1646	
56	03/07/1646	p	Parl.	T		21/07/1646 (London, Westminster and counties under parliamentary power)	Thanksgiving day for the capture of Oxford, Farringdon, Anglesey and Lichfield	CJ - 03/07/1646; CJ - 11/07/1646; CJ - 17/07/1646. See also LJ - 09/07/1646	

57	25/08/1646	p	Parl.	T		08/09/1646 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality, and ten miles about); 22/09/1646 (elsewhere in counties under parliamentary power)	Day of thanksgiving for military successes, Worcester, Wallingford, Ruthen, Ragland, and Pendennis.	CJ - 25/08/1646	
58	03/12/1646	p	Parl.	F	Parl. Ordinance	09/12/1646 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 23/12/1646 (the whole kingdom)	Public fast and day of humiliation for removal of the great judgement of rain and waters, and preventing the sad consequences	CJ - 03/12/1646	

59	27/01/1647	p	Parl.	F	Commons ordinance	10/03/1647	Day of public humiliation for the growth and spreading of errors, heresies and blasphemies, and assistance in suppression	CJ - 27/01/1647	
60	18/08/1647	p	Parl.	T		31/08/1647 (London, Westminster, Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 07/09/1647 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for great victory in Ireland	CJ - 18/08/1647	
61	29/11/1647	p	Parl.	TS		05/12/1647 (London, Westminster, their Liberties, late Lines of Communication); 19/12/1647 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Thanks for victory in Munster in Ireland on 13/11/1647	CJ - 29/11/1647	

6 2	13/04/1648	p	Parl.			16/04/1648 (late Lines of Communication)	Thanksgiving day for the delivery of London from the late tumult	CJ - 13/04/1648	
6 3	11/05/1648	p	Parl.	T		17/05/1648 (London, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 07/06/1648 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for victory in South Wales	CJ - 11/05/1648	
6 4	03/06/1648	p	Parl.	TS		04/06/1648 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication)	Thanks for parliamentary victory at Maidstone	CJ - 03/06/1648	
6 5	13/06/1648	p	Parl.	TS		18/06/1648 (London, late Lines of Communication)	Thanks for the reducing of Kent	CJ - 13/06/1648	

66	05/07/1648	p	Parl.	TS		09/07/1648 (London, late Lines of Communication)	Thanks for northern victories	CJ - 05/07/1648	
67	13/07/1648	p	Parl.	T		19/07/1648 (late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanksgiving for recent victories	CJ - 13/07/1648	
68	18/07/1648	p	Parl.	T	Commons order	09/08/1648	Day of thanksgiving for several victories	CJ - 18/07/1648	
69	05/08/1648	p	Parl.	F		10/08/1648 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Day of humiliation in response to heavy rain	CJ - 05/08/1648	
70	23/08/1648	p	Parl.	T		07/09/1648	Day of thanksgiving for Cromwell's victory at Preston & other victories	CJ - 23/08/1648	

7 1	?	r	K	F		15/09/1648 (Charles and his advisers acted as representatives of the royalist cause in this divine petition)	Prayers used on the day of fasting for the Newport treaty.		C4165
7 2	28/09/1648	p	Parl.	TS		01/10/1648 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for the regaining of Carrickfregus and Belfast	CJ - 28/09/1648	
7 3	04/10/1648	p	Parl.	TS		08/10/1648 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for the reducing of Anglesey	CJ - 04/10/1648	
7 4	28/02/1649 ; 08/03/1649 ; 17/03/1649	p	Parl.	F		19/04/1649; previous proposed dates were 22/03/1649; 05/04/1649	Day of fasting and humiliation for national and private sins	E2505	

7 5	20/04/1649	p	Parl.	F		03/05/1649 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 17/05/1649 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on the forces in Ireland [order also repealed the monthly fast]	CJ - 20/04/1649	
7 6	26/05/1649	p	Parl.	T		07/06/1649 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 28/06/1649 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for reduction of the Levellers and success of the fleet	CJ - 26/05/1649	see E1060, C4137

77	06/07/1649	p	Commons	F	Commons order	11/07/1649 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 01/08/1649 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of fasting for blessing on forces now going for the relief of Ireland	CJ - 06/07/1649	
78	16/08/1649	p	Parl.	T	Commons	29/08/1649	Day of thanksgiving for victory at Drogheda, Rathmines etc	CJ - 16/08/1649	
79	02/10/1649	p	Parl.	T	Commons order	01/11/1649	Day of thanksgiving for Irish victories	CJ - 02/10/1649	
80	12/12/1649	p	Parl.	TS		16/12/1649 (London, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for victories in Ireland	CJ - 12/12/1649	

8 1	04/02/1650	p	Parl.	F		28/02/1650	Day of fasting and humiliation in view of the public sins, prevailing blasphemy, and prayer for the advancement of Christ's kingdom and discovery and prevention of conspiracies	E981	
8 2	16/05/1650	p	Parl.	F		13/06/1650	Day of fasting and humiliation for the nation's great sins and blessing on Parliament's councils and endeavours, and preservation of nation from plots, designs and combinations	CJ - 16/05/1650	
8 3	09/07/1650	p	Parl.	T	Commons order	26/07/1650	Day of thanksgiving for Irish victories, especially Ulster	CJ - 09/07/1650	see E1123aA

84	27/08/1650	p	Commons	TS	Commons order	01/09/1650 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 15/09/1649 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Public Thanks for victories in Ireland, by the surrender of Waterford, Duncannon, and Catherlo	CJ - 27/08/1650	
85	17/09/1650	p	Parl Act	T		08/10/1650	Thanksgiving day for victory over the Scots at Dunbar	CJ - 17/09/1650	
86	26/11/1650	p	Parl.	TS		01/12/1650 (London, Westminster, their liberties, late Lines of Communication)	Thanks for victory at Melick Island	CJ - 26/11/1650; Wing B1027	
87	31/12/1650	p	Parl.	T	Parl. Act	30/01/1651	Day of thanksgiving for army and naval victories, esp taking of Edinburgh castle, and discovery of late horrid design to raise a new war	E.1061[33]	E1061[33]

88	04/03/1651	p	Parl.	F		13/03/1651 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 02/04/1651 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on Commonwealth's councils and arms	CJ - 04/03/1651	
89	25/07/1651	p	Parl.	TS		30/07/1651 (London, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for victory over the Scots at Inverkeithing	CJ - 25/07/1651	
90	29/08/1651	p	Parl.	TS		31/08/1651 (London, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for victories at Lancaster (Scotland) and for the taking of Stirling	Cj - 29/08/1651; CJ - 30/08/1651	

91	06/09/1651 , 19/09/1651	p	Parl.	T	Parl Act	07/09/1651 (London, late Lines of Communicatio n); 24/10/1651 (England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland)	Day of thanksgiving for victory at Worcester	CJ - 06/09/1651; E1061[57]	
92	28/11/1651	p	Parl.	TS		07/12/1651 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communicatio n, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for victories at Limerick and the capture of the Isles of Jersey and Man	CJ - 28/11/1651	
93	01/06/1652	p	Parl.	F	Commons order	09/06/1652 (London, Westminster, Middlesex, late Lines of Communicatio n, Bills of Mortality); 30/06/1652 (elsewhere in the Commonwealt h)	Day of fasting and humiliation for averting judgements, removing sins and a blessing on the Councils and Commonwealth	CJ - 01/06/1652. See Wing E1118	

94	10/08/1652 , date moved and order printed 01/09/1652	p	Parl.	F	Parl Act	13/10/1652 (originally 08/09/1652)	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on the war with the United Provinces	Wing E1077	
95	24/02/1653	p	Parl.	TS		27/02/1653 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Thanks for the victory over the Dutch Fleet	CJ - 24/02/1653	
96	27/01/1653 ; 09/02/1653	p	Parl.	F	Commons order	03/03/1653	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on Commonwealth's councils and arms	CJ - 27/01/1653; E2451	
97	15/03/1653	p	Parl.	T		12/04/1653	Day of thanksgiving for naval victory over Dutch	CJ - 15/03/1653	
98	11/06/1653	p	Parl.	T	Declaration from the General and Council of State	23/06/1653	Thanksgiving for naval victories over the Dutch	E775aA, CJ - 11/06/1653	Some verses for study are suggested in the order E775aA

