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Restoration, religion, and revenge

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RESTORATION, RELIGION AND REVENGE

A Thesis

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Agricultural and Mechanical College
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By

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In Memory
of
Laura Fay Thornton, 1937-2003,
Who always believed in me

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is religious dissent in Restoration England. The government of Charles II and the reinstated Church of England both had programs on how to deal with the problem of religious nonconformity. This project presents the punitive legislation supported by king, parliament, and church to stamp out dissent. These programs were unable to sway the beliefs of committed nonconformists who gave testimony to the strength of their beliefs by facing persecution and imprisonment.

Introduction

Parliament declared on May 8, 1660 the exiled Charles Stuart, King of England. The Restoration was a time of mixed hopes and fears for many. The displaced bishops and ministers of the Church of England looked upon the return of the monarchy as a return to the rightful order of things. The Cavaliers saw chances for personal gain and revenge against the supporters of Oliver Cromwell. Nonconformists' ministers and congregations campaigned for differing degrees of toleration. Charles's Declaration of Breda initially offered tolerance in religious matters. Questions of religion continued the entirety of Charles II reign and ran the gamut from reestablishing the state church to excluding a catholic heir to the throne. Charles tried to moderate the most severe legislation, but political necessity forced the king to allow persecution of dissenters.

The historical dilemma or problem in dealing with religious matters is bias. Religion as a subject of history requires the historian to examine multiple points of view. The most striking is denominational bias. Most organized religions have histories that promote their own positions or view of events. These denominational histories vary in objectivity. Baptist historians tried until the early twentieth century to trace a trail of Baptist blood to John the Baptist. Leon H. McBeth defeated this claim with his documented study of Baptist evolution in *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*, which argues that a decisive Baptist identity does not emerge until the early years of the seventeenth century. British historians offer conflicting views of the motives for the Reformation and spread of protestant ideas within the British Isles. The historian cannot disregard political or social motives in religious controversies and/or legislation. A need for responsible study of religion in its historical context is grounding in the basic tenets

of Christian theology. Seventeenth-century contemporaries attacked opposing positions using theological, social, and political grounds.

England had a long history of heterodox religious beliefs and political responses to those beliefs. English kings from the time of Edward I had laws governing praemunire. External authority, be it physical or spiritual, concerned English monarchs from the thirteenth century. Heretics of any stripe were enemies of the religious and political establishment. Henry IV was the first English monarch to equate religious nonconformity with sedition. The notable targets of this policy were the Lollards. They agitated for religious reforms, but those who refused to go underground were in danger of losing their lives. The early Stuarts varied in devotion to the church they headed, but both James I and Charles I ignored the pleas for reform from those discontented with the liturgy and practices of the church.

Religious policies in Restoration England have many sources and motives. The aim of this project is to understand the diversity and influences in religious policies from the Restoration. The meanings behind terms such as toleration, dissent, conformity, and comprehension depended upon which group supplied the definitions. In general, comprehension argued for a broad and inclusive settlement for the Church of England. This definition had support among Independents, Presbyterians, and Anglicans. Presbyterian Richard Baxter and Anglican John Tillotson both supported this view. Dissent meant anything from rejecting the *Book Common of Prayer* and episcopacy to changing the meaning of the sacraments. Moderate dissenters wanted the ability to choose what they wished to use from the liturgy. Radical dissenters rejected the liturgy in its entirety and changed methods of church membership. They also felt they were the true representation of God's church on this earth and that all other methods were erroneous. Conformity and toleration were even less defined. Conformity

offered additional headaches for divines because of the internal/external divide. The leadership of the Church of England split into two camps: one supporting inclusion and the other upholding fierce loyalty to the prewar church. This later group, the High Church party “thought of themselves as the faithful remnant of a persecuted Church from which all others had fallen away.”¹ Toleration was not equality—it was defined as freedom to worship without legal ramifications. The meaning of toleration depended on who defined it. Moderate dissenters like the Presbyterians meant toleration for people who believed as they did. Moderate Anglicans believed the word to mean acceptance of those not completely conforming to the liturgy while their High Church counterparts viewed toleration as a gateway to sedition. Radical dissenters like the Baptists meant full religious toleration for Protestants of any stripe and included Jews, and Muslims in their arguments. Pleas for toleration were not attempts to gain political representation. Punitive legislation against religious nonconformists pulled from political and social concerns within the church and society.

The subject of this thesis is attitudes toward dissent from the government and the Church of England. The dissenters within England were a minority that political and religious leaders fixated upon. Leadership within the church and among the cavaliers placed some if not all of the blame for the events of the civil war and commonwealth upon the dissenters. Many dissenters were of lower social status and their prominence was proof of a world gone mad or at the very least turned upside down. This was especially true for the most radical dissenters such as the Baptists who supported the increasingly radical parliaments of the interregnum. The Baptists were associated with regicides and with Fifth Monarchists: both made the newly reconstituted monarchy nervous. I use the life John Bunyan and the Baptists as an example of the inability of a government to enforce religious conformity to the Church of England.

¹ Robert Bosher. *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*. New York: Oxford University Press, xv.

Fear of rebellion and punishment for the previous regime influenced policies. Charles forgave most of those who took up arms against his father; only the regicides felt his wrath. Both Edward Hyde and Charles II were moderates in planning for a religious settlement. Charles intended on granting pardons to many jailed by old punitive statutes. His Parliament took an increasingly negative view of nonconformity and the king's granting of individual indulgences. The restored bishops in the House of Lords wanted a return of the ecclesiastic status quo. Adding into the volatile mix was a fear of rebellion. The English government and people survived one civil war; no one desired to live through another. Even the hint of seditious activity could land an individual in great difficulty. The Restoration despite its religious rigidity opened the door for religious toleration in subsequent generations.

Under Construction: The Restoration Government

The Restoration of the Stuarts to the throne in 1660 raised hopes and expectations among many diverse groups of English society. Some feared the return of the king and wished for a continuation of the English Republic. The government of the Restoration period had to resolve long-standing questions about political and religious matters. The men involved in these decisions carried the experiences of exile, religious conversion, and personal and public tragedies into their political lives. Charles II learned the value of compromise while abroad and this willingness to tolerate dissent marked many of his religious intentions. His parliaments would strive to preserve the power of the constitution over the prerogative of the king echoing an older debate. His cavaliers carried grudges against those who had removed them from places of power and influence that flavored the factional politics of Restoration England. The king gave into the demands of the cavaliers due to ties of personal loyalty and the financial needs of the crown.

The man destined to be king arrived into a life of privilege 29 May 1630. The young prince's life changed with the outbreak of war with Scotland in 1638 and he experienced further upset with the onset of the English Civil War in 1642. In the early 1640s, Charles and James joined their father in the military maneuvers of the war. He was present at Edgehill and wiser heads reined in the young prince preventing his capture by the enemy.¹ Charles made his headquarters at Bristol aided by some of his father's most capable ministers; the youngest and most influential was Sir Edward Hyde. Charles left his father in March 1645 and the aftermath of Naseby insured a permanent separation. The Prince retreated to the Scilly Islands as the New Model Army tightened its control over the western counties. Henrietta Maria wrote anxiously, "I shall not sleep in quiet until I hear that the Prince of Wales be removed from thence."² The

¹ Ronald Hutton. *Charles the Second*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). 6.

² Geoffrey Smith. *The Cavaliers in Exile*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). 19.

queen's fears subsided somewhat when the prince and his followers removed to Jersey in April 1646.

The Prince of Wales never met with his father again as his other siblings did during the king's imprisonment in 1647 at Hampton Court. "[H]e took great care to instruct his children how to behave themselves, if the worst should befall him that the worst of his enemies did contrive or wish; and 'that they should preserve unshaken their affection and duty to the Prince their brother.'"³ Charles I also admonished his children to remain faithful to the Church of England specifically warning them of their mother's Catholicism.

Isolated on Jersey, the prince had a company of around 300 royalist supporters. Some of these early supporters would return victorious with King Charles II at the Restoration. The factionalism that marked Charles's reign emerged while on Jersey. The initial divisions arose over what to do with the prince. Initially, the strongest faction developed around the queen in exile in France. This was the Louvre group led by Lord Henry Jermyn. They sought a pragmatic alliance with the Presbyterians of England and Scotland. They also desired the prince's presence in Paris. Sir John Berkeley described their ambitions in writing to Hyde, "to give one hand to the Catholic Roman, and the other to the Presbyterian, and join with them both to the destruction of our common enemy."⁴ The prince left Jersey for the Palace of St. Germain on 25 June 1646. The other factions materialized between the defeat of the Covenanters by Cromwell's troops and Charles I's execution. The Old Royalists remained true to Anglican teachings and traditional constitutional principles. Hyde was a prime example of the Old Royalists. The Swordsmen were a loose alliance of military men who looked to Prince Rupert for leadership and no one

³ G. D. Boyle, Ed. *Characters and Episodes of the Great Rebellion*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889). 209.

⁴ Smith, 26.

else.⁵ Charles Gerard, raised later to the peerage as earl of Macclesfield, was one cavalier general who supported the Swordsmen.⁶ Prince Rupert was a successful and capable cavalry commander in the royalist armies. He fought at York, Marston Moor, and Naseby. Prince Rupert was a nephew of Charles I and the son of the prince of Orange. It was to the Hague that Charles I sought to send his youngest children for safety. These factional divisions were not ironclad; the men involved looked out for and to friends and patrons in the opposing group. Personal rivalries often destroyed work vital for survival of the Stuart line.

In March 1650, Charles and his advisors opened negotiations with the Scottish commissioners in Breda. Robert Baillie, a Scottish commissioner, wrote after meeting Charles, “If God would send him among us, without some of his present counselors, I think he might make, by God’s blessing, as good a King as Britain saw these hundred years.”⁷ Hyde was one of the leading counselors uninterested in forming an alliance with the Scottish Covenanters. Charles gave lip service to the Scots, who requested his affirmation of the Solemn League and Covenant as well as the Westminster Confession of Faith. Charles and a group of exiled Cavaliers embarked for Scotland June 1650. Most of the cavaliers who followed Charles to Scotland were inappropriate companions for a pious prince, according to the Scots, and had to leave. The covenant was the price for the Scottish crown and a method of insuring support for his attempt to regain the English throne. Charles signed the oath to advance his own position and resisted the attempted Presbyterian indoctrination. The Covenant included two provisions on the majesty and position of the king. “We shall, with the same sincerity, reality and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour with our estates and lives mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments and the liberties of the kingdoms, and to preserve the and defend

⁵ Ibid, 27.

⁶ Ibid, 46.

⁷ Trevor Royle. *The British Civil War*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

the king's majesty's person and authority".⁸ Charles's hopes quickly turned to ash with the defeat of the Scottish forces at Worcester in 1651.

The years following Worcester caused intrigues to develop on both sides of the Channel with little positive outcome. Cromwell and his government monitored Charles and his exiled court with more precision than Charles's followers could imagine. Hyde had many informants in England and among the dispersed exiles. Some of his most reliable correspondents were clerics removed from their livings. Cromwell's death in 1658 and his successor Richard's peaceful introduction as Lord Protector caused royalist hopes to fade once more. However, neither the members of the Rump nor the exiled court predicted the actions of one man, General George Monck in Scotland. Monck acted to secure the position of the army, and in particular, the payment of arrears to his men. The Rump had a reputation for radicalism—religious and political. The Rump Parliament came into power in 1649-1653 as the remnants of the Long Parliament that survived Pride's Purge in December 1648. On December 6, Colonel Thomas Pride prevented conservative and Presbyterian MPs entry into the Commons by surrounding the building with soldiers. Pride also served on the high court of justice and signed the king's death warrant.⁹ Cromwell later overthrew the Rump for failing on a number of key issues such as payment of the army, and not producing a godly government or Presbyterian churches throughout England. The Barebones Parliament of 1653 was the last parliament called until 1660. This began when the Rump restored itself to power after the death of Oliver Cromwell. The restored Rump lasted the summer of 1659 until the army refused to allow anyone admittance, but the members refused entry still believed themselves a legitimate political body. A fierce print campaign began in the months after Cromwell's death advocating the restoration

⁸ Henry Bettenson et al. *Documents of the Christian Church, 3rd Ed.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). 317.

⁹ Ian J. Gentles. "Thomas Pride." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-5). 2-3.

of the Long Parliament as the only legitimate parliamentary body in England. This campaign received a helping hand when Monck crossed the Tweed. Monck's contacts ranged from Parliamentarians to Charles to other military men. No one on either side was certain of the general's goals "no man knew what he would do, or declare."¹⁰ Monck with his army might establish military rule, restore Richard Cromwell, or work to restore the Stuarts.

Early in 1660, individual counties presented to both the Rump and Monck petitions for a free parliament. The Oxfordshire petition opened with "That as they were freeborn people and subjects of England, that it was a privilege that knights and burgesses ought to be present in Parliament for the good of their country [i.e. county] and in many places the countries are wholly left out, either by death or seclusion."¹¹ The Rump acquiesced and announced in late January 1660 that elections for a new parliament would occur. Samuel Pepys recorded 21 February 1660 "...that the House doth intend to do nothing more than to issue writs, and to settle a foundation for a free Parliament."¹² He also wrote mid-March that "...I heard how the Parliament this day dissolved themselves...and now they began to talk loud of the King."¹³

Charles moved to Breda and entered into negotiations with Monck aided by Sir John Grenville, a clandestine supporter of the king while Cromwell lived. Grenville received the earldom of Bath for his devotion to the crown after the Restoration.¹⁴ Monck offered a letter to the members as well as the *Declaration of Breda*. The *Declaration of Breda* arrived in time to ease fears about Charles's religious aims among many Presbyterians elected to the new parliament.

¹⁰ N. H. Keeble. *The Restoration*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). 17.