99	08/08/1653	p	Parl.	T	Parl declaration	25/08/1653	Day of thanksgiving for naval victory over Dutch	E1510; SP 25/43/1	
100	20/03/1654	p	Cromwell	F	Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector	24/03/1654 (London, Westminster and the 'out-parishes'); 07/04/1654 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of humiliation for drought	C7077	
101	09/05/1654	p	Cromwell	T	A declaration of his Highness	23/05/1654	Day of thanksgiving for peace with the United Provinces, and the late seasonable rain	C7080	
102	04/09/1654, altered 19/09/1654.	p	Parl with Protector's concurrence	F	Declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector and the Parliament of the Commonwealth	13/09/1654 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 11/10/1654 (England, Wales, Scotland); 01/11/1654 (Ireland)	Day of fasting and humiliation in the three nations	E.1064[46] also C7068A which is the same	E70968a

1 0 3	25/05/1655	p	Cromwel l	F	A Declaratio n of His Highness with the Advice of His Council	14/06/1655	People 'invited' to Day of fasting and humiliation with collections for relief of poor Protestants (Vaudois of Savoy).	E.1064[54]	
1 0 4	21/11/1655	p	Cromwel l	F	A Declaratio n of His Highness	06/12/1655	Day of public humiliation	C7078	
1 0 5	14/03/1656	p	Cromwel l	F	A declaratio n of his Highness inviting the people	28/03/1656	Day of fasting and humiliation for the failure of the West Indies expedition, the unity among the godly, unquiet and ungodliness, oaths, profanities etc, and the condition of Protestants in Piedmont and Switzerland	C7078b, C7079	

106	02/10/1656	p	Commons	T		08/10/1656 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication); 05/11/1656 (elsewhere in England, Wales, Scotland, Wales)	Day of thanksgiving for victory against Spanish fleet in West Indies	CJ - 02/10/1656	
107	18/09/1656 but order to move it given on 23/9/1656 as it coincided with the swearing in of the Lord Mayor of London	p	The Protector and Parliament	F	Commons with his Highness the Lord Protector's Approbation and Declaration	30/10/1656 but originally 24/09/1656	Day of fasting and humiliation in three nations for vice, blasphemies, divisions, atheistical spirit etc	CJ - 18/09/1656, C7070	
108	31/01/1657	p	Commons	T	Declaration	20/02/1657	Day of thanksgiving in the three nations for deliverance of Protector from conspiracy	C7066	C7066

1 0 9	28/05/1657	p	Parl.	T		03/06/1657 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality)	Day of Thanksgiving for naval success against Spain	Wing E1694	
1 1 0	13/08/1657	p	The Lord Protector and his Privy Council	F		21/08/1657 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality) and elsewhere where possible.	Fast day for visitation by sickness	Wing E2926D	
1 1 1	25/08/1657	p	The Lord Protector and his Privy Council	T		03/09/1657 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality) and elsewhere where possible	Anniversary thanksgiving for parliamentary victory at Dunbar and Worcester	Wing 2926B	

1 1 2	10/09/1657	p	The Lord Protector and his Privy Council	F	Council order	30/09/1657	Day of humiliation because of the sickness	E2926C	
1 1 3	29/04/1658	p	Lord Protector	F	Declaration	05/05/1658 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication, Bills of Mortality); 19/05/1658 (elsewhere in England and Wales)	Day of fasting and humiliation because of the plague	C7072	
1 1 4	03/07/1658	p	Lord Protector	T	Declaration	21/07/1658	Day of thanksgiving for defeat of attempted invasion, and end of sickness etc	C7067	
1 1 5	24/09/1658	p	Richard Cromwell and his Privy Council	F	Declaration	13/10/1658	Day of humiliation for the plague and the death of the Protector	C7181	

116	16/12/1658	p	Lord Protector (Richard)	F	Declaration	29/12/1658 (England and Wales); 05/01/1658 (Scotland and Ireland)	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on the counsels and affairs of the three nations	C7182	
117	02/02/1659; 02/04/1659; 04/04/1659	p	Lord Protector (Richard) and Both Houses	F	Declaration	18/05/1659; previously proposed date of 12/05/1659	Day of fasting and humiliation throughout England, Scotland and Ireland	C7073	
118	26/07/1659	p	Commons	F	Commons order	31/08/1659	Day of fasting and humiliation throughout England, Scotland and Ireland	E1753	
119	24/09/1659	p	Commons	T		06/10/1659 (London, Westminster, late Lines of Communication); 03/11/1659 (elsewhere in the Commonwealth)	Thanksgiving for defeat of royalist conspiracy [Booth]	E1493	

1 2 0	16/03/1660	p	Common s	F	Parl ordinance ? term not used on order	06/04/1660	Day of fasting and humiliation for blessing on the next parliament, that the Lord will make them healers of our breaches and instruments to restore peace	E2237A	
1 2 1	26/04/1660 , royal proclamatio n followed on 08/05/1660	p	Parl	T	Parl order then Royal Proclamati on	10/05/1660	Day of thanksgiving for the Lord general and others who have been instrumental in delivery of this nation from thraldom and misery [order of 08/05/1660 adds that 10/05/1660 be thanks to King, and that ministers in Eng, Scot and Ireland should pray for King	E2243C	F1572A? (Not on EEBO, BL copy)
1 2 2	05/06/1660	r	Charles II	T	Royal Proclamati on	28/06/1660	Day of thanksgiving for the Restoration [after address of both Houses of Parliament 21/05/1660; to be read on Lord's Day before, in all churches]	C3426	C4170

List 2: Further potential royalist thanksgivings¹

Entries in some churchwardens' accounts for royalist parishes of ringing at the King's command for victory may indicate royalist thanksgiving days for which the orders and forms have not survived, though this is not the case in every instance. Interestingly and conversely, where prayers for royalist victories can be traced, they do not necessarily indicate a thanksgiving service. Following the battle of Edgehill on 23 October 1642, where the royalists won at best an inconclusive victory (even though it opened the road to London), St Martin cum Gregory, Micklegate in York paid two shillings and sixpence 'for ringing at Edgehill Victory'.² Yet, despite the survival of a prayer for victory at Edgehill, it seems unlikely that Charles called a national thanksgiving for this victory.³ This is due both to a lack of reference to such an occasion in the records and to the nature of the prayer itself.

Further royalist thanksgivings can be discerned from parish sources, but it can be problematic to assign a national thanksgiving status to them. St Mary on the Hill's account also mentions a thanksgiving on the 25 July 1643 in passing when the parish 'P[ay]d for Ringinge the Eveninge after the publique thanks giueinge the 25th of July after the enemy was gone from before this Citty; by Comaund of [th]e Maior'.⁴ While this might indicate a royalist thanksgiving for the victories obtained in July, this may equally refer to a local thanksgiving for the defeat of the enemy.

As parliament held days of prayer in London and its surrounding area as a symbol of the nation, so it seems that Charles ordered prayer days in Oxford as the representative capital of the royalist state. There is evidence from churchwardens' accounts in Oxford of thanksgivings in the summer and winter

¹ This material has been placed in the appendix due to its highly tentative nature.

² Borthwick Institute, PR Y MG/19, St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate Churchwardens' accounts, p. 239.

³ I have not seen any reference within the local records surveyed of reference to a thanksgiving for Edgehill, nor a thanksgiving entry made close to payments for ringing for Edgehill. For the prayer *A Praier of Thanksgiving for his majesties victory over the Rebels at Edgehill*, see Cambridge University Library, Mm.1.51, fo 1r.

⁴ Chester CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, 1643.

of 1645, though with a significant gap after the battle of Naseby. While the dates of these occasions are given in the accounts as 9 June, 12 June, 2 October and 12 December, no direct cause of the thanksgivings are given.⁵ One might postulate that the victory at Leicester, the removal of the new model army from Oxford on 29 May, and the success at Newcastle might have prompted the June thanksgivings. Similarly, the King's timely arrival at Chester on 23 September might have prompted the October thanksgiving. However, this is simply conjecture and a reason for a royalist thanksgiving on 12 December when they were suffering a series of serious defeats is somewhat baffling.

Ringling for royalist victories (sometimes with the addition of bonfires) appears to have been the parliamentary equivalent of calling a thanksgiving day in terms of their frequency and many appear to have been ordered by the King directly when he was nearby.⁶ Other entries for ringling by command of the mayor may indicate orders for ringling disseminating from the court, but none have been traced. Ringling for victory was an expression of joy and a means of communicating news to the surrounding area. Royal orders for bell ringling had political advantages, but they were also a means of thanking God for the victory without requiring parishioners to take the day off work. Days on which the bells rang for the King's cause were days concerned with thanksgiving, but were not necessarily national days of prayer. Given the general scholarly neglect of parish celebration of royalist victories, I have included a table below of days when the bells rang in England for the King's victories. There are many additional references to tintinnabulation for the King's victories in churchwardens' accounts from royalist areas but they have not been included unless a specific date could be identified.

⁵ Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1 St Martin Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 185r; Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 211/4/F1/3 St Michael Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 41r.

⁶ 'Item paid to the Ringers for ringling on the 30th of Aprill 1645 by the Kings Ma^{ties} order – 5s', Oxfordshire CRO, PAR Oxford St Aldate b. 18, St Aldate Churchwardens' accounts, 1644-45v. 'Item paid for a Bonfire by order from {the} King for {the} victory att Newarke – 3s', Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1 St Martin Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 183r.

Table of potential royalist thanksgivings (as dates upon which English bells rang for royalist victories).⁷

Date	Victory	Parishes ringing
29 May 1643	Exeter	Temple, St Werberge Bristol; St Michael's, York
1 June 1643	Bradford	St Michael's, York
23 June 1643	Unknown, possibly start of victory against Waller	St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate, York; St John Baptist, Chester
8 July 1643	Unknown, perhaps Landsdown Hill	St John Baptist, St Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester
22 July 1643	In South against Waller and others	St Michael's, York
3 August 1643	Bristol	St Michael's, St John's Ousebridge, York
2 October 1643	A victory in the South	St Michael's, St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate, York
27 December 1643	Middlewich	St John Baptist, St Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester
24 March 1644	Newark	St Michael's, St Martins, Oxford; St John's Ousebridge, York, also possibly St John Baptist, Chester, although St Mary-on-the-Hill Chester rang for Newark the following day so this may represent a delay in receipt of the news.

Where the dates and causes for ringing can be discerned from the sources, many of the parishes ringing are closely located to the battlefield. However, some victories were so significant that parishes located far from the scene of victory rang their bells in support. For example, the taking of Exeter by the royalists caused the bells to ring in York as well as in Bristol and the victory at Newark caused ringing in Oxford as well as York. One would expect this table to contain

⁷ Bristol RO, P.Tem/Cal-21, Temple Churchwardens' accounts, 1643; Bristol RO, P/St W/Ch W/3/b St Werberge Churchwardens' accounts, p. 114; Borthwick Institute, PR Y/MS 5, St Michael Spurriergate Churchwardens' accounts, 1643-44, Borthwick Institute, PR Y MG/19 St Martin cum Gregory Micklegate Churchwardens' accounts, p. 239; Cheshire CRO, P51/12/1, St John the Baptist Churchwardens' accounts, 1643; Cheshire CRO, P20/13/1 (microfilm MF 237/2), St Mary on the Hill Churchwardens' accounts, 1643-44; Borthwick Institute, PR Y/J 17, St John Ousebridge Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 89r; Oxfordshire CRO, PAR 207/4/F1/1 St Martin Churchwardens' accounts, fo. 183r.

more references to ringing in Oxford, and there are many references to ringing for victories in churchwardens' accounts from Oxford, but most do not give precise dates of ringing, nor it is possible to deduce them from the records.

Table 1.1: Overview of number and type of occasion, 1640-1660

Count of Date of observance	Fast, Thanksgiving or Additional prayer					
Parl or Royalist?	A	F	T	TS	Grand Total	
p		30	44	31	105	
r		2	5	10	17	
Grand Total		2	35	54	31	122

Table 1.2: Overview of nationwide prayers issued by each year, 1640-1660

Count of Fast, Thanksgiving or Additional prayer	
date of ob. Year	Total
1640	3
1641	2
1642	2
1643	12
1644	11
1645	20
1646	8
1647	3
1648	12
1649	7
1650	6
1651	6
1652	2
1653	5
1654	3
1655	2
1656	3
1657	5
1658	4
1659	3
1660	3
*	
Grand Total	122

Table 1.3: Number and type of nationwide prayers, 1640-1660

Count	P or R?	F, T, TS, or A		Parliamentarian Total	Royalist			Royalist Total	Grand Total
	Parliamentarian				Additional Prayer	Fast	Thanksgiving		
Year	Fast	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving on a Sunday						
1640					1	2		3	3
1641	1	1		2					2
1642			1	1	1			1	2
1643	1	4		4		1	2	3	12
1644	2	4		3			2	2	11
1645		6		8		1	5	6	20
1646	1	6		1					8
1647	1	1		1					3
1648	1	4		6		1		1	12
1649	3	3		1					7
1650	2	2		2					6
1651	1	2		3					6
1652	2			2					2
1653	1	3	1	5					5
1654	2	1		3					3
1655	2			2					2
1656	2	1		3					3
1657	2	3		5					5
1658	3	1		4					4
1659	2	1		3					3
1660	1	1		2			1	1	3
Grand Total	30	44	31	105	2	5	10	17	122

Table 1.4: Overview of type of worship

Fast (parl.)	30
Thanksgiving (parl.)	75
Fast (roy.)	5
Thanksgiving (roy.)	9
Additional prayer (roy.)	3

Table 2.1: Number and type of nationwide prayers, 1603-1660

Count of date of ob. Year	Type			
Year	Additional prayer	Fast	Thanksgiving	Grand Total
1603	1			1
1604	1			1
1605	2			2
1606	1			1
1611	1			1
1613	1			1
1620	1			1
1625	1			1
1626		1	1	2
1627	1			1
1628	2	1		3
1629		1		1
1630	2			2
1631	2			2
1633	2			2
1635	1			1
1636	2	1		3
1639	1			1
1640	1	2		3
1641		1	1	2
1642	1		1	2
1643	1	2	9	12
1644		2	9	11
1645		1	19	20
1646		1	7	8
1647		1	2	3
1648		2	10	12
1649		3	4	7
1650		2	4	6
1651		1	5	6
1652		2		2
1653		1	4	5
1654		2	1	3
1655		2		2
1656		2	1	3
1657		2	3	5
1658		3	1	4
1659		2	1	3
1660		1	2	3
*				
Grand Total	25	39	85	149

Table 2.2: Number and type of nationwide prayers, inc. monthly fast, 1603-60

Count of Fast, Thanksgiving or Additional prayer		Fast, Thanksgiving or Additional prayer		
date of ob. Year	Additional prayer	Fast	Thanksgiving	Grand Total
1603	1	28		29
1604	1	28		29
1605	2			2
1606	1			1
1611	1			1
1613	1			1
1620	1			1
1625	1	20		21
1626		1	1	2
1627	1			1
1628	2	1		3
1629		1		1
1630	2			2
1631	2			2
1633	2			2
1635	1			1
1636	2	1		3
1639	1			1
1640	1	2		3
1641		1	1	2
1642	1	11	1	13
1643	1	13	10	24
1644		14	9	23
1645		13	19	32
1646		13	7	20
1647		13	2	15
1648		14	10	24
1649		6	4	10
1650		2	4	6
1651		1	5	6
1652		2		2
1653		1	4	5
1654		2	1	3
1655		2		2
1656		2	1	3
1657		2	3	5
1658		3	1	4
1659		2	1	3
1660		1	2	3
(blank)				
Grand Total	25	200	86	311

Table 3.1: Number of potential days of observation (inc. both monthly fasts)

Year	Number of potential days of observation (inc. both monthly fasts)
1640	3
1641	2
1642	2
1643	27
1644	35
1645	42
1646	32
1647	27
1648	36
1649	10
1650	6
1651	6
1652	2
1653	5
1654	3
1655	2
1656	3
1657	5
1658	4
1659	3
1660	3