¹¹ John Miller. *The Restoration and England of Charles II, 2nd Ed.* (Harlow: Longman, 1997). 93.

¹² Samuel Pepys. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys, Vol. I.* Edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). 62.

¹³ *Ibid*, 89.

¹⁴ Victor Stater. "John Grenville, first earl of Bath." *ODNB*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-5). 2.

And because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other...we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called into question for differences of opinion in matter of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.¹⁵

Charles expected the support of his parliament in extending this promise of liberty of conscience to his subjects. He stated his willingness to work for a religious settlement of limited toleration saying "...that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the full granting of that indulgence."¹⁶

The Convention Parliament began on 25 April 1660. The members of the House of Commons included 158 men from royalist families and 150 men of parliamentary background. The men of parliamentary origins were largely Presbyterian and additionally 108 members took up arms for Charles I in the civil war.¹⁷ On 8 May 1660, both houses decided in favor of the exiled king.

...the Lords and Commons now assembled in Parliament, together with the lord mayor, aldermen and commons of the city of London and other freemen of this kingdom now present, do, according to our duty and allegiance, heartily, joyfully and unanimously acknowledge and proclaim that immediately upon the decease of our late Sovereign Lord King Charles the imperial crown of England, and of all the kingdoms, dominions and rights belonging to the same, did by inheritance, birthright, and lawful and undoubted succession descend and come to his most excellent majesty Charles the Second.¹⁸

A great crowd of people went to Breda to escort the returning king home. Pepys remarked upon his first vision of the king "all the afternoon the King walked here and there, up and down (quite contrary to what I thought him to have been), very active and stirring."¹⁹ The king and his company disembarked at Dover and met with an assembled crowd of the local inhabitants and

¹⁵ Andrew Browning, Ed. *English Historical Documents, Vol. VIII*. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953). 57-58.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 371.

¹⁷ Keeble, 29.

¹⁸ Browning, 58-59.

¹⁹ Pepys, 155.

Monck before removing to Canterbury for the night. Charles entered London 29 May 1660, his thirtieth birthday, to shouts of joy and welcome from the gathered crowds. Clarendon recalled the events of the day

The joy was universal; and whosoever was not pleased at heart, took more the care to appear as if he was; and no voice was heard but of the highest congratulation, of extolling the person of the king, admiring his condescensions and affability, raising his praises to heaven, and cursing and detesting the memory of those villains who had so long excluded so meritorious a prince.²⁰

The mood among some individuals was less than optimistic about the returning monarchy. Lucy Hutchinson, wife of a regicide, writing in March 1660 “that glorious Parliament [came] to a period, not so fatal to itself as to the three nations, whose sun of liberty then set, and all their glory gave place to the foulest mists that ever overspread a miserable people.”²¹ Nonetheless, Charles returned to public acclaim and some quietly expressed private misgivings. The settlements that followed his coronation caused those outside the confines of the Church of England to pay close attention to the forthcoming religious settlements.

The Church of England achieved honor by its association with the monarchy. Two days of prayer were added to the liturgical year: January 30 and May 29. These dates honored the memory of the late Charles I and celebrated the return of Charles II. Westminster Abbey was the site of Charles’s coronation on 23 April 1661. The elaborate ceremony showed the prominence of the restored bishops. The new bishop of London, Gilbert Sheldon, officiated due to the ill health of the archbishop of Canterbury, William Juxon. Pepys described the event in great detail “...and he came forth to the throne, and there passed many ceremonies: as taking the oath, and having things read to him by the Bishop; and his lords and bishops come, and kneeled before

²⁰ G. Huehns, Ed. *Selections from Clarendon*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). 370-371.

²¹ Keeble, 48.

him.”²² John Evelyn described the event as “after the Sermon the K: tooke his Oath before the altar to <maintaine> the Religion, Mag: Charta & Laws of the Land.”²³ Philip Henry, a Puritan, was not comfortable with the elaborate ceremony around the coronation. He recorded sarcastically, “King Crowned, great joy, much sin, the Lord pardon. Twas a very wett evening, which prevented something of God’s Dishonour.”²⁴

Restoring normalcy after years of discord and rule by a radical minority was the initial task for all members of the Restoration government. The Convention Parliament (1660-61) was responsible for the first settlement of the country. The Cavalier Parliament (1662-79) implemented the second settlement, removing constitutional reforms dating from the 1640s, and offering no toleration for dissenting religious sects. These two bodies of MPs interacted with Charles and his Privy Council. The Privy Council included the royal dukes York and Gloucester, seven former exiled counselors, six English royalists, eight wartime Parliamentarians, and four former supporters of Cromwell.²⁵ The new advisors showed the diversity within the kingdom. This body divided into an inner ring of advisors named the Committee for Foreign Affairs, which included Hyde (soon to be earl of Clarendon), James Butler the duke of Ormond and lord lieutenant of Ireland, Sir Edward Nicholas, Monck (now duke of Abermarle), Thomas Wriothesley earl of Southampton, and Sir William Morice.²⁶ Clarendon, Ormond, and Nicholas spent time in the exiled court serving Charles II. Morice was one of the MPs excluded from sitting by Pride’s Purge, but returned for the Barebone’s Parliament in 1653. He was one of the first parliamentary contacts Monck made in 1660.²⁷

²² Pepys, *Vol2*. 84.

²³ John Evelyn. *The Diary of John Evelyn*. Edited by Guy de la Bedoyere. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004). 119.

²⁴ Keeble, 48.

²⁵ Hutton, 134-35. *Charles II*.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 136.

²⁷ Paul Seward. “Sir William Morice.” *ODNB*. 1-2.

Southampton was a staunch supporter of both Charles I and Charles II. He refused to take part in coercing Charles I after his capture. He attended the king's trial and funeral. Southampton remained quiet in the 1650s corresponding with Hyde. He spent a brief amount of time in the Tower for opposing the tax assessment of his property. He served Charles II capably as Lord Treasurer.²⁸

Charles wanted a secure and loyal established church. He believed this could best occur with cooperation between presbytery and episcopacy. This spirit of moderation revealed itself in the *Worcester House Declaration*. "For the better doing whereof we did intend, upon our first arrival in this kingdom, to call a synod of divines, as the most proper remedy for all those differences and dissatisfactions which had or should arise in matters of religion."²⁹ The declaration called for bishops to lead ordination services with the aid of presbyters and allowed ministers to use as much or little of the Book of Common Prayer as they desired. The Worcester House Declaration made in 1660 stressed the continuity of Charles's desires now in England with the promises for tolerance made at Breda. Religious settlement was one of the first tasks the new royal government had to undertake for the restoring of normalcy. Charles seemed to argue for limited toleration due to his experiences on the continent. He presented a *Declaration in favour of toleration* in 1662.

...we are glad to lay hold on this occasion to renew unto all our subjects concerned in those promises of indulgence by a true tenderness of conscience this assurance, that as in the first place we have been zealous to settle the uniformity of the Church of England in discipline, ceremony and government, and shall ever constantly maintain it, so as for what concerns the penalties upon those who (living peaceable) do not conform thereunto through scruple and tenderness of misguided conscience, but modestly and without scandal perform their devotions in their own way, we shall make it our special care...at this next approaching session to concur with us in the making some such Act for that purpose as may

²⁸ David L. Smith. "Thomas Wriothesley, fourth earl of Southampton." *ONDB*. 3-5.

²⁹ Browning, 366.

enable us to exercise with a more universal satisfaction that power of dispensing...³⁰

Charles's other great religious goal was to take the position of protector of loyal Nonconformists. The claim to dispense religious freedom from the throne would cause numerous disagreements between Charles and his parliaments in which the will of the king faltered because of pressing needs elsewhere, usually financial.

The Convention Parliament restored the bishops to the House of Lords by overturning *An Act for disabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporal jurisdiction or authority*. This repeal placed the Church of England in a position to reclaim what it had lost and to stamp out what it deemed as dangerously schismatic. In a few simple words the church regained much of what it lost “ be it enacted...that the said Act...and every clause, matter and thing therein contained, shall be and is hereby from henceforth repealed, annulled and made void to all intents and purposes whatsoever.”³¹ The end of the Convention Parliament and the First Settlement seemed to end with the new king in a position of power. His ministers weathered personal and public crises—most notably the scandal between the Duke of York and Anne Hyde, which gave Hyde an earldom. Public opinion shifted quickly and by August 1662, a popular London proverb summed up the restored monarchy saying “The bishops get all, the courtiers spend all, the citizens pay for all, the King neglects all, and the Devil take all.”³²

The Cavalier Parliament, named for the viewpoint of the majority of its members, had different goals than their predecessors. The Cavaliers had several common characteristics: a landed gentry social background, service in the King's forces during the Civil War, connections

³⁰ Ibid, 373.

³¹ Ibid, 208.

³² Ronald Hutton. *The Restoration*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

with the royal court, and for some the bitter experience of exile during the Interregnum.³³ Cavalier MPs and Anglican clerics worked in tandem to suppress sedition and rebellious heresies. As a group, they worked to protect what they believed to be their rights and privileges. Cavaliers disliked religious radicals for embodying an ever-present threat of rebellion. In 1662, this body struck a blow at the independent presses used by many dissenting groups by implementing the Licensing Act. An unregulated press was a feature of a republican government and a past many were eager to avoid. The basic premise of the act called for a ban upon "...any heretical, seditious, schismatical or offensive books or pamphlets, wherein any doctrine or opinion shall be asserted or maintained which is contrary to the Christian faith or the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England."³⁴ Robert L'Estrange was the official given the task of discovering and disciplining unlicensed pamphleteers. L'Estrange also wrote pamphlets in support of Parliament's policies, especially those policies concerning Nonconformists. He crossed pens with Richard Baxter with *The Relapsed Apostate* (1661) and *State-Divinity* (1661).³⁵ Even before the Licensing Act existed, John Bunyan's printer, Francis Smith, had his assets seized four times and in both Sherborne and Exeter, pamphlets of Baptists and Presbyterians fed the fires.³⁶ The Licensing Act also applied to newspapers and the *London Gazette* was the only licensed newspaper.

The debate over toleration encompassed many diverse opinions and personalities. A commonality between the debaters was to frame the argument using secular grounds, not spiritual grounds. The spiritual reasons for or against toleration did not vanish, but a more rational language was developing in the realm of natural theology. Natural theologians argued

³³ Smith, 51.

³⁴ Browning, 67.

³⁵ Harold Love. "Sir Robert L'Estrange." *ODNB*. 3.

³⁶ Hutton, 156. *The Restoration*.

that it was a natural right for man to worship God in any manner he saw fit. Additionally, their argument stressed liberty of conscience as a natural right. The Latitudinarians, those within the Church of England who favored a comprehensive church settlement, based much of their arguments for tolerance on natural theology. John Tillotson, a popular London preacher and future archbishop of Canterbury, was one such natural theologian. The idea of liberty of conscience appeared in the *Declaration in favour of indulgence* and the *Declaration of Breda*. Leading the call for complete toleration in religious matters were the Quakers and Baptists. Both of these sects also advocated some form of church and state separation. Eventually, both the Whigs and Nonconformists argued for toleration using a contract theory of government. They argued that government existed to protect property and the greatest property of an individual was the conscience. They also argued that the government had the duty to preserve liberty by protecting all societies and organizations loyal to the state, including religious sects.³⁷ John Locke's 1689 *A Letter Concerning Toleration* entered the seventeenth-century debate too late to have a real impact in the late 1680s. His ideas echoed what he observed during the late seventeenth-century debates and profoundly influenced the next generation of thinkers and rebels.

The Convention Parliament tried to make as many diverse parties as possible satisfied with the religious settlement and pleased few. The debate around the church raged in print beginning before the Restoration and continuing until the Glorious Revolution. The major divisions of opinion developed into three categories: those in favor of full toleration, those opposed to any form of toleration, and those in favor of limited toleration. Those in favor of limited religious toleration believed "...nothing were more to be desired, in order to the lasting

³⁷ Raymond C. Mensing, Jr. *Toleration and Parliament*. (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979). 25-27.

Happiness of this Nation, than a Conformity of all Minds, under the same Doctrine, and Worship in Religion.”³⁸ However, this group of adherents believed that compromise in religion was permissible for the political well being of the nation. Charles and Clarendon believed this.

Clarendon explained:

...I plead for a Toleration of Non-Conformists; thereby I intend no more, than an bare Exemption of Penalties, with a Liberty of Exercising their Religion such competent Restrictions, as shall be judged Necessary, both to secure the Publique from a Riot, and Sedition, and to put a Difference between their Conventions, and the Religious Assemblies of the Church, Established by law.³⁹

Limited toleration allowed Nonconformists to practice their religion under a set of guidelines provided by the government. Under the guise of limited toleration fell those who sought a broader based Church of England. This ideology of comprehension was popular with moderate Presbyterian dissenters, like Richard Baxter. Those who favored toleration made their assertions of religious freedom using many methods, but a common argument was to attack the liturgy using early church history.

Again, if Liturgy, prescribed forms of prayer imposed by Authority, be so essential to the planting and preserving of the Christian Religion, I wonder why Christ (the Wisdom of the Father) and his Apostles (immediately inspired) did not digest, and prescribe, and by his Regal, and their Apostolical authority, impose a Liturgy on all Nations, and Christian Churches, and how they planted the Christian religion without it?⁴⁰

In countering this type of argument, those against toleration stated the unassailable bond between the forces of civil government and ecclesiastical authority. The argument claimed that “take away these two pillars of Magistracy and Ministry, and you destroy both Church and State.”⁴¹

The fear of religious radicals fomenting rebellion seemed proven correct with Venner’s Rebellion in January 1661. Thomas Venner’s Fifth Monarchy men marched on London

³⁸ Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon. *Second Thoughts*. (London, 1660). 2.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁰ Thomas Bolde. *Rhetorick Restrained*. (London, 1660). 6.