Chart 1.1: Nationwide prayer ordered in England, 1640-1660

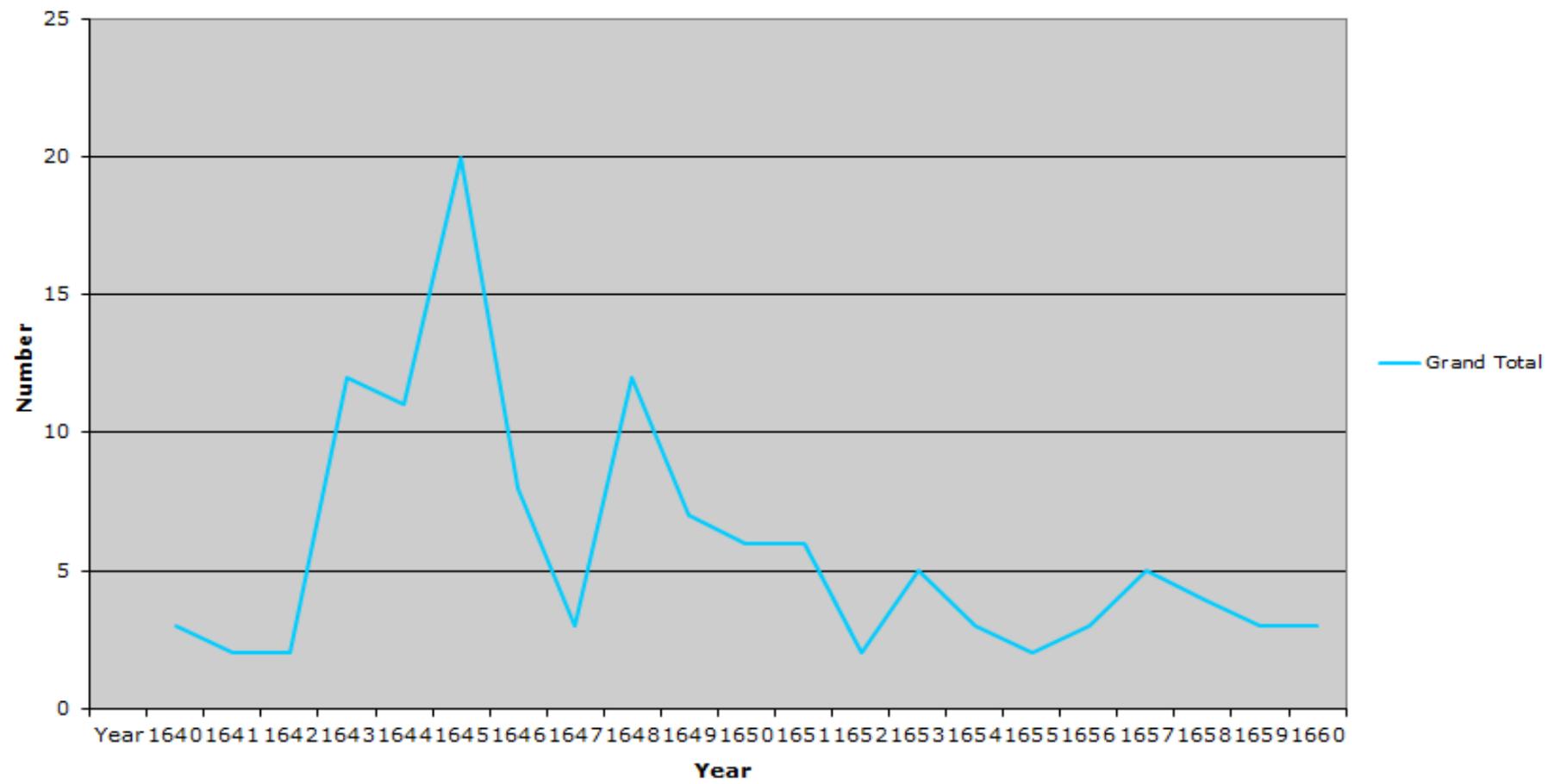


Chart 2.1: Types of nationwide prayer ordered in England, 1640-1660

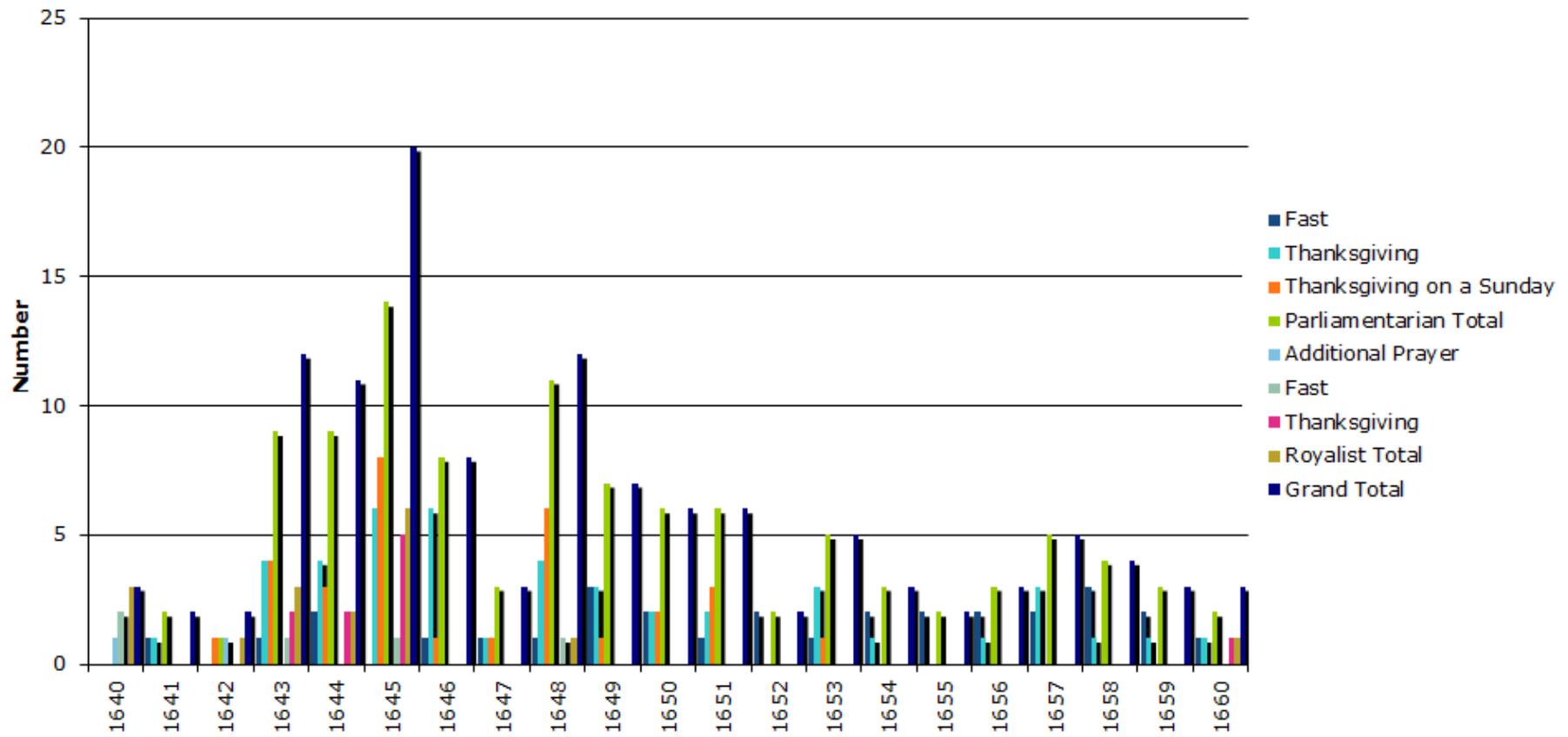