⁴¹ Thomas Hall. *The Beauty of Magistracy*. (London, 1660). 3.

proclaiming “King Jesus.” The rebellion passed quickly and with its leaders executed for treason the Fifth Monarchists faded. But association with Venner or other radicals was reason enough for the state to intervene in a person’s life.

The Cavalier Parliament passed in succession a series of acts governing religion. These acts are the Clarendon Code. The four acts of the code were: the Corporation Act, 1661, the Act of Uniformity, 1662, the Five Mile Act, 1665, and the Conventicle Act, 1670. Each of these acts caused a specific group of dissenters to feel the pressure of the law. The Conventicle Act was particularly useful in rounding up dissenters due to the looseness of its interpretation and implementation. The penalties for those convicted were stiff fines, up to ten pounds per person per infraction. Three unrelated persons meeting together in a private home were open to charge as a conventicle. Josias Warne allegedly said in response to the rumored rebellions against the Conventicle Act, “You Cavaleers say this King is the head of the Church...And wee never had good dayes since the King came in...And if I had but sixpence in all the world I would give it to fight for the good Ole Cause.”⁴² The Church of England, as an entity, supported this legislation, but individual priests and parishioners disagreed. The Clarendon Code failed in its attempt to compel uniform religious practice on the people of England and Wales. The punitive legislation could not be uniformly enforced, leading to sporadic persecutions of dissenters. Some of the legislation required juries to hear the trials of the accused Nonconformists, and jurors sometimes refused to punish their neighbors. The laxity or severity of the enforcement also related to external foreign affairs.

An example of the tie between religious policies and external affairs were the Second and Third Dutch wars. One of the after effects of the Second Dutch War was Clarendon’s impeachment. Clarendon worked in and with Parliament arguing for the right of the king to

⁴² Tim Harris. *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). 75.

pardon loyal dissenters and with his dismissal, Charles lost one of his most capable allies. Clarendon became the scapegoat for the disastrous naval decisions made late in the war. The earl was out of contact during the decision-making and in his defense James spoke against his brother. One charge laid upon Clarendon was “That he hath in the hearing of many of his Majesty’s subjects falsely and seditiously said that the king was in his heart a papist, popishly affected, or words to that effect.”⁴³ Clarendon began his second period of exile in November 1667 remaining loyal to the monarchy to his end.

Clarendon’s removal from office ushered in a new era in Charles’s government. Many theories abound about the intentions of the government following Clarendon. One theory asserts that a grand strategy emerges with a range of goals from creating an absolute monarchy to take revenge upon the Dutch to tying English fortunes closer with France. The other theory proposes that the government was under the control of five men: Thomas Clifford, Henry Bennet earl of Arlington, George Villiers duke of Buckingham, Anthony Ashley Cooper later earl of Shaftesbury, and John Maitland duke of Lauderdale—the so-called Cabal.⁴⁴ The five years after Clarendon’s exile saw the lapsing of some of the religious legislation of the Clarendon Code. Arlington and Buckingham were the real power in the Cabal, but the five men never worked as an integrated unit. Charles worked with his ministers and played them off one another at times. He was also increasingly open to feminine persuasion by a series of women who graced the royal bed and held royal favor. One policy Charles pursued out of his own desire was another war with the Dutch.

In seeking war, Charles believed that in order to be successful all of his subjects should support his aims. Charles offered an indulgence for dissenters in March 1672, in order to unite

⁴³ Browning, 193.

⁴⁴ Hutton, 254. *Charles II*

his country before facing a military threat. The king embarked upon an ambitious religious policy that reinforced the traditional right of the monarch over all religious matters. The *Declaration of Indulgence* was issued 15 March 1672. The indulgence declared, "...that the execution of all and all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical, against whatsoever sort of nonconformists or recusants, be immediately suspended."⁴⁵ It also allowed dissenters to worship in approved public sites, but this was not true religious freedom. The indulgence only allowed public worship under certain conditions. The main condition was that "...our express will and pleasure is that none of our subjects do presume to meet in any such place until such place be allowed and the teacher of that congregation be approved by us."⁴⁶ The task now fell to the government to evaluate and license dissenting ministers and locations of worship. Presbyterian Oliver Heywood of Halifax received a license that gave him permission "to be a teacher of the congregation allowed by us a room or rooms in the house of John Butterworth...to teach in any other place licensed and allowed by us according to our said declaration."⁴⁷ The indulgence was careful to exclude Roman Catholics from public worship, but suspended the penal laws pertaining to Catholics. The English feared a monarch sympathetic to Catholicism and rumors of Charles's secret loyalty to Rome floated about. The declaration affirmed the Church of England by naming it "the basis, rule and standard of the general and public worship of God."⁴⁸ Anglican clerics received assurance that their livings and ecclesiastical status were safe and unobtainable by anyone not entirely conforming to the doctrines of the church.

The promises of the indulgence relied heavily upon military success in the war with the Dutch. By 1673, no great victory existed for shoring up support for an unpopular religious

⁴⁵ Browning, 387.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 388.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 389.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 388.

program in parliament. The Dutch merchant fleet was eluding capture and the English fleet suffered from bad timing and worse luck. The English fleet escaped narrowly entrapment in the Thames. The expenses of fighting caused Charles to rescind the *Declaration of Indulgence*. Parliament forced the issue because of their power of the purse. This same parliament saw the passing of a new punitive law against Nonconformists and Catholics. The Test Act required every person in salaried civil or military service to affirm between Easter 1673 and 1 August 1673 the oaths of supremacy and allegiance. These government officials also had to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Church of England. Anyone who failed to meet the measures of the Test Act "...shall be *ipso facto* adjudged incapable and disabled in law to all intents and purposes whatsoever to have, occupy or enjoy the said office or offices, employment or employments."⁴⁹ This act covered everyone from commoners to peers and its most notable victim was the duke of York. James's refusal to partake of the sacrament proved the rumors true. The heir to the throne was a Roman Catholic.

The end of the Second Dutch War in 1674 with little success marked the end of the government of the Cabal. Arlington and Buckingham bickered throughout the war and the division allowed a new man to rise to prominence. That man was Thomas Osborne who quickly obtained the title earl of Danby. Danby's ministry put the weight of the government behind religious persecution. He sought both religious and political support from the Church of England. He courted the cavaliers in parliament by portraying his enemies as either republicans or dissenters. Either would motivate the cavalier revenge mentality. The Cavalier Parliament ended its dominance with the impeachment and imprisonment of Danby for overstepping the power of his position. However, factional politics emerged from the change in power and remain to this day.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 390.

The factions in Parliament defined themselves in religious matters during what historians term the Exclusion Crisis. Initially, the news of James's Catholicism disquieted small numbers of people. Charles was in good health and might outlive his younger brother, who had already sired two Protestant daughters as potential heirs to the throne. The emergence of the Whigs and Tories as political parties marked a change in English political life—the movement toward greater public political awareness. The platform of the Whigs during the crisis was to trump up fears of Catholicism in England. The Tories were not a creation of the court, but a combination of the gentry and clergy who maintained traditional cavalier loyalties to both crown and church. They defended the monarchy, not the monarch and believed they had to protect the church against papists and dissenters. Both Whigs and Tories profited from the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679 that left them both free to print political pamphlets.

The Whig propaganda machine illustrated the fears of another papist plot by reminding the countryside of the evil of the papists. The Popish Plot discovered in the autumn of 1678 was their trump card. The Popish Plot was an imaginary plan that would kill the king, burn London to the ground, and 20,000 papists would cut the throats of 100,000 Protestants.⁵⁰ The plot tied together fears of a catholic king aided by a French army. “The duke of York was to take the crown by gift from the Pope, and lest any opposition should be made the French were ready with an army and fleet.”⁵¹ Papist plotters received the blame for every calamity to befall the English people in the last fifty years. Jesuits began the great fire of London in 1666. Jesuits also provoked the beginnings of the civil wars and engineered the death of Charles I. The Whigs led by the earl of Shaftesbury pursued the Duke of York's exclusion from the succession through constitutional means. Shaftesbury lost much of his political power with the end of the Cabal, but

⁵⁰ Harris, 96.

⁵¹ Browning, 111.

during the crisis Charles named him lord president of a reconstructed privy council in 1679.⁵² Charles II alleged that he fought for exclusion because he was “only angry in revenge, because he was not employed.”⁵³ The propaganda of the Whigs slanted toward support for dissenters. Many early leading Whigs believed personally in toleration. Shaftsbury adhered to the Test Act, but criticized episcopacy. Buckingham’s club at the Salutation Tavern seemed to lean toward a Baptist viewpoint, according to the surviving rolls of members. Titus Oates, the revealer of the Popish Plot, was an apostate Roman Catholic who was the son of a prominent Baptist minister.⁵⁴

The Tories replied to the Whigs questioning the validity of the Popish Plot. Toryism began as a reaction to the Whig introduction of Exclusion in parliament in May 1679. Tories existed in a state of double paradox—passive loyalty to the monarch coupled with trust in the benevolence of the monarch and rampant party activity.⁵⁵ The Tories believed Charles’s stance against Exclusion was valid and some privately believed James more trustworthy than his brother. The clergy allied with the Tories due to the attacks on the Church of England. Whigs often attacked high-ranking Tories in the press for being closet papists. Sir Robert L’Estrange was one victim of such an attack. He wrote that there was hardly anything “That has done us more Mischief then the Accusing this Lord, That Commoner; this Bishop, that Alderman...for Popishly Affected; when the whole world knows’um to be Church-of-England Protestants.”⁵⁶ Tories attacked their opponents for using the bottom of society for support while they sprang from the better sort of people. The most successful charge against the Whigs was that of fomenting rebellion. The Tories rallied around “Forty-one is here again”⁵⁷ during the heyday of

⁵² Tim Harris. “Anthony Ashley Cooper, first earl of Shaftesbury.” *ODNB*. 30.

⁵³ John Spurr. *England in the 1670s*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). 37.

⁵⁴ Harris, 119-120.

⁵⁵ J. R. Jones. “Parties and Parliament” in *The Restored Monarchy*. J.R. Jones, Ed. (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979). 66.

⁵⁶ Harris, 125.

⁵⁷ Jones, 67.

the Whigs. The Whigs controlled the Commons and the Tories the Lords when the Exclusion debate emerged in Parliament.

Neither the Whigs nor Tories desired a Catholic upon the throne, but the Whigs unrestrained attempt to replace James as heir fell on hostile ears. Charles staunchly defended his brother's right to the throne. Clarendon remarked earlier on Charles's faith in his brother. "And the king was as incapable of any infusions which might lessen his confidence in his brother, as any noble and virtuous mind could be."⁵⁸ The Whig dominated Commons drafted the Exclusion Bill in 1680. The bill sought to protect the Protestant religion and remove the threat of a Catholic monarch in one dramatic action. The Whigs believed that if James assumed the crown all protestant religions would face a time of persecution similar to the persecution under Mary I. The bill stated grandly "...that the said James, duke of York, shall be and is by authority of this present Parliament excluded and made forever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the imperial crown of this realm and of the kingdom of Ireland."⁵⁹ Every church of the Church of England would have to read this bill of exclusion twice a year, on Christmas day and Easter Sunday, during the remainder of James's life. The Tory dominated Lords rejected the Exclusion Bill in November 1680, nearly two to one.⁶⁰ Charles acted to prevent another battle over exclusion and exercising his prerogative, he dismissed three of his parliaments the last one in 1681 and never called another into being. Charles offered the following explanation:

But Contrary to Our Offers and Expectation, We saw, that no Expedient would be entertain'd but that of Total Exclusion, which We had so often declar'd, was a Point, that in our own Royal Judgment, so nearly concern'd Us both in Honour, Justice, and Conscience, that We could never consent to it.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Huehns, 426-427.

⁵⁹ Browning, 113.

⁶⁰ Jones, 68.

⁶¹ Charles II. *His Majesties Declaration...to dissolve the last two parliaments.* (London: 1681). 6-7.

The triumph of the Tories led to renewed persecution of Nonconformists due to their close association with the developing high church party. This party in the church followed Sheldon's beliefs about the necessity of the church to support the state and vice versa. In an abrupt change of position, Tories began to dominate the city of London by the calculated use of intimidation and threats of business boycotts. The Tories maintained control of the county militia's and the commissions of the peace. One cause of the Tory success was the propaganda of L'Estrange. The Tory press showed the Whigs as fomenters of rebellion and religious fanaticism. The Whigs had no one to match L'Estrange's clever pen. The commitment to Anglicanism in the Tory press was high church, not allowing those moderates who championed comprehension prominence in ecclesiastical matters. L'Estrange viewed anyone deviating from traditional Anglicanism as a potential threat as a religious fanatic.

The government established with the Restoration began in great harmony and dissolved into bitter factions. They split over religion both inside and outside the Church of England. Religion and politics remained intertwined throughout this period. The men in positions of political power sought to protect that power against the prerogative of the monarch. The constitutional questions that divided the country during the civil wars never reached a true solution under the later Stuart kings. Charles compromised his stated religious intentions to obtain what he sought from Parliament. English society changed fundamentally during the Interregnum and failure to recognize that fact dictated legislation and policies. The Nonconformists, moderates to extremists, had to deal with a hostile political environment that lumped them all together in the press.

Under Siege: The Restoration Church of England

The Church of England faced many challenges during the seventeenth century including a period in which participation in Anglican rites carried criminal charges. The re-establishment of the Church of England pulled together half a century of theological differences and personal quarrels with the hope of forming one unified national church capable of embracing moderate dissenters to strict interpretations of Anglicanism. The men who formed the Restoration-era church varied from moderate believers in episcopacy to men motivated by years of exile and personal loss determined to return to the glory days. The dream of a unified national church would ultimately fail, torn apart by political and ideological differences as well as deep theological differences. The church was not free of heated exchanges between opposing positions.

The accession of James I in 1603 caused the puritan faction within the church to hope for a period of reform. The Puritans offered to James the Millenary Petition. The petition requested that the usages of the cross in baptism cease as a superstition and that private baptism by women halt. It also requested that the wearing of the Cap and Surplice end and that individual's should experience an examination before communion and that this sacrament take place with a sermon. They also wanted to modify the length of the service and to change the music and prayers.¹ The other demands included that only canonical scriptures had status for use in worship and instruction of the young and an end to the use of a ring in marriage ceremonies and the custom of bowing at the name of Jesus. James called a conference to address these and other issues at Hampton Court in 1604. The Puritans had four spokesmen and by royal decree could only make six criticisms. The Puritan critiques under discussion were: the general Absolution, the

¹ Horton Davies. *Worship and Theology in England, Vol. 2 From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1996). 333.

Confirmation of children, private Baptism administered by women, the brevity of the Prayer Book Catechism, the inaccuracy of biblical translation, as well as other critiques of the Prayer Book like the inclusion of the apocryphal materials.² Absolution and Confirmation received clarification by additional wording. Absolution added the words “of pronouncing the remission of sins,” while Confirmation added the line for “catechising or the examination of the children’s faith.”³ The conference also declared that private baptism was the realm of ministers and curates. The Puritan’s hopes fell with the retention and reinforcement of religious affectations they considered unsubstantiated by scripture such as the giving of a ring in marriage and the sealing with the cross at baptism. Here the groundwork developed for the Authorized Version of the Bible, commonly known as the King James Version. Lessons from the Old Testament replaced four lessons from the Apocrypha.⁴ This translation is the most notable achievement of the Hampton Court Conference.

The translation of the biblical text into the English language had a history stretching back to John Wycliffe and William Tyndale. The Thirty-Nine Articles provided for the service to be in a language the congregation understood. The translation proposed originally by Puritan John Reynolds, master of Corpus Christi College Oxford, at Hampton Court got a champion in the newly instituted Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft.⁵ Bancroft realized that he could counter the threat of the Geneva Bible, favored by the Puritans, by working closely with the translation. James believed he received a reprieve from irritating religious quarrels—translations took time and James knew this fact. “A translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal

² Ibid, 334.

³ Ibid, 334.

⁴ Ibid, 334-335.

⁵ Alister McGrath. *In the Beginning*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2001). 172

notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service.”⁶ The translator used the Bishop’s Bible and all other English translations before consulting the work from Geneva. In 1611, the Authorized Version of the Bible reached the printers. The tension between the Authorized Text and the Geneva Bible continued until the Restoration, after which the King James Bible became a symbol of the restored political, religious, and social order.

The reign of Charles I dissolved in large part due to religious questions. The subject of the vitriolic religious debates dealt less with the material contained within the prayer book and more on the outward expression of religious devotions. “What was tragic in this era of religious intolerance was that what was secondary in importance in doctrine or worship assumed major importance as the line between Catholic and Puritan Anglicans hardened.”⁷ Davies uses the terminology Catholic Anglicans to refer to those within the Church of England that followed Laudian tendencies; however, I use the terminology Puritan and Anglican. One of the most prominent leaders in the Anglican camp was Archbishop William Laud of Canterbury. Laud offended the Puritans by insisting upon the raising of the altar to the eastern end of the church. He also reintroduced the custom of kneeling for communion—a puritan complaint since the time of Edward VI. The sacrament was the focus of the worship experience at the expense of the sermon. Laud was a man of great devotion, discipline, learning and sympathy for the poor. He was both a loyal royalist and churchman. His great failing lay in his inability to see the Puritan point of view. Essentially, both the Laudians and the Puritans believed they acted in the best interest of the Church of England.⁸

Laudianism developed from an intellectual movement in the universities into a synthesis of religious and political power that challenged traditional elites according to Hugh Trevor-

⁶ Ibid, 164.

⁷ Davies. *Vol. 2*, 339.

⁸ Ibid, 339.

Roper. Three distinct but over-lapping intellectual movements existed within the university systems. The Erasmian message arrived in England under Henry VIII. This message was rational, tolerant, and apolitical coupled with a strong appeal to primitive Christianity. The teaching from Geneva made headway in times of stress like the 1580s. Calvinism was strongest when the threat of Roman Catholicism was evident. The third strand was ‘historicist’ Protestantism from Germany.⁹ The Synod of Dordt 1619 polarized the parties within the Church of England. Both the Jacobean Calvinists and the English Arminians were dismayed by the harsh response of the Dutch Calvinists to their Arminian brethren. The English Arminians flourished at Cambridge even though they were unacceptable in court circles. Their leaders Bishop Lancelot Andrewes of Winchester and Bishop John Overall of Lichfield were men of uncontroversial natures and personal piety.¹⁰ Things begin to change between 1621-1624 with the acceptance of a new generation of Arminians at court by Charles, Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham. William Laud of Oxford, Matthew Wren and John Cosin of Cambridge cultivated relationships with Buckingham and Prince Charles.¹¹

The first years of the reign of Charles I found the English Arminians fighting for survival and ultimately control of the church. Laud began to exercise influence over the universities with the blessing of the king. The king ordered that the universities search for “all directions, orders, injunctions, admonitions or the like, concerning learning or manners”¹² since the reign of Elizabeth. Laud received all the copies of the information and presented the papers to the king. He wrote that the purpose was, “that both universities may receive the same rule, go on the same

⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper. *Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans*. (London: Seeker and Warburg Ltd., 1987). 42-44.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 60.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 61.

¹² *Ibid*, 67.

way, and so be the happy mother of piety and union through the church.”¹³ Oxford soon surpassed Cambridge as the foremost Arminian university in England—a great change for the former pillar of university Calvinism.

In the political arena, the original rational, liberal and ecumenical Erasmianism of Overall and Andrewes changed into a religious-political form protected by the exercise of the royal prerogative. The Arminian churchmen felt the taint of appeasement as some of their Dutch brethren turned to Rome. The final debates of the House of Commons before its dissolution in 1629 denounced Arminianism and its notorious advocates Laud and Cosin.¹⁴ Francis Rous, a step-brother of Puritan John Pym declared, “An Arminian is the spawn of a Papist...and if you mark it well, you will see an Arminian reaching out his hand to a Papist, a Papist to a Jesuit, and a Jesuit gives one hand to the Pope and the other to the King of Spain.”¹⁵ The Arminians were not Catholics. Many defended protestant claims against catholic propaganda beginning with Bishop Andrewes, stand against Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. Laud made his mark by refuting the work of another Jesuit, Thomas Fisher. The Church of England under Richard Hooker defined itself as in contrast with Calvinism; the Arminian churchmen contrasted the church with Catholicism. The crime of the Arminians involved their critical contrast of the two churches, not a blind disavowal of Catholicism, as was the mode of Geneva.¹⁶ The dismissing of parliament in 1629 gave the Arminian churchmen a position of power and influence that they used quickly to stem the puritan tide.

Archbishop George Abbot of Canterbury was in 1629 a political nonentity. Laud and his advocates had the ear of the king and the next year he received the Chancellorship of Oxford.

¹³ Ibid, 67.

¹⁴ Ibid, 68.

¹⁵ Ibid, 68.

¹⁶ Ibid, 68-69.

This action caused the shift of Arminian power to Oxford from Cambridge. Laud gave the university formal statutes ensuring that power remained in the hands of the college heads that he controlled. The university church and college chapels underwent a transformation with Laudian inspired altars and tables. Laud also made friends at the university by funding the library, founding a chair in Arabic, and building a new quadrangle at St. John's College. He also created the university press.¹⁷ Laud's great triumph was evident by a visit of the king to the university in 1636.

The stability of Laud's position looked unassailable, however, events in Scotland caused far more problems than anyone foresaw. In 1637, Laud with the king's backing attempted to fulfill a wish of James I, the introduction of a new prayer book in Scotland. Laud's new prayer book reordered communion, invoked the Holy Spirit during consecration, changed the calendar of Scottish saints along with the thanksgiving prayers of the saints, and indicated use of the Authorized Version in the lectionary.¹⁸ Laud's Scottish Prayer Book influences the current Scottish liturgy, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, as well as the books of the Protestant Episcopal Church in both the United States and South Africa.¹⁹ The introduction of the new Scottish prayer book proved disastrous and forced Charles to call a parliament. The House of Lords attempted to provide a settlement to prevent a rupture within the church and society. They selected Archbishop John Williams of York, Archbishop James Ussher of Armagh, Bishop Matthew Wren, and Dr Robert Sanderson, later Bishop of Lincoln. These learned men provided a study of the puritan criticism of the prayer book. Most of the criticism dealt with furnishings of the church and the physical posture of the worshipper—few comments dealt with the textual

¹⁷ Ibid, 79.

¹⁸ Davies. *Vol. 2.* 342.

¹⁹ Ibid, 342.

changes of the prayer book.²⁰ Archbishop Ussher wrote for the House of Commons in 1642 a statement concerning his belief about the use of a liturgy.

The Spirit of God is no more restrained by using a set forme of prayers, then by singing set Hymnes or Psalmes in meter, which yet the adversaries of our Common Prayers practice in their assemblies...All the Churches in the Christian World in the first and best times had their set forme of Lyturgy, whereof most are extant in the writings of the Fathers at this day.²¹

The House of Commons passed a series of resolutions in 1641 making clear their distaste with the recent innovations in places of worship. The Puritan response lashed out at Laud and his love of opulence in the worship space.

That the churchwardens of every parish church and chapel...do forthwith remove the communion table from the east end...and that they take away the rails, and levels and chancels...That all crucifixes, scandalous pictures of any one or more persons of the Trinity, and all the images of the Virgin Mary, shall be taken away and abolished; and that all tapers, candlesticks and basins be removed from the communion table: That all corporal bowing at the name of Jesus or towards the east end of the church...or towards the communion table be henceforth foreborne...That the Lord's Day shall be duly observed and sanctified.²²

In December 1641, Charles attempted to stem the tide by issuing a proclamation on religion, but it was already too late.

...His Majesty with his Parliament hath it under consideration, how all scruples may be removed, and being in the meantime sensible that the present division, separation and disorder about worship and service of God...His Majesty doth therefore charge and command, that Divine Service be performed in this his kingdom...as it is appointed by the laws and statutes established in this realm.²³

Charles reminded his subjects that “no parsons, vicars or curates” had the permission or ability to introduce new modes of worship contrary to the laws of the land.

Parliament began to remake the establishment changing fundamental aspects of society.

In February 1642, the Clerical Disabilities Act passed into law. The traditional seating of the

²⁰ Ibid, 343.

²¹ James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh. *The Bishops of Armagh's Direction*. (London: 1660). 2-3.

²² Davies. *Vol 2.*, 343-344.

²³ Gardiner, 232-33.

English bishops and archbishops as peers of the realm ended. The bishop shall not “have any seat or place, suffrage, or voice, or use, or execute any power or authority in the Parliaments of this realm, nor shall be of the Privy Council of His Majesty.”²⁴ The fate of the Laud and his closest supporters was dire. Laud and Wren faced immediate imprisonment. Laud went to his execution in 1645, a week after Parliament declared the usage of the Prayer Book illegal. His final speech was a prayer for “the preservation of this poor Church of England in her truth, peace, and patrimony.”²⁵ Wren spent the interregnum imprisoned in the Tower. Cosin fled serving as a chaplain at the court of Henrietta Maria.²⁶

Parliament wasted no time in attempting to regulate worship in England after attacking the institutions and privileges of the Church of England. They declared, “that they intend a due and necessary reformation of the government and the liturgy of the church” in which they pledged “to take nothing away...but what shall be evil and justly offensive.”²⁷ The House of Commons allied with the Scottish Covenanters swearing to uphold the Solemn League and Covenant on September 25, 1643.²⁸ The second article of the covenant made plain the target of the new reformation.

That we shall in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, prelacy (that is, Church government by Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness...²⁹

Parliament’s direction on religion held strong puritan leanings and a mistrust of the men educated in the Laudian influenced universities during the 1630s.

²⁴ Ibid, 242.

²⁵ Boshier, 1.

²⁶ Davies. *Vol 2.*, 344.

²⁷ Gardiner, 247.

²⁸ Ibid, 267.

²⁹ Ibid, 268-269.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines appointed by Parliament completed the *Directory of Public Worship* in 1645.³⁰ This Assembly of Divines offered the first confessional statement in England modeled on Calvinistic theology. In direct conflict with their Anglican predecessors, the Assembly believed “all those whom God hath predestined unto life—and those only—He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His Word and Spirit.”³¹ The *Directory* had many critics. One of the most vocal was Dr. Henry Hammond who followed one of the two options open to Anglicans. Hammond defended the use of the prayer book and attacked the newly published *Directory of Public Worship*. Hammond’s *The View of the New Directory and a Vindication of the Antient Liturgy of the Church of England* catalogued the faults of the new worship service. His work listed what the service lacked: no liturgy, lack of uniformity in worship, no outward signs of worship, lack of responses for the people, and one long prayer. He also criticized the lack of outward expressions in communion, marriage, and baptism by removing the option for kneeling, giving rings, and signing an infant with the cross. Many of the private services such as thanksgiving after childbirth, a solemn burial service, and communion of the sick were lacking entirely.³² The anonymous *Eikon Basilike* was an unintentional critique of the Westminster Assembly. This work criticized the members of the Assembly, “That these men (I say) should so suddenly change the Liturgy into a Directory, as if the Spirit needed help for invention.”³³

Jeremy Taylor argued for the return of the Anglican liturgy in *An Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgies against the Presence of the Spirit*.³⁴ Taylor disliked extemporaneous

³⁰ Davies. *Vol2.*, 344.

³¹ Henry Bettenson et al., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 3rd Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). 321.

³² Davies. *Vol 2.*, 345-346.