Chart 2.2: Pie chart of nationwide prayer ordered in England, 1640-1660

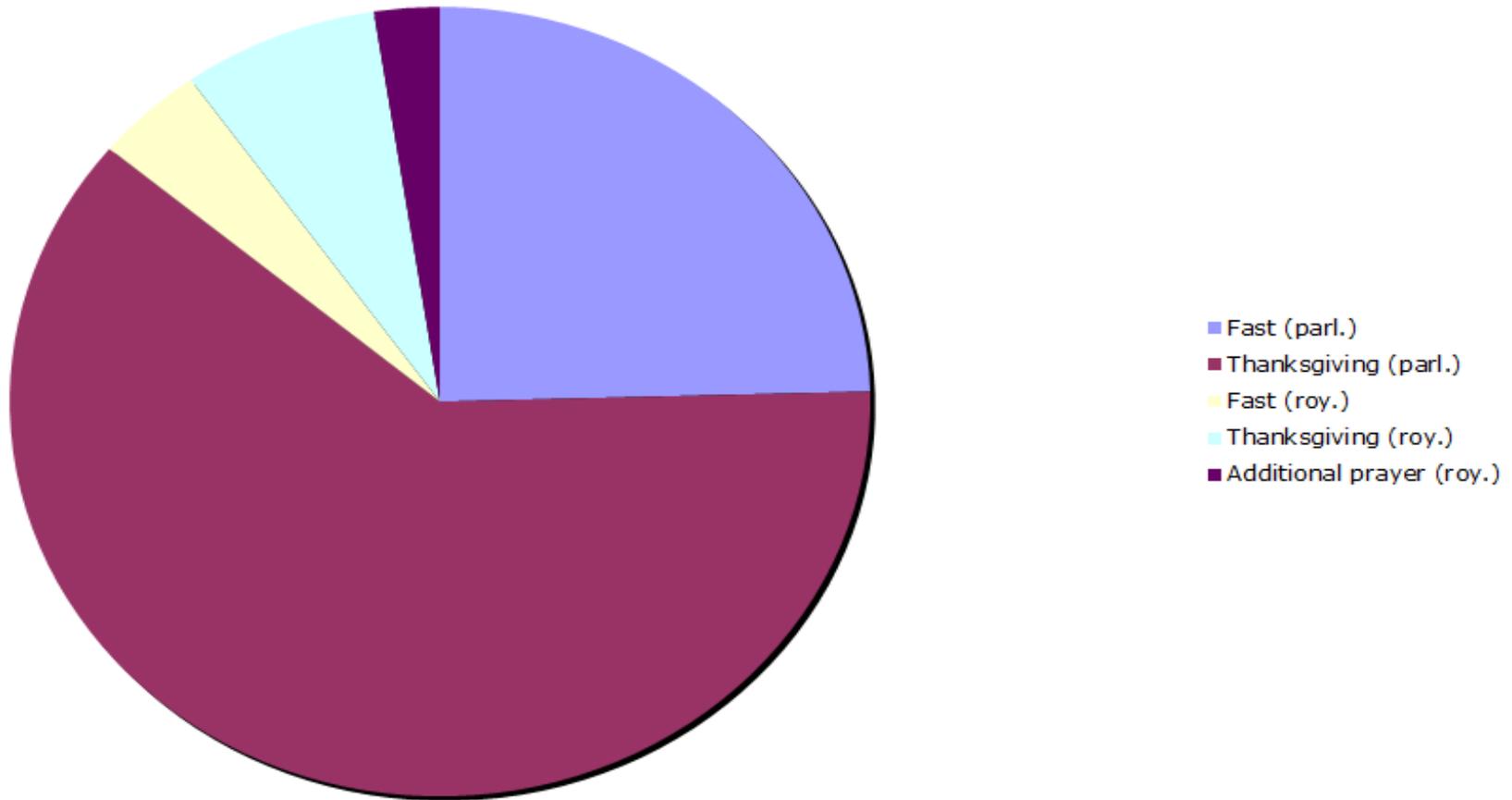


Chart 3.1: Nationwide prayer ordered in England, 1603-1660

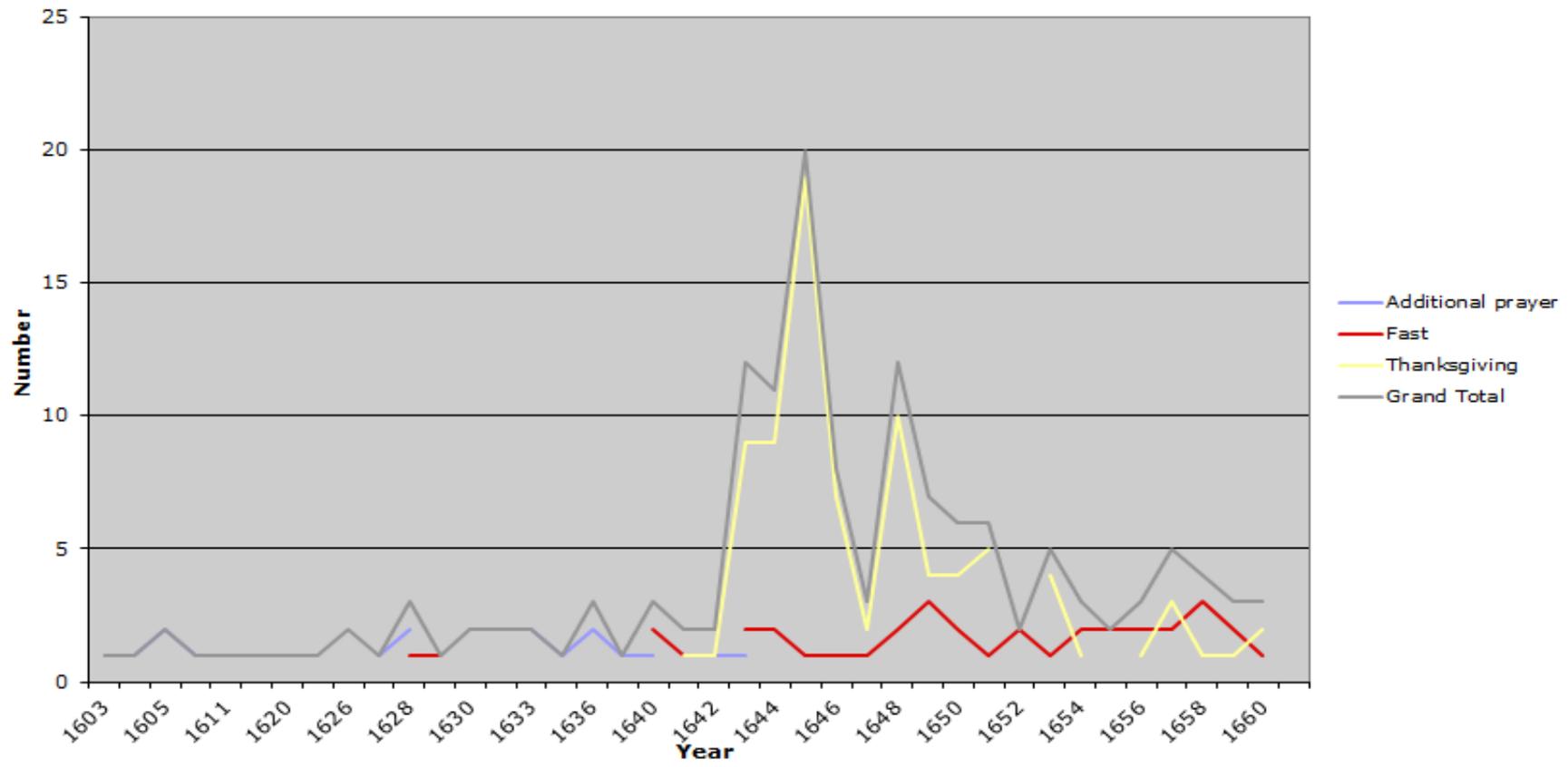


Chart 4.1: Nationwide prayer days observed in England, 1603-1660