³³ *Ibid*, 347.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 348.

prayer citing a long list of scriptural precedents for written prayers using examples like Moses, David, and the Lord's Prayer begged for by the original apostles. He also questioned the claim that written prayer lacked the Spirit of God. Liturgies were symbols of union within society. Taylor allowed for great liberty in the sermon to adjust the message to the congregation present. Public prayer could "convey an article of faith into the most secret retirement of the Spirit, and to establish it with a firme perswasion, and indeare it to us with the greatest affection."³⁵ He mocked the Puritans at prayer. "They *make Prayers* and they *make them long*, by this meanes they receive double advantages, for they get reputation to their ability and to their piety."³⁶ Taylor ended with a moving plea for the return of the liturgy due to the proliferation of false teachings and improper practices.

He that considers the universal difformity of Publick Worship, and the no means of Union, no Symbol of Publick Communion being publickly consigned; that all Heresies may, with the same authority, be brought into our Prayers, and offered to God in behalf of the people, with the same authority, that any truth may, all the particular manner of our Prayers being left to the choice of all men, of all perswasions, and then observes actually, there are in many places, Hersesie and Blasphemy, and Impertinency, and illiterate Rudenesses, put into the Devotion of the most solemne Dayes...³⁷

Taylor's words seemed prophetic in connection with the proliferation of new doctrines and the arrival of radical new religious sects protected or tolerated by the commonwealth and its army.

The leaders of the Anglican Church and its traditional sources of revenue were fond memories by the emergence of the Barebones Parliament in 1653. The survival of the Anglican Church fell to the parish clergy. The lands that the church controlled and derived income from went on the block in October 1646 to support the fledgling republic and invoking a formal

³⁵ Ibid, 349.

³⁶ Ibid, 350.

³⁷ Ibid, 350.

abolition of episcopacy.³⁸ The other option for those remaining in England was evasion of the law—meeting in secret and using the liturgy for worship. Even though proscribed by law, some English citizens wanted the important events of life documented in a familiar manner.

John Evelyn wrote on November 7, 1653, “My Wife was Church’d by Mr. Owen, whom I always made use of on these occasions, because the Parish Minister durst not (or perhaps would not) have officiated according to the form and usage of the Church of England, to which I allways adhered.”³⁹ This was after the birth of his second son. He used the services of Mr. Owen again after the birth of his third son holding a christening service complete with godparents. Oliver Cromwell and his associates worked on a religious compromise allowing all worthy men to teach under sanction by the state. The state run church was a mix of puritan and independent congregational ideas; the new state church had no place for Anglicans, who would not conform to the new regime. According to the new constitution, ministers had to agree to teach in accordance with Reformed Christianity. Evelyn recorded, “This day there also came forth the Protectors Edict or Proclamation, prohibiting all ministers of the Church of England from Preaching.”⁴⁰ At Christmas 1657, Evelyn and his wife attended holy services in London where the service ended abruptly during communion with the arrival of armed soldiers. “All the Communicants and Assembly surpriz’d and kept Prisoners by them, some in the house, others carried away.”⁴¹ Each worshipper then underwent questioning for breaking the law.

When I came before them they tooke my name & aboad, examined me, why contrarie to an Ordinance made that none should no longer observe the superstitious time of the Nativity (so esteem’d by them) I durst offend, & particularly be at Common prayers, which they told was but the Masse in

³⁸ John Spurr. *The Restoration of the Church of England, 1646-1689*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

3.

³⁹ Evelyn, 86.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 99. November 27, 1655

⁴¹ Ibid, 105.

English, ...with much threatening, & finding no colour to detain me longer, with much pitty of my Ignorance, they dismissed me:⁴²

The interregnum left a legacy of political and religious questioned that needed solving with the return of the monarchy and episcopacy in 1660. Radical religious groups like the Quakers, Ranters, and even the Baptists multiplied in the semi-tolerant society of the protectorate. These dissenters opposed any move to restore a national church. Puritans, most of them in the Presbyterian fold, wanted a truly reformed comprehensive church settlement-- something they desired since the reign of James I. The return of an episcopally governed Church of England was a triumph for the Anglicans, who lost everything during the Cromwellian regime. The church settlements faced challenges in doctrine, in practice, and in dominant figures that created factions inside and outside of the Church of England. John Gauden, a moderate Anglican divine, preached before Monck and the Mayor of London arguing for a reduced episcopacy like that advocated by Ussher in the 1640s. In 1660, he preached that church leadership needed “the fatherly gravity, prudence and eminence of godly and reverend bishops; by the brotherly assistance, and son like subordination of sober and orderly presbyters...and humble and diligent deacons.”⁴³ Both Anglicans and Presbyterians saw radical dissenters as a source of instability and republican feeling.

Charles offered his subjects a “liberty to tender consciences” from Breda. The clergy had the unenviable task of defining the scope of that liberty. In June 1660, Charles issued a proclamation forbidding the ejection of any minister until Parliament resolved the issue. William Prynne orchestrated the Act for Settling Ministers in September 1660. Prynne argued that any man with ordination by any ecclesiastic person from January 1, 1642 was the lawful minister

⁴² Ibid, 105.

⁴³ Spurr, *Church*. 33.

unless a previous minister lived.⁴⁴ The act confirmed all ministers except those who denied infant baptism (like Baptists and Quakers), petitioned for regicide, or who possessed a living in which the previous minister still lived. Over 700 parishes experienced a change in ministers, 300 due to the survival of the original ministers. Richard Baxter was one example of a man who lost his living at Kidderminster due to the survival of his predecessor.⁴⁵

Charles followed his promise at Breda with the Worcester House Declaration, 1660. This declaration reconfirmed Charles's ideas of tolerance and moderate episcopacy. Regarding church governance "no bishop shall ordain, or exercise any part of jurisdiction which appertains to the Censures of the Church, without the advice and assistance of the presbyters."⁴⁶ However, Charles praised the existing bishops as "men of great and exemplary piety in their lives, which they have manifested in their notorious and unexampled suffering during these late distempers."⁴⁷ Perhaps the most significant matter addressed lay in the promise to appoint a commission to review the *Book of Common Prayer*.

...though we do esteem the liturgy of the church of England, contained in the Book of Common Prayer and by law established to be the best we have seen, yet, since we find some exceptions made against several things therein, we will appoint an equal number of learned divines of both persuasions to review the same and to make such alterations as shall be thought most necessary.⁴⁸

In September, Charles appointed a number of moderate bishops who agreed with the principles of the Declaration. John Gauden was one of the men elevated to the episcopacy, as Bishop of Exeter.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ N. H. Keeble. *The Restoration*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002). 80.

⁴⁵ Spurr, *Church*. 34.

⁴⁶ Browning, 367.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 367.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 369.

⁴⁹ Spurr, *Church*. 35. Davies. *Vol 2*, 368.

The Savoy Conference had the duty of revising the prayer book and liturgy. Two distinct groups emerged within the debates of the conference. The Presbyterians, who hoped for a broad church settlement and the Anglicans, who varied in the interpretations of how strictly the liturgy should be enforced. Outside the conference, the Cavalier Parliament wanted a return to the 1604 *Book of Common Prayer*, convinced that the monarchy, the church, and the liturgy supported one another. The Commons decided on June 25, 1661 “to view the several laws for confirming the Liturgy of the Church of England ...and to bring in a compendious Bill to supply any defect in the former laws, and to provide for an effectual conformity to the Liturgy of the Church for the time to come.”⁵⁰ This action was taken with the knowledge that the Savoy Conference was working liturgical revisions. The cavaliers and some of the restored bishops and clergy viewed the prayer book as persecuted and paid for with the martyrdoms of Charles I and William Laud.⁵¹

The Savoy Conference received royal authorization on March 25, 1661 and met beginning April 15 continuing until July 21 of the same year.⁵² The conference was as much a political tool as a liturgical tool. The men of the Great Tew Circle arrived in positions of power politically and spiritually and affected the outcome of the restoration settlements. Gilbert Sheldon, Bishop of London and Chancellor Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, met at Lord Falkland’s Great Tew Estate forming a connection that survived civil war, exile, and public office. The bishop’s party had Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York as its nominal leader. The actual mantle of leadership fell to Sheldon. His fellow workers were Robert Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln, John Gauden, Bishop of Exeter, George Morley, Bishop of Worcester, and John Cosin, Bishop of Durham. The Presbyterian leader was Edward Reynolds, newly appointed

⁵⁰ Boshier, 223.

⁵¹ Davies, *Vol. 2*, 363-364.

⁵² *Ibid*, 368.

Bishop of Norwich. He selected two London ministers Edward Calamy and Mathew Newcomen, Professor John Wallis of Oxford, and the eminent Richard Baxter, who had declined a bishopric.⁵³

Liturgists Wren and Cosin agreed that the prayer book could be improved and Cosin wished to adapt it along the lines of the Scottish prayer book of 1637. Even Sheldon and Sanderson modified the prayer book for use during the interregnum. Baxter wanted a liturgy acceptable to both Presbyterians and Anglicans by adapting the wording and making certain ceremonies and behaviors optional. Sheldon, however, opened the Savoy Conference saying the bishops were happy with the prayer book as it was. The Presbyterians wanted the revisions; therefore, they had the responsibility to present both their exceptions and alternatives. The Presbyterians produced a strong case of exceptions—eighteen general in character and seventy-eight particular.⁵⁴

Baxter produced his own set of exceptions, which outlined his moderate viewpoint echoing complaints from the past years of church disagreements. He differed from some of his other brethren by not standing completely against the prayer book.

From the beginning I told them I was not of their mind, who charged the Common Prayer with false doctrine, or idolatry, or false worship in the matter of substance, nor that I took it to be a worship which a Christian might not lawfully join in, when he had not liberty and ability for better; and that I always took the faults of the Common Prayer to be, chiefly, DISORDER and DEFECTIVENESS; and so, that it was a TRUE WORSHIP THOUGH IMPERFECT.⁵⁵

His main objections lay in the sequences of the prayer book and the wording of many of the prayers, especially the repetition of petitions already stated elsewhere. He also disagreed with the practice that all persons regardless of worthiness should partake in communion three times a

⁵³ Ibid, 368.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 369.

⁵⁵ A. Harold Wood. *Church Unity without Uniformity*. (London: The Epworth Press, 1963). 185.

year. He believed that ministers should not baptize the children of the ungodly if it went against the conscience of the minister. Baxter also presented an alternative liturgy written in a two-week span.

The main basis of the Presbyterian reforms was Ussher's model of limited episcopacy.

Their basic requests can be simplified into four statements:

1. Freedom to use an alternative liturgy.
2. The right of pastors to exercise discipline in their own churches.
3. Freedom of ministers from subscribing to use the whole of the Prayer Book and particular ceremonies to which some objected.
4. Freedom from swearing canonical obedience to diocesan bishops.⁵⁶

The bishops only answered seventeen of the ninety-six exceptions—three in general and fourteen of a particular nature. The most important was the requirement of the use of the Authorized Version for all scriptural readings.⁵⁷ The bishops believed that upholding the prayer book offered the best route for peace and stability within the church. They believed that no one could write public prayers to satisfy everyone, but the liturgy used scripture and had the weight of tradition and long use. The bishops considered “devotion apt to freeze or sleep, or flat in a long continued prayer” and that short prayers were preferable as worshippers were “therein often called upon and awakened by frequent ‘Amens’ and responses.”⁵⁸ Extemporaneous prayer was a tool of the mischievous and radical sectaries and had no place in proper worship. The Savoy Conference was a complete failure in reaching any type of comprehensive church settlement. Despite the failure of the divines within the conference to come to any agreement, the political atmosphere made any Puritan or overtly Laudian Prayer Book doubtful. The Laudians would find that working within the government was the easiest way to implement their desires for the church. The Cavalier Parliament consisted of many individuals who lost lands and faced

⁵⁶ Ibid, 193.

⁵⁷ Davies. *Vol. 2*, 370.

⁵⁸ Wood, 196.

persecution under the Cromwellian regime. These men were not tolerant of even the most moderate Presbyterians. This parliament acted in hopes of passing a new Act of Uniformity and the 1604 Prayer Book while the Savoy Conference was still in session.⁵⁹ The Convocation of Canterbury overlapped with the meetings at Savoy, but Charles pressed for a hurried settlement of the church. He authorized the convocation to work on the settlement of the Church within the rubric of already established ceremonies and the Thirty Nine Articles.⁶⁰ The Savoy Conference ended midsummer 1661 with little success. Both Parliament and the Convocation reconvened in November 1661. The bishops were to sit in the House of Lords and Sheldon wrote to Cosin reminding him of their duty, "...for the King expects it from all of our order, and when his great business for his revenue and that of the Church is over, any may have liberty to return to his diocese."⁶¹ Twenty-three of the twenty-seven bishops took their seats when Parliament reconvened to vote on the settlement of the church.⁶²

The Prayer Book of 1662 was conservative and completed in record time. The Convocation of Canterbury met from May 8 to July 31, 1661, reconvened November 21 to December 18, 1661, and sent the amended prayer book to the king on December 20.⁶³ Bishop Sanderson wrote the preface of the new *Book of Common Prayer*. He listed three reasons for the alterations: clearer direction for ministers of the divine service, removal of archaic terminology for current use, and inserting scripture of the Authorized Version.⁶⁴ The few additions were necessities. They inserted an Office for Adult Baptism useful to combat Baptist practices as well as for the use on natives converted on plantations. The prayers added included one for burial at

⁵⁹ Davies. *Vol 2*, 372.

⁶⁰ Boshier, 230.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 237.

⁶² *Ibid*, 237.

⁶³ Davies. *Vol 2*, 379.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 378.

sea. Prayers were added for the death of Charles I commemorated on January 29 and the restoration and birth date of Charles II celebrated on May 29. The major changes clarified ordination to the priesthood. The ordination formula changed for a priest from “receive the holy ghost” to “Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and work of a Priest, in the Church of God, now committed by the imposition of our hands.”⁶⁵ Bishop ordained priests and the archbishop ordained bishops both using the formula “by the imposition of our hands.” The Prayer Book received the final royal approval on May 19, 1662 and was to come into use by St Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1662 as a provision of the Act of Uniformity.⁶⁶

The political atmosphere changed in 1660 with the November vote for the Cavalier Parliament. The Presbyterian faction in the new parliament, which began May 8, 1661, fell to fifty members.⁶⁷ Those with Puritan tendencies were discredited further by the January 1661 uprising of Fifth Monarchists. Baptists and Quakers tried to distance themselves from the small rebellion of fifty in London, but a royal proclamation on January 10 forbade any meetings of Quakers, Baptists, or Fifth Monarchists.⁶⁸ Secretary of State Sir Edward Nicholas and others believed that “under the specious pretense of Religion and piety” sectaries “hid their horrid designs.”⁶⁹ Religious dissent no matter what form was a cloak for political rebellion and seditious activities. This was a dominant attitude in the members of the Cavalier Parliament strengthened by the coronation of Charles II in full episcopal regalia and ceremony the preceding April. The Act of Uniformity drew from the existing Elizabethan Act of Uniformity passed in 1559.⁷⁰ Religious conformity provided political peace and stability in the minds of many by

⁶⁵ Ibid, 382.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 382.

⁶⁷ Keeble, 115.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 116.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 116.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 117.

reinforcing the order of society. Richard Allestree preached a sermon on the second anniversary of the restoration,

when men once depart from Uniformity...why may not divisions be as infinite as mens phansies?...It is *one God, one Faith, one Worship* makes *hearts one*. Hands lifted up together in the Temple they will joyn and clasp: and so *Religion* does fulfill its name as a *religando*, binds Prince and subjects all together; and they who thus do seek the *Lord their God*, will also seek *David their King*.⁷¹

The 1662 Act of Uniformity was far stricter than its Elizabethan predecessor. The opening paragraphs of the act reminded the nation “that nothing conduceth more to the settling of the peace of this nation...than an universal agreement in worship of Almighty God.”⁷²

The Act of Uniformity targeted and ejected men who failed to conform, unlike the Act for Settling Ministers, which ejected only if the incumbent still lived. The act required those receiving a clerical living to consent to everything in the *Book of Common Prayer*, to follow the Thirty Nine Articles, to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, and to receive ordination from a bishop. Each minister was to declare publicly:

I, A.B., do declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entituled, *The Book of Common Prayer and administration of the sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the church according to the use of the Church of England, together with the psalter or psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in churches, and the form or manner of making, ordaining and consecrating bishops, priests and deacons*.⁷³

The act reinforced the authority of the civil magistrates and denounced those who “take arms against the king...or against those that are commissioned by him.”⁷⁴ In particular, Article 37 of the Thirty Nine Articles reinforced the power of the king over matters civil and ecclesiastical.

⁷¹ Ibid, 118.

⁷² Browning, 378.

⁷³ Browning, 378.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 379.

The provisions went into effect August 24, 1662 and ejected 936 ministers.⁷⁵ Most of the ejected ministers hoped for a church along the model of the Worcester House Declaration. They disliked the inflexibility of the language and the requirements in the communion service. Some refused re-ordination at the hands of a bishop because that action seemingly invalidated an earlier ordination by presbyters. Some just lacked the time to review the new prayer book before the required date like Richard Kidder.

I had a good title to my living, I never took the Covenant or Engagement; I was entirely satisfied with episcopacy, and with a liturgy; I had no hand in the late confusions and was so far from it that I lamented them; I had orders from a bishop when it was dangerous to receive them that way. The truth is I had not due time given to me to consider, and was deprived of my living for not subscribing to a book that was not (as it ought to have been) laid before me.⁷⁶

Kidder later conformed following the lead of the majority of parish clergy and accepted the rule of uniformity. The Act of Uniformity tarred moderate nonconformists and radical sectaries with the same brush, as a danger to order and stability. Sheldon believed that the only solution to the religious question was submission to the law.

‘Tis only a resolute execution of the law that must cure this disease, all other remedies serve and will increase it; and it’s necessary that they who will be governed as men by reason and persuasions should be governed as beasts by power and force, all other courses will be ineffectual, ever have been so, ever will be so.⁷⁷

There was no such thing as a loyal or moderate dissenter. The moderation and toleration espoused by Sheldon when a young man altered in the face of political and spiritual necessity. Sheldon believed firmly that the church’s survival and the survival of the monarchy depended upon conformity in law and in religious practice. He began the official process of linking membership in the Church of England with full rights of an Englishman in the state.

⁷⁵ Spurr, *Church*. 43.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 44.

⁷⁷ Keeble, 120.

The state of the Church of England at the Restoration was poor. Churches had lost their communion vessels and sources of income with the abolition of tithes during the interregnum. Church buildings served as nonconformist's meeting houses, storehouses, and stables. Churches destroyed in the fighting still lay in ruins for the most part. Average parishioners often attended both conventicle and Anglican services regularly. The Compton Census of 1671-72 discovered seventy percent of parishes identified at least one person who failed to conform and sixty-nine parishes reported at least one conventicle.⁷⁸ The Compton Census focused on Wiltshire, but a similar makeup for other shires is a logical assumption. Nonconformists appeared as the greatest threat to the re-establishment of the Church of England. Debates about toleration were the realm of the clerics and the educated.

The issue of toleration sprang for some from the debate over comprehension within the church. Comprehension failed, but the idea of a national church that embraced all godly ministers held great appeal for some. The Anglican establishment was vehemently against any form of toleration. The episcopacy and the monarchy worked together—neither could stand without the other's support. Sheldon was the leader of the church even though just a bishop; he had the ear of the king and connections in parliament. The anonymous G. S. (attributed to Sheldon among others) argued the responsibility of Christian people to their prince.

Adde to this, that we are to pray for Kings, to obey and honour the King, and that by divine command, and if so, then no man can blame me, if I enquire into the case, if or no I have by Divine Right, a King to pray for, to honour, and to obey, and whether or no active, or barely passive obedience, be due from, and required of me as a Christian, to those, who in exclusion of him, have exercised the Power of the Nation in which I have lived these severall years.⁷⁹

Obedience to the church equaled obedience to the state. Thomas Hall wrote, "There should therefore be a sweet Harmony and mutual assistance between Magistrates and Ministers, since

⁷⁸ Donald A. Spaeth. *The Church in an Age of Danger*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 157.

⁷⁹ G. S. *Monarchy Triumphant*. (London: 1660). 8.

the one helps uphold the other, and they are ordained by God for the mutual aid of each other.”⁸⁰

The duty of a member of society was obedience and such obedience ensured stability. “Civil subjection to Superior may well stand with spiritual liberty; for spiritual privileges do not abrogate but confirm our obedience to them.”⁸¹

The other major tactic used in confronting nonconformists arguing for toleration was the idea that English separatists lacked just cause for dissent. Tied to this idea was that ministers who first received orders from the Church of England lacked the ability to preach against the church. “And if so, I pray inform me whether a Bishop or Minister fallen from the Church of England, may not also take upon him to Preach against the Church of England, by pretense of the Orders received from her Hands?”⁸² Ward’s queries implied negative responses. The Anglican clergy feared nonconformity because they remembered the rule of the Lord Protector and the radicals who supported him. Rule by fanatics was dangerous—religious fanatics even more so. “Whether Africa produces more variety of Monsters, than Britain does Fanaticks, where every Man may Read, and Interpret the Scriptures according to his own Judgment of Discretion?”⁸³ Even in times of indulgence, the church still preached that dissenters were without just cause of separation. “Again, We the Church of England have not given them the like, or any just cause of separating, as the Church of Rome gave them and us.”⁸⁴ Repeatedly the Anglicans equated dissent as a factor for disrupting the peace.

If it be not Ambition, but Conscience; Let it so appear by your charity to
Dissenters, by a serious and impartial Enquiry into the Grounds upon which you
separate from us, without prejudice and passion; and do not so far Idolize a Sect

⁸⁰ Hall, 3.

⁸¹ Ibid, 21.

⁸² Thomas Ward. *Some Queries to the Protestants concerning the English Reformation*. (London: 1687). 2.

⁸³ Ibid, 6.

⁸⁴ Francis Fullwood. *Toleration not to be Abused by the Independents*. (London: 1672). 14.

or an Opinion, as to prefer it before the Peace and Settlement of a Church, and Nation.⁸⁵

The seventeenth century saw the arrival of natural theology and philosophy and these ideas entered into the debate over toleration. Natural theology was the realm of the Latitudinarians, the moderates within the Church of England. Their message was one of comprehension, the minimal creed, and the reasonableness of Christianity to a generation taxed by religious disharmony and the political discord such quarrels caused.⁸⁶ John Tillotson, future archbishop of Canterbury and popular London preacher illustrated this theme in a sermon before the king in 1680.

Religion is a thing to which men are not only formed by education and custom...It is that to which we are all carried by a natural inclination: which is the true Reason why some Religion or other hath so universally prevailed in all Ages and places of the world...Take away this, and all Obligations of Conscience cease: and where there is no obligation of Conscience, all security of Truth and Justice and mutual confidence among men is at an end.⁸⁷

The arguments for toleration focused upon English history and the classic liberties enjoyed by the English people. Sir Charles Wolsey, an ex-Cromwellian, argued that it was impossible to make some one believe and that persecution created future resentment.⁸⁸ “Bede tells us, That here in England, so soon as King Ethelbert was converted by Austin the monk, he made a Law, That none should be compelled to Religion; having understood that Christ’s Service ought to be voluntary, and not compelled.”⁸⁹ Attacking the powers of the state, proponents of toleration argued against the connection between civil and ecclesiastic powers. “That no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel men, to any part of the Doctrine, Worship,

⁸⁵ Ibid, 31.

⁸⁶ W. M. Spellman. *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660-1700*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993). 60.

⁸⁷ John Tillotson. *The Protestant Religion Vindicated*. (Brabazon Aylmer:London,1680). 7-8.

⁸⁸ John Spurr. *England in the 1670s*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2000). 236.

⁸⁹ Sir Charles Wolsey. *Liberty of Conscience*. (London: 1668). 34.

or Discipline of the Gospel.”⁹⁰ “Nature abhors compulsion in Religious things, as a spiritual rape upon the conscience.”⁹¹ The definition of the conscience was also a key component of the argument. “Conscience is an ability in the understanding of man, by a reflect[ive] act to judge of himself in all he does, as to his acceptance, or rejection with God.”⁹² Some argued before both houses of parliament for liberty of conscience as promised in the Declaration of Breda.

“Because, No man can perswade the conscience of another, either what God is, or how he should be worshipped, but by the Spirit, which God hath given to instruct man in the wayes of Truth.”⁹³

Tied to this line of argument was the scriptural principle of not leading others into sin.

“Because, Imposition upon mens Consciences necessitates them to sin, in yielding a conformity contrary to their own faith: for whatsoever is not of a mans own faith, is sin.”⁹⁴

Regardless of these arguments, Restoration authorities remained firmly in the anti-dissent camp. The passage of the 1672 indulgence represented a minor set back trumped with a strong move against nonconformists in positions of power with the Test Act in 1673. The church of Sheldon stayed in power and control until the aftereffects of the Glorious Revolution. The Church of England during the Restoration attempted to illustrate Hooker’s famous maxim: “there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is a member of the commonwealth, nor a member of the commonwealth which is not also a member of the Church of England.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Ibid, 26.

⁹¹ Ibid, 27.

⁹² Ibid, 2.

⁹³ John Crook. *Liberty of Conscience Asserted*. (London: 1661). 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁹⁵ Spurr, 109-110.

Under a Cloud: The Experience of Persecution

The end of the Cromwellian regime coupled with the return of the Royalist exiles marked a change for those holding religious ideas other than the principle of a state church. A plethora of dissenting groups emerged under the generally tolerant atmosphere of the commonwealth and protectorate. The Quakers developed in this period and the Particular Baptists wrote their first doctrinal statement. These two groups among others supported Cromwell and fought in the New Model Army where some rose into the ranks of officers. In 1650, parliament abolished the Elizabethan statutes concerning matters of faith as “divers religious and peaceable people, well-affected to the prosperity of the Commonwealth, have not only been molested and imprisoned, but also brought into danger of abjuring their country.”¹ The act required all able-bodied persons to attend some sort of public religious service every week whether at a state preferred Presbyterian service or a meeting of the dissenting variety. The law forbade Roman Catholic worship as well as Anglican services.

The dissenting sects varied greatly and enjoyed a long history in England. The first dissenters emerged due to disagreements with the Elizabethan mantra of *via media*. The middle way allowed unorthodox beliefs to remain under the majority religion without serious persecution. The ascendancy of the Stuarts allowed Scottish Presbyterianism the opportunity to merge with the native Calvinistic-Puritan elements present in the south. After the abolition of episcopacy, the Presbyterians developed the *Directory of Public Worship*, but failed to oust the prayer book and ignored the attraction of the sectaries for common people. The definition of Independent varied enough to allow Anabaptists or Baptists, Separatists, Congregationalists, Antinomians, and Seekers to be lumped together en masse. The terminology created confusion at the time as an unnamed writer penned, “all sectaries are Independents...all Independents be

¹ Gardiner, 391.

not properly sectaries.”² A strain of apocalyptic imagery frequented the writing of these diverse groups. Millennialism led to the formation of the Fifth Monarchy men, who expected great change politically and socially and who prepared for a reordered society and church. Of these groups, the Baptists had the best-defined doctrine. They believed in the principle of believer’s baptism upon profession of faith, not infant baptism like both the Anglicans and Presbyterians. The Baptists had two major divisions over the issue of atonement. General Baptists believed in a general atonement; Christ died for all. Particular Baptists followed Calvin and believed Christ died for the elect. The two surviving sects from this period are the Quakers and Baptists. The other sects faded in the period following the Restoration into partial conformity or complete irreligion.