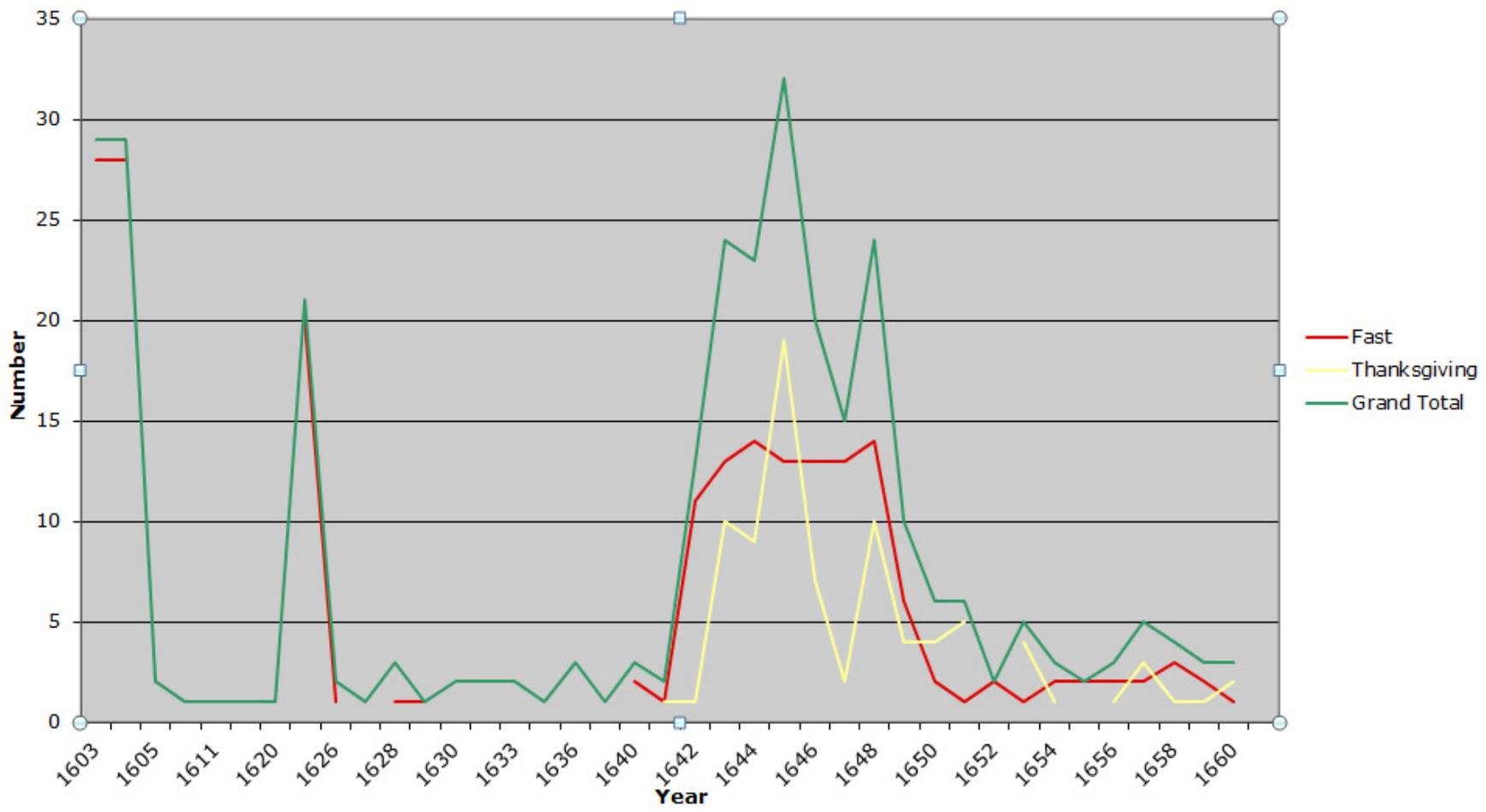
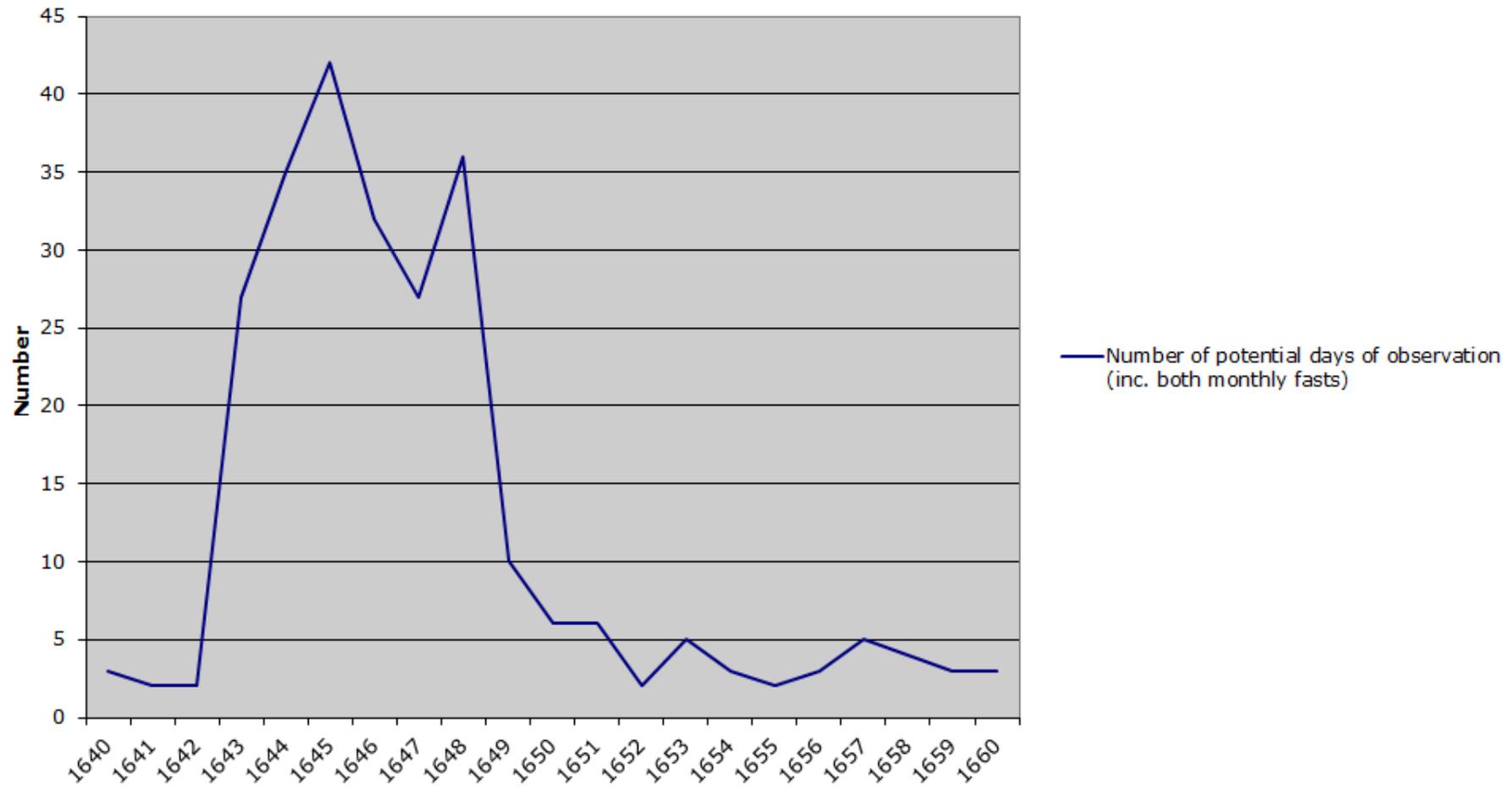
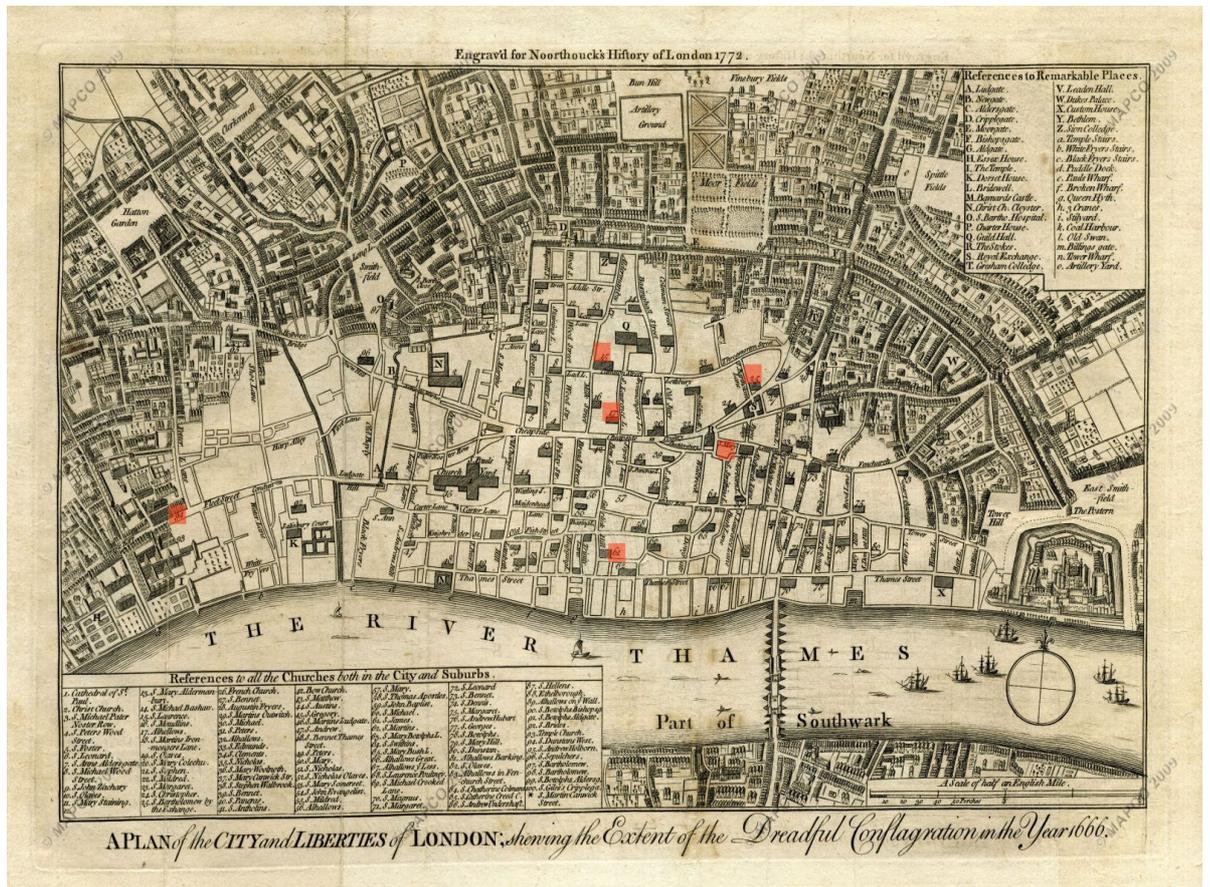


Chart 4.2 Number of potential days of observation (inc. both monthly fasts)