Promises of toleration abounded in the weeks leading up to the triumphant return of Charles II. The king offered “liberty to tender consciences” in April 1660 in the Declaration of Breda. The plea for religious toleration existed in print from the turn of the seventeenth century. “The plea for liberty of conscience is no new doctrine; as old certainly as the blessed word of God itself, which gives us this immovable foundation thereof: That every man should be fully persuaded of the truth of that way wherein he serves the Lord.”³ Tied closely to the reasons for toleration were biblical mandates against the persecution of individuals for religious practices. “Because Christ hath not commanded any king, bishop, or minister to persecute the people for different judgment in matters of religion.”⁴ The restoration of the Church of England and the election of the Cavalier Parliament coupled with the failure to uphold the promises of the Worcester House Declaration insured little toleration of dissenting religious groups. The

² Michael R. Watts. *The Dissenters, Vol. 1*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). 98.

³ Edward Underhill. *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution 1614-1661*. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1966). 11. (Reprint of 1846 edition). *Religions Peace: or Liberty of Conscience*. (London, 1646).

⁴ *Ibid*, 27.

declaration promised ministers the ability to pick what they wanted to use from the Common Prayer and offered ordination at the hand of a bishop aided by presbyters. The restored churchmen and the cavaliers in parliament believed the sentiment expressed by an anonymous rhyme of 1641, “When women preach and cobblers pray, the fiends in hell make holiday.”⁵ The fear of revolt and sedition influenced the members of the Cavalier Parliament. The example of Thomas Venner’s Fifth Monarchist’s uprising in January 1661 proved for many that radical dissenters were dangerous at best and traitorous at worst. Venner’s revolt “for King Jesus” was a failure, but a grand piece of propaganda for those opposed to toleration. Pepys recorded, “A thing that was never heard of, that so few men should dare and do such mischief. Their word was ‘King Jesus, and the heads upon the gates.’”⁶ Even Evelyn wrote of the uprising, “This night was a bloody Insurrection of some fift-monarchy Enthusiasts...the wretchedly abused people could say nothing to extenuate their madnesse, & unwarrantable zeale.”⁷ The cavaliers also desired the restoration of traditional society with the established church and the gentry supporting each other’s elevated place in the social hierarchy. These men had lost their traditional standings due to republican principles and were eager to correct that wrong.

The acts governing religious expression in the 1660s are known collectively as the Clarendon Code, even though the chancellor believed in limited toleration. Clarendon believed that with the government in position as overseer a strictly regulated form of toleration was possible. The code consisted of four acts of parliament: the Corporation Act, 1661, Act of Uniformity, 1662, the Five Mile Act, 1665, and the Conventicle Act, 1670.

The Corporation Act attempted to restore order to the process of electing magistrates by stating the oaths required as well as the qualifications needed for service. The first part of the

⁵ Watts, 83.

⁶ Pepys, *Vol 2*. 10.

⁷ Evelyn, 117.

oath declared the illegality of taking up arms against the king. The second oath declared that “there lies no obligation upon me or any other person from the oath commonly called the Solemn League and Covenant, and that the same was in itself an unlawful oath, and imposed upon the subjects of this realm against the known laws and liberties of the kingdom.”⁸ Those refusing the required oaths lost their offices. The final requirement in addition to taking the oaths was “...no person or persons shall hereafter be placed, elected or chosen in or to any of the offices or places aforesaid that shall not have within one year next before such election or choice taken the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper according to the rites of the Church of England.”⁹ Commissioners appointed under the act were capable of removing from office any who failed to follow its provisions.

Partial conformists and moderate dissenters like Richard Baxter felt the pressure of the government with the passage of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. This act drew from the 1559 Elizabethan Act of Uniformity. The act moved quickly through parliament aided by the bishops in the House of Lords led by Gilbert Sheldon, then Bishop of London. Charles and his advisors were unable to halt the legislation, but the king hoped the use of his prerogative would moderate its severity. Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury recalled that “there was a great debate in council whether the act should be immediately executed or respited until next convention of Parliament...But it was carried against all moderate methods, upon a supposition that most would conform.”¹⁰ The act “asserted that it was ‘the great and scandalous neglect of ministers’ of its prescribed liturgy and the determination of many ‘willfully and schismatically’ to refuse to

⁸ Browning, 376.

⁹ Ibid, 376.

¹⁰ Gilbert Burnet. *A History of His Own Times*. Abridged by Rev. Thomas Stackhouse. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1906). 67.

attend their parish churches, which had created the ‘Factions and Schisms.’”¹¹ The blame for the “late troubles” fell strongly on those who failed to conform. The concessions of the Worcester House Declaration meant little to the cavaliers in parliament and the bishops newly restored to the House of Lords. The act forced uniformity in religious services and episcopal ordination. The language of the act called for “unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the book entitled, *The Book of Common Prayer*.”¹² The act also applied to the universities, cathedral schools, hospitals, deans, canons, masters, chaplains, tutors as well as vicars, curates, lecturers, and parsons. The law required clerics to swear:

I, A. B. do declare that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take arms against the king, and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person or against those commissioned by him, and that I will conform to the liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by law established; and I do declare that I do hold their lies no obligation upon me or on any other person from the oath commonly called the Solemn League and Covenant to endeavour any change or alteration of government either in Church or State...¹³

The act went into effect on Saint Bartholomew’s Day 1662. Evelyn recorded the events of this day in his diary along with the message preached concerning one’s duty to the lawful magistrates and king. “There were strong Guards in the Citty this day, apprehending some Tumult, many of the Presbyterian Ministers, not conforming.”¹⁴ Fellow diarist Pepys went to St Dunstan’s to hear the farewell sermon of Presbyterian Dr William Bates. “At 8 a-clock I went and crowded in the back door among others, and the church being half-full before any doors were open publicly.”¹⁵ Pepys returned for the afternoon service and Bates shared his reasons for not conforming to those gathered.

¹¹ Keeble, 117.

¹² Browning, 378.

¹³ Ibid, 379-80.

¹⁴ Evelyn, 130.

¹⁵ Pepys, *Vol 3*. 167.

Yet this I shall say, that it is not my opinion, faction, or humour that keeps me from complying with what is required of us, but something which after much prayer, discourse and study yet remains unsatisfied and commands me herein. Wherefore, if it is my unhappiness not to receive such an illumination as should direct me otherwise, I know no reason why men should not pardon me for it in this world, and am confident that God will pardon me for it in the next.¹⁶

Vicar John Herring concluded with “God, he bids us to preach, and men bid us not to preach; and if we do, we are to be imprisoned and further punished: all that I can say to it is that I beg your prayers and the prayers of good Christians for us.”¹⁷ The majority of parish ministers and clergy conformed in some manner to the prayer book. The act caused 936 ministers to lose their livings on St Bartholomew’s Day 1662.¹⁸ This act flew contrary to the promises made at Breda and Charles had a ready reply.

...and being so zealous as we are (and by the grace of God shall ever be) for the maintenance of the true Protestant religion, finding it so shaken (not to say overthrown) as we did, we should give its establishment the precedency before matters of indulgence to dissenters from it...we are glad to lay hold on this occasion to renew unto all our subjects concerned in those promises of indulgence by a true tenderness of conscience this assurance...what concerns the penalties upon those who (living peaceable) do not conform thereunto through scruple and tenderness of misguided conscience, but modestly without scandal perform their devotions in their own way, we shall make it our special care...¹⁹

Charles acted upon this promise ten years later with the Declaration of Indulgence.

The Five Mile Act, 1665 went after ministers who refused to give unfeigned consent to the *Book of Common Prayer* and continued to live or preach within their region without official sanction. The government believed that dissenting ministers were taking the opportunity “to distil the poisonous principles of schism and rebellion in the hearts of his Majesty’s subjects, to the great danger of the Church and kingdom.”²⁰ The act forbade any dissenting minister to come

¹⁶ Ibid, 168.

¹⁷ Ibid, 168.

¹⁸ Spurr, 43. *Church*.

¹⁹ Browning, 372-73.

²⁰ Ibid, 383.

within five miles of any city, town or borough where he served previously as a minister. This act also sought to prevent dissenters from setting up rival congregations. The act forbade nonconformist teaching at both private and public settings and disallowed boarders. The penalties for violating this law were severe: a forty-pound fine per infraction and the possibility of six months in jail without bail.

The Conventicle Act passed in 1670 levied penalties against the membership of conventicles, marking a change in policy. Previous punitive legislation applied to government officials and ministers. The Conventicle Act went after the common people over the age of sixteen, male and female, engaged in illegal religious meetings. A conventicle was “five persons or more assembled together over and besides those of the same household.”²¹ The fine for each offense was ten shillings levied by the sale of the offenders property. If the offender was unable to pay, a wealthier individual guilty of the same crime was liable for the fine per the discretion of the justice of the peace, although, no one individual could be fined more than ten pounds per infraction. Leaders of the conventicles received a harsher penalty. The first offense was punishable by twenty pounds taken by selling property. Each additional infraction brought a forty pound fine. If the teacher was not a resident of the area or disappeared, members of the conventicle were liable for the fine. The property owners of the conventicle sites faced a twenty pound fine. The act also allowed the justices and other magistrates to break into private residences upon suspicion of a conventicle in progress. Any magistrate who had information about conventicles in his area, but did nothing, owed a fine of five pounds. If the magistrate refused to enforce the act, he forfeited one hundred pounds.²² The Conventicle Act used paid informers to help enforce the law. The informer received one-third of the collected fine.

²¹ Ibid, 384.

²² Ibid, 385-86.

The environment that shaped Clarendon Code was fearful of republicanism, religious radicalism, and eager to ensure the restored monarchy. One conservative warned, “You have a mind to see another Rebellion, and another King Murdered, I pray & beseech you, Give your votes for a Tolleration.”²³ The rumors of revivals of the “good old cause” caused local magistrates, especially the lords lieutenant, to keep close watch on their shires for political or religious rebels. The lieutenants were Royalists, with very few exceptions. They were the sons of men who died fighting for Charles I and men who lived under suspicion during the commonwealth and protectorate. Even deputy lieutenants had Royalist pedigrees or they did not receive approval from the king. The post-war lieutenants differed from their predecessors by having strong ties to the king and a focus on the nation as opposed to the region. During the Commonwealth, the rule of the major generals had illustrated that “a quasi-military institution with flexible jurisdiction could be of vital importance in ensuring the survival of the newly constituted government.”²⁴ The lieutenants believed in the myth of the Royal Martyr—a view of a perfect Royalist Anglican state destroyed by irrational fanatics.²⁵ A prime piece of propaganda that helped perpetuate this myth was the anonymous *Eikon Basilike*, showing Charles I in the guise of a holy martyr. The prewar lieutenants harassed Roman Catholics, but their postwar brethren sought political and religious dissenters. Religious dissent and sedition were opposite sides of the same coin to many in positions to harass and persecute the suspected offenders. Lord Robert Brooke, lord lieutenant of Staffordshire warned, “For should the pulpit be allowed a sanctuary for sedition or treason, we must expect quickly to see the kingdom again in flames.”²⁶ The beliefs of the lieutenants proved seemed vindicated with news of plots and uprisings against

²³ Richard Greaves. *Glimpses of Glory*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). 223.

²⁴ Victor Stater. *Noble Government*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994). 75.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 95.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 100.

the government with alarming frequency. Alexis de Toqueville later observed of the revolutionary sects, “they were able to alarm and trouble their century but not to subdue or lead it.”²⁷

The magistrates got a firm defender in Thomas Hall who wrote *The Beauty of Magistracy* in 1660.

There should therefore be a sweet Harmony and mutual assistance between Magistrates and Ministers, since the one helps to uphold the other, and they are ordained by God for the mutual aid of each other. The Minister wants the aid of the Magistrate in Temporals; and the Magistrate wants the Minister’s aid in Spiritual and eternal blessings.²⁸

The fount of all power civil or spiritual was of God. Direct disobedience of a person in any position of power was disobedience to God.

God is the Author, Approver and Defender of Magistracy from him they have their Mission and Commission...Usurpers by Permission and lawful Governors by Commission from him; the one by his Providence and some kind of approbation, the other by his Ordinance and appointment; there is no Power but ‘tis of God; the power is his, however men come by it, or however they abuse it.²⁹

The dissenters acknowledged that God was the giver of all power and that magistrates had authority over civil matters. But they objected to the spiritual authority of civil officers.

Because if magistrates, as such, have such an authority, then all magistrates in all nations have the same power. Then, if we lived in Turkey, we must receive the Koran, and be a worshipper of Mahomet; if in Spain, be a papist; in England, sometimes a papist, as in Henry the Eighth’s days, a protestant in Edward the Sixth’s, a papist again in Queen Mary’s, and a protestant again in Queen Elizabeth’s. And so for ever, as the authority changes religion, must we do the same.³⁰

The jailed writers of this petition denied the legality of any monarch or simple magistrate to force religious beliefs upon any group of people. “To inflict temporal punishments, upon any of

²⁷ J.F. McGregor and B. Reay, Eds. *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). 21.

²⁸ Hall, 3.

²⁹ Ibid, 12.

³⁰ Underhill, 301. *The Humble Petition and Representation of the Anabaptists*. (London: 1660).

us thy subjects, for not conforming to thy decrees that restrain us from the worship that we know to be of God”³¹ broke the command of Christ in the golden rule. This biblical command appeared commonly as justification of toleration. The Standard Confession of the General Baptists, also written in 1660, pled for toleration.