Map 1: The travels of Master Gulston

Map 1, extracted from John Northouck, *A New History of London, Including Westminster and Southwark* (London, 1773)

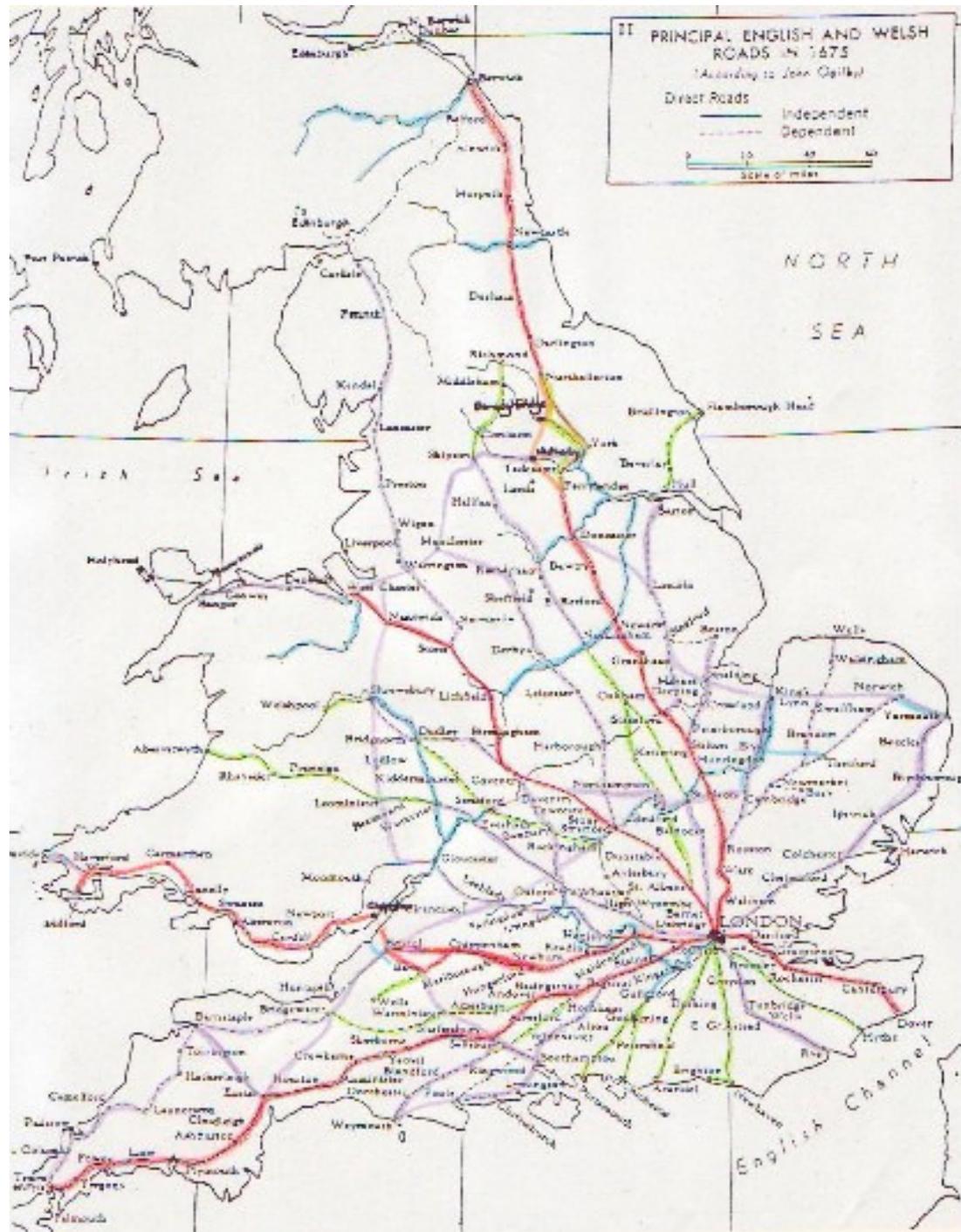


Map 2: Elizabethan post roads

Map 2, extracted from A. Robertson, *Post roads, post towns, postal rates* (Plymouth, 1961), 2.



Map 4: Post roads in the civil war

Map 4, extracted from Robertson, *Post roads*, 4.

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A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, for a Time of Publique Thanksgiving, Upon the Five and Twentieth of This Instant August, for the Great Victory Lately Vouchsafed to Their Fleet at Sea (London, 1653; Wing E1510)

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A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Eighth of July: On Which Day a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Averting of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God from This Kingdom (London, 1640; STC 16557)

A Forme of Common Prayer to Be Used Upon the Solemn Fast Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Second Friday in Every Moneth. Beginning on the Tenth Day of November Next, Being Friday. For the Averting of Gods Iudgements Now Upon Us; for the Ceasing of This Present Rebellion; and Restoring a Happy Peace in This Kingdome (Oxford, 1643; Wing C4111, C4111A)

A Forme of Common Prayer: To Be Used Upon the 17th of November, and the 8th of December: On Which Dayes a Fast Is Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation, for the Removing of the Plague, and Other Judgements of God, from This Kingdom (London, 1640; STC 16559)

A Forme of Common-Prayer, to Be Used Upon the Solemne Fast, Appointed by His Majesties Proclamation Upon the Fifth of February, Being Wednesday. For a Blessing on the Treaty Now Begun, That the End of It May Be a Happy Peace to the King and to All His People. Set Forth by His Majesties Speciall Command, to Be Used in All Churches and Chappels (Oxford, 1644; Wing C4112A)

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A Forme of Thanksgiving for the Late Defeat Given Unto the Rebels at Newarke (Oxford, 1644; Wing C4179B)

A Fourme to Be Used in Common Prayer Twyse a Weke, and Also an Order of Publique Fast, to Be Used Euey Wednesday in the Weeke, Durying This Tyme of Mortalitie, and Other Afflictions, Wherwith the Realme at This Present Is Visited (London, 1563; STC 16506, 16506.3)

A fourme to be vused in common prayer twise a weeke, and also an order of publique fast, to be vused euey Wednesday in the weeke, during this tyme of mortalitie and other afflictions, wherwith the realme at this present is visited (London, 1563; STC 16505)

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A Perfect Relation of Severall Remarkable Passages, Which Passed Betwixt the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, and the Commissioners, the Last Fast Day at Holmby, About the Directory and Forme of Prayer (London, 1647; Wing P1507)

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A sermon preached at the publique fast the eighth of March, in St Maries Oxford, before the great assembly of the members of the honourable House of Commons there assembled. By Gryffith Williams L. Bishop of Ossory: and published by their speciall command (Oxford, 1644; Wing W2671)

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A Short Forme of Thanksgiving to God, for Staying the Contagious Sickenes of the Plague: To Be Used in Common Prayer, on Sundayes, Wednesdayes and Fridayes (London, 1604; 16533)

A Supply of Prayer for the Ships of This Kingdom That Want Ministers to Pray with Them: Agreeable to the Directory Established by Parliament. Published by Authority (London, 1645; S6191)

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An Act Appointing Thursday the last Day of February, 1649 for A Solemn day of Humiliation, Fasting & Prayer (London, 1650; Wing E981)

An act for setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Wednesday the 29th of August, 1649. Together with a declaration & a narrative of the grounds and reasons thereof (London, 1649; Thomason E.1060[55])

An act for setting apart a day of solemn fasting and humiliation, and repealing the former monethly-fast (London, 1649; Wing E1075)

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An act for the observation of a day of publique fasting and humiliation (London, 1652; Wing E1118)

An Act for the setting apart a day of publique thanksgiving, to be kept on Friday the twenty sixth of this instant July together with a declaration and narrative, expressing the grounds and reasons thereof (London, 1650; Wing E1123aA).

An Act of the Commons of England Assembled in Parliament, For the keeping a day of Humiliation upon Thursday the 19 day of April, 1649 (London, 1649; Wing E2505)

An Order of Parliament with the Consent of His Highness the Lord Protector, for a Day of Publike Thanksgiving within the Cities of London and Westminster, the Late Lines of Communication, and Weekly Bills of Mortality, on Wednesday the Third of June Next; for the Great Success God Hath Been Pleased to Give the Navy of This Commonwealth under the Command of General Blake against the Spaniard. Together with a Narrative of the Same Success, as It Was Communicated in a Letter from the Said General (London, 1657; Wing E1694A)

An order of Parliament, for a thanks-giving together with a declaration of the grounds and reasons of it (London, 1650; Wing E1691)

An Ordinance of Parliament for a Day of Publike Thanksgiving for the Peace Concluded between England and Scotland (London, 1641; Wing E1797)

An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament. Concerning the growth and spreading of errors, heresies, and blasphemies. Setting a part a day of publike humiliation, to seeke Gods assistance for the suppressing and preventing the same (London, 1647; Wing E1824)

Articles to Be Enquired of within the Diocese of Lincoln in the Generall and Trienniall Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God, John, by Gods Providence, Lord Bishop of Lincoln, to Be Held in the Yeer of Our Lord God 1641 (London, 1641; Wing C4053)

By the King. A Proclamation Commanding a Due Execution of Lawes, Concerning Lent and Fasting Dayes (London, 1632; STC 8990)

By the King. A Proclamation for a generall and publike Thankesgiuing to Almighty God, for his great mercy in staying his hand, and asswaging the late fearefull Visitation of the Plague (London, 1625; STC 8821)

By the King. A Proclamation for a general fast thorowout this Realm of England (London, 1641; Wing C2582)

By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2583)

By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Held Throughout This Kingdome on the Second Friday in Every Moneth (Oxford, 1643; Wing C2584)

By the King. A Proclamation for a generall Fast to be kept thorowout the Realm of England (London, 1640; STC 9170)

By the King. A Proclamation for a Generall Fast to Be Solemnized Thorowout This Realm of England (London, 1640; STC 9159)

By the King. A Proclamation for a publike, generall, and solemne Fast (London, 1625; STC 8787)

By the King. A Proclamation for a Solemn Fast on Wenesday the Fifth of February Next, Upon Occasion of the Present Treaty for Peace (London, 1645; Wing C2585)

By the King. A Proclamation for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn and Publick Thanksgiving Throughout the Whole Kingdom (London, 1660; Wing C3426)

By the King. A Proclamation for the Setling of the Letter Office of England and Scotland (London, 1635; STC 9041)

By the King. A Proclamation, for the Observation of the Nine and Twentieth Day of May Instant, as a Day of Publick Thanksgiving, According to the Late Act of Parliament for That Purpose (London, 1661; Wing C3498)

By the King. Orders for the Furtherance of Our Service, as Well to Our Pacquets and Letters, as for Riding in Post; Specially Set Downe, and Commanded to Be Observed, Where Our Postes Are Established within Our County of [Blank] (London, 1637; ESTC S123490 (not in STC). The National Archives Hold Perhaps the Only Two Copies, See SP 16/364/90 and SP 16/490/69)

By the Protector. A Declaration of His Highness for a Day of Publique Fasting and Humiliation (London, 1658; Wing C7181)

By the Protector: Orders for the Furtherance of Our Service as Well as for Our Pacquetts and Letters as for Riding in Post (London, 21 August 1655; British Library E1064 (57))

Certaine praiers collected out of a fourme of godly meditations, set foorth by her Maiesties authoritie in the great mortalitie, in the fift yeere of her Highnesse raigne, and most necessarie to be vsed at this time in the like present visitation of Gods heauie hand for our manifold sinnes, and commended vnto the ministers and people of London, by the Reuerend Father in God, Iohn Bishop of London, &c. Iuly. 1593 (London, 1593; STC 16524)

Certaine Prayers Collected out of a Forme of Godly Meditations, Set Forth by His Majesties Authoritie: And Most Necessary to Be Vsed at This Time in the Present Visitation of Gods Heauy Hand for Our Manifold Sinnes. Together with the Order of a Fast to Be Kept Euery Wednesday During the Said Visitation (London, 1603; STC 16532)

Certaine Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches. In the Time of the Late Queene Elizabeth of Famous Memory. And Now Thought Fit to Be Reprinted by Authority from the Kings Most Excellent Majesty (London, 1640; STC 13677)

Commons Ordinance for the General Fast (London, 23 December 1641; Wing E2778)

Die Martis, 17 Septembr. 1650. Ordered by the Parliament, that the sheriffs of the respective counties within England and Wales, be required and enjoyned forthwith to send to the ministers of the several parishes in the respective counties, The Act for setting apart Tuesday the eighth day of October (London, 1650; Wing E1749bA)

Die Mercurii, 19. July, 1643. The Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, out of the deep sense of Gods heavy wrath now upon this kingdome (London, 1643; Wing E1640B)

Die Sabbati 16. Januarii. 1640. It is this day ordered by the Lords spirituall and temporall in the High Court of Parliament assembled, that the divine service be performed as it is appointed by the acts of Parliament of this realm (London, 1641; Wing E2807)

A Forme of Thanksgiving for the great Mercy that God hath bestowed upon these three Nations of England, Scotland and Ireland by the Hand of the Lord General Monck and the Two Houses of Parliament, in Restoring the King unto his Right and Government; and in the opening a Doore thereby to Establishment, of the the true Religion, and to the Settlement of these Distracted and Oppressed Nations in Peace and Righteousnesse, by the Proclamation of King Charles the II. May this 8. 1660 (London, 1660; Wing F1572A)

Friday, March the 16th. 1659 Resolved, &C. (London, 1659; Wing E2237A)
 Letters from Ireland, relating the several great successes it hath pleased God to give unto the Parliaments forces there, in the taking of Drogheda, Trym, Dundalk, Carlingford, and the Nury. Together with a list of the chief commanders, and the number of the officers and soldiers slain in Drogheda. *Die Martis, 2 Octobr. 1649.* Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, that the several letters from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, together with so much of Colonel Venables letter as concerns the successes in Ireland, be forthwith printed and published (London, 1649; Wing L1778)

Meroz Cvrse for not helping the Lord Against the Mighty. Being The Substance of a Sermon, Preached on a day of humiliation, at S. Sepulchers, London, December 2. 1641, By that powerfull and Godly Divine, Mr. Stephen Marshall, published in one sheet of Paper, (not by the Author) but by a Lover of the Truth ,for their good especially that are not able to buy bigger books' (London, 1641; Wing M761B)

Prayers and Thanksgivings Used in the King's Army before and after Battle (Oxford, 1643; Wing M1761)

Prayers Fitted to Several Occasions, to Be Used in His Majesty's Armies and Garrisons (Exeter, 1645; Wing C4091I)

Private Forms of Prayer for These Sad Times (Oxford, 1645; Wing D2665)

The Commencement of the Treaty Between the King's Majesty, and the Commissioners of Parliament At Newport. A Prayer Drawmne by His Majesties special direction and Dictates, for a blessing on the Treaty at Newport (Newport, 1648; Wing C5546)

The order of prayer, and other exercises, vpon Wednesdays and Frydayes, to auert and turne Gods wrath from vs, threatned by the late terrible earthquake: to be vsed in all parish churches and housholdes throughout the realme (London, 1580; STC 16513)

The perfect weekly account containing certain special and remarkable passages from both Houses of Parliament, the General Assembly of the kingdom of Scotland, and the state and condition of the Kings Majesty, the army and kingdom (London, 1648-1649; Thomason E.566.17)

The seconde Tome of Homelyes of such matters as were promised and Intituled in the former part of the Homelyes, set out by the auctoritie of the Quenes Maiestie: And to be read in every paryshe Church agreablye (London, 1563; STC 13665)

The True Informer: Continuing a Collection of the Most Speciall and Observable Passages, Which Have Beene Informed This Weeke from Severall Parts of His Majesties Dominions (London, Saturday October 28 to Saturday November 4 1643; Thomason 13:E.74[21])

The vote of both Houses of Parliament; upon the discovering of the late designe. Or, A narrative of a seditious and Iesuiticall practice upon the Parliament, and city of London, lately discovered; and some observations upon it by Mr. Soliciter. Die Sabbathi, 20 Ian. 1643. It is this day ordered by the Lords and Commons, that the 21. day of this instant January, being the Lords day, be kept as a day of publique thanksgiving, for the great deliverances which God hath given to the Parliament and city, from the severall plots and designes against them; and more particularly, in discovering the late designe: and that the vote of both Houses upon the late designe be printed, and read in the churches (London, 1644; Wing E2433)

The Wonderful Effects of a true and Religious Fast, or, An Exhortation to our Monethly Fasting and Prayer For England and Ireland (London, 1642; Wing W3365)

Thursday the Tenth of September, 1657 at the Council at White-Hall (London, 1657; Wing E2926C)

Thursday, April 26. 1660 (London, 1660; Wing E2243C).

Tuesday, July 26. 1659 (London, 1659; Wing E1753)

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Diurnall Occurrences or Daily Proceedings (1640-1641, Wing E1527)

Exact Diurnall Faithfully Communicating (Diary or An Exact Journall) (1644-1646, 144)

Impartial Scout (1650, 196)

Kingdomes Intelligencer (1661-63, 486)

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