That it is the will, and mind of God (in these Gospel times) that all men should have the free liberty of their own Consciences in matters of Religion, or Worship, with out the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account; and that for any in Authority otherwise to act, we confidently believe is expressly contrary to the Mind of Christ.³²

Toleration for the Baptists was freedom from persecution and punitive measures. They advocated toleration for all people regardless of professed faith—going so far as to advocate religious toleration for Christian and non-Christian religious practices.

A Baptist named John Sturgion wrote *A Plea for Toleration* in March 1661 on behalf of the innocent baptized brethren and addressed it to the king. He reminded Charles of his promise to secure liberty of conscience for those that “did not disturb the peace of the kingdom” so that they “might worship God according to their light.”³³ He made certain to illustrate the innocent suffering for the guilty. “I cannot imagine how your majesty can be unsatisfied as to the innocency of the baptized people and others, who have not only disclaimed the wicked rebellion...but they have pressed their innocency from the very thought or imagination of any such wickedness.”³⁴ Sturgion argued for the ability of men to determine the reasonableness of religion.

For what is more unreasonable, than to deny men the use of their reason in choice of their religion? For if scripture, tradition, councils, and fathers, be the evidence in a question; yet reason is the judge...And not only the unreasonableness, but the

³¹ Ibid, 304.

³² William Lumpkin. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1959). 232.

³³ Underhill, 324-25. John Sturgion. *A Plea for Toleration*. (London: 1661).

³⁴ Ibid, 325.

impiety of using force in this case, may be further seen if it be considered, that there is nothing, under God, hath the power over the understanding of a man.³⁵

Baptists and other Nonconformists distanced themselves from association with Fifth Monarchist principles. Fifth Monarchists were millenarians who believed that the return and rule of King Jesus was due around the year 1700 based upon complex computations involving the last chapter of Daniel and the imagery of the beast. The Fifth Monarchists were not above giving God a hand to usher in the millennial kingdom of Christ. In the 1650s, they agitated for the dissolution of Rump and the rule of the godly. The Barebones Parliament had a radical faction that included a dozen Fifth Monarchists, twenty-eight known Independents, and seven Baptists, all of whom supported drastic change.³⁶ The parliament changed the process of recording births, marriages, and deaths using a national registry as opposed to ecclesiastical records. The radicals fought to abolish the tithe, but lost to the moderates by a vote in committee of 56 to 49.³⁷ The Baptist confessions of the 1650s illustrated their loyalty to the parliamentary state, something that haunted their later professions of loyalty.

That we do own a Magistratical power for the governing of this our English Nation, to be determined in a just Parliamentary way; and that we ought to pray for good Governors, and a good Government; that we may live a peacable and godly life in all honesty; standing ready at all times, as necessity may require, to vindicate such a Magistracy or Magistrates, not only with arguments of sound reason, but also with our Estates and Lives.³⁸

The stigma associated with radical political agendas carried over into the reign of Charles II. Three men with strong Baptist views were excluded from the Act of Oblivion—two as regicides, John Carew and Thomas Harrison, and the other as member of the regiment that provided

³⁵ Ibid, 332.

³⁶ Watts, 144-145.

³⁷ Ibid, 149.

³⁸ Lumpkin, 188. *The Faith and Practice of the Thirty Congregations*, 1651.

security for the king's trial, Daniel Axtell.³⁹ After Venner's revolt, Charles issued a proclamation forbidding the meeting of Quakers, Baptists, and Fifth Monarchists on the assumption that these groups were working together to overthrow the state.

The first identifiable Baptists emerged from the English separatists who fled to Holland in 1607 to escape persecution. In Amsterdam, the tradition of English separatism encountered and learned from the Anabaptist traditions present in Dutch Mennonite communities. The leaders John Smyth and Thomas Helwys formed their church based on the ideology of an Old Testament covenant allowing for some degree of government control of religion. Within two years, Smyth declared that baptism applied only to professing Christians. The church reconstituted with membership based on the principle of believer's baptism. Smyth re-baptized himself and his congregation. Unfortunately, the new church soon split with Smyth believing his re-baptism unauthentic. Smyth and most of the church entered the Mennonite community. Helwys remained true to the principle of believer's baptism and the remnant that remained with him was the first Baptist church, English or otherwise. In 1611, Helwys led his group of followers back to England and he established a church in Spitalfield, London.⁴⁰ Helwys came to believe that fleeing because of religious persecution was wrong—it prevented true religion from spreading. His ideas were published in the *Declaration of Faith of the English People Remaining at Amsterdam* in 1611. "That everie Church is to receive in all their members by Baptisme upon the Confession of their faith and sinnes wrought by the preaching of the word of the Gospel."⁴¹ Criticism of the established church abounded and got Helwys into trouble. "And therefore Churches constituted after anie other manner [than believer's baptism], or off any other

³⁹ B.R. White. *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*. (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1983). 100.

⁴⁰ H. Leon McBeth. *The Baptist Heritage*. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987). 38.

⁴¹Lumpkin, 120.

persons are not according to CHRIST'S Testament.”⁴² Helwys died in 1616 in prison for authoring a tract attacking the Church of England and arguing for full religious liberty, *A Short Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity*.⁴³ The church that Helwys founded was a General Baptist church. These churches rose out of strict separatist principles, but time on the continent exposed them to the view of Arminius. They believed in a general atonement, thus the moniker General Baptists.

The Particular Baptists developed a generation later than their General Baptist brethren, but came to occupy the position of the most influence and importance. The name particular deals with their vision of atonement. These were the Calvinistic Baptists and church membership belonged to the elect. Modern Baptists draw much of their heritage from this branch of the Baptist family tree. The mother church of the Particular Baptists was the JIJ Church located in Southwark, London and named for its first three pastors: Henry Jacob (1616-1622), John Lathrop (1624-1634), and Henry Jessey (1637).⁴⁴ This church was initially semi-separate. Some members of the church occasionally attended Anglican parish services for christenings and other ceremonies. The 1630s found the church racked with schism over legitimacy of the Church of England and the size of the congregation. The church continued to splinter over the question of believer's baptism. John Bunyan's church in Bedford began as a cell of the splintered JIJ Church. It was in these small congregations that the principle of baptism by immersion began. By 1644, these smaller churches combined and issued a joint confession of faith. "That Baptisme is an Ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed onely upon persons professing faith...the dispensing of this Ordinance the Scripture

⁴² Ibid, 120.

⁴³ McBeth, 38.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 42.

holds out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water.”⁴⁵ The practice of immersion garnered bad press. Dr. Daniel Featley accused them of “going naked into rivers, there to be plunged and Dipt...they flock together in great multitudes men and women together to be dipt.”⁴⁶ The 1644 Confession contained a side note on immersion reminding all involved to wear enough clothing to preserve everyone’s modesty.

The General Baptists issued their *Standard Confession* the year of the Restoration in an environment of accusations from opposition to magistracy to outright murder. They responded with “we believe that there ought to be civil Magistrates in all Nations, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.”⁴⁷ They believed that civil authorities had the power from God to punish those who broke just civil laws. Punishment for crimes committed was without regard for the perpetrator’s rank or religion. However, the government had no right to impose religion upon the population. “But in case the Civil Powers...impose things about Religion, which through conscience to God [we] cannot obey...we ought (in such cases) to obey God rather than men.”⁴⁸ They also sought to proclaim their innocence in the charges laid against them, especially the charge of plotting to murder those who held different religious beliefs. The charge that we intended “to cut the throats of such as were contrary minded to us in matter of Religion...that we utterly abhor, and abominate the thought.”⁴⁹

The Baptist pleas for no harassment or persecution fell upon deaf ears. They were considered a dangerous group and eager magistrates began to arrest Baptists under the old Elizabethan laws. Most of those arrested spent little time in jail with a few exceptions. John Bunyan, who belonged to the Particular Baptist congregation in Bedford, spent eleven years in

⁴⁵ Lumpkin, 167. *The First London Confession of Faith*, 1644.

⁴⁶ McBeth, 48. Featley wrote *The Dippers Dipt* (1645) an attack on Baptist principles at large.

⁴⁷ Lumpkin, 233.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 233.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 234.

jail. Bunyan used his time in prison to write and create one of the classics of Christianity and English literature, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan was born in Elstow in November 1628. His parents christened him at the parish church on November 30, 1628.⁵⁰ His family was not wealthy, but by no means were they of the poorest in the community. Both his father and grandfather owned enough property at their deaths to warrant a will. Young John attended school; possibly even grammar school though later Bunyan downplayed his own education. As a young man, he fought for Parliament at the Newport garrison. He served under harsh conditions, lacking proper clothing, housing, and food. His unit took part in the siege of Oxford. "When I was a soldier, I with others was selected to go to such a place to besiege it."⁵¹ Another volunteered to go in Bunyan's place and "as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head with a musket ball and died."⁵² In 1647, Bunyan's company was one of many that stood at the ready to go to Ireland under the command of Colonel Owen O'Connolly. The regiment disbanded ending Bunyan's military career.⁵³ The army exposed Bunyan to a variety of competing religious ideas—Anglicans, Presbyterians, and sectaries in addition to the provisions of the Solemn League and Covenant and the preaching of some notorious separatists. One of these was a Particular Baptist, Paul Hobson who arrived with an invitation to preach at Newport in June 1645. Hobson was infamous for his beliefs, winding up on a list (along with John Milton) of those denounced by Sion College, London the previous December.⁵⁴ Hobson's repudiation of a national church and the idea of a church made of visible saints were ideas later embraced by Bunyan.

⁵⁰ Greaves, 3.

⁵¹ John Bunyan. *Grace Abounding*. (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1993). 11. modern reprint .

⁵² *Ibid*, 11.

⁵³ Greaves, 11-19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 23.

After leaving the army, Bunyan married his first wife and fathered his blind daughter Mary and a son. Bunyan suffered bouts of anxiety and depression from childhood. He feared divine judgment and felt unworthy of grace and forgiveness. He worried that such a sinner as himself was incapable of receiving divine forgiveness. Seeking an antidote to his melancholy, Bunyan threw himself into religious activity in his parish church. He later recalled that he adored the ritual and ceremonies of the Church of England. The vicar of his parish church, Christopher Hall, was a gifted preacher and Bunyan felt singled out in his sermons. Bunyan's conformity to the Anglican Church lasted just over a year. His spiritual awakening occurred in 1650 and his personal spiritual turmoil marked with periods of joy and depression continued until the late 1650s. He became a member of the Bedford Baptist church in 1655 and underwent believer's baptism around the same time.⁵⁵ By the restoration, Bunyan was on firm ground and he illustrated his commitment to his beliefs in facing more than eleven years in prison.

Bunyan spent his years in captivity writing for the brethren as well as defending his right to nonconformity in brilliant allegory. His writing was influenced by a variety of sources. He drew from the story of St George in Richard Johnson's *The Most Famous History of the Seven Champions of Christendome* as well as the medieval romance of *Bevis of Southampton*. The trials of Bevis: giants, lions, and a false deity Apoline received a fresh approach in the adventures of his Pilgrim, Christian.⁵⁶ He disdained the classics of the university educated because he believed that such clerics "nuzzle up [their] people in ignorance with Aristotle, Plato, and the rest of the heathenish Philosophers and preach little, if any thing of Christ rightly."⁵⁷ Bunyan thought Luther's commentary on the book of Galatians a worthy read and he carried the book into prison with him.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 5.

Bunyan went to preach in a home in Lower Samsell on November 12, 1660, the day devoted to prayer for the nation as decided by the Bedford congregation. Local justice of the peace Francis Wingate heard about the house meeting. Wingate was a staunch Royalist, who observed his widowed mother suffering for her political loyalties under Cromwell. Wingate believed like many Restoration era justices that nonconformists were the greatest danger facing the nation. Bunyan arrived in Lower Samsell and a friend told him of the rumored warrant for his arrest. He decided like Helwys fifty years before to set an example and not flee before persecution. The service halted before Bunyan began his sermon due to the arrival of the authorities. Bunyan went before Wingate on the 13th where he inquired if Bunyan was content to follow his trade rather than to break the law. An apology and promise to tend to his craft would have caused Wingate to release Bunyan on the spot. However, Bunyan told Wingate he could preach and follow his trade and Wingate ordered his imprisonment until the next quarter session.

The quarter session convened in Bedford in January 1661. Bunyan's indictment charged that he had "devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is a common upholder of several conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom."⁵⁸ This indictment came from the 1593 Elizabethan statute. Bunyan refused to answer the indictment claiming he attended the church of God regularly and hoped to spark a debate about the nature of a true church. His trial resembled a debate more than a traditional legal proceeding. During his trial, Venner and the Fifth Monarchists revolted and cast greater suspicion on all nonconformists. Bunyan remained in prison despite emotional pleas made by his second wife Elizabeth to two different judges on the King's Bench. Bunyan would

⁵⁸ Ibid, 135.

not be at liberty until the Declaration of Indulgence. He received a license to preach on May 9, 1672 and received a formal pardon issued under the Great Seal on September 13.⁵⁹

Bunyan believed like other Particular Baptists “that it is the will of the Lord, and it is given to the saints not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his name and so to pass through many tribulations into the kingdom of God.”⁶⁰ The theme of suffering and undergoing great periods of tribulation figured prominently in Bunyan’s greatest work, *The Pilgrims Progress*. The story of *The Pilgrims Progress* is both simple and complex. It was simple in that it allowed common folk to identify with the pilgrim, Christian. It was complex because embedded in the allegory was criticism of the established church and state. The allegory begins with Graceless fleeing his home with a heavy burden. He met Evangelist, who gave him a scroll of parchment and directions to the gate. Evangelist renamed Graceless as Christian. Christian followed the instructions to the gate accompanied by his neighbor, Pliable. Pliable turned back at the first difficulty leaving Christian alone. He turned to Worldly Wiseman for advice on how to ease his burden. Christian went to Legality and fled in terror of his life at the eruption of a volcano. Christian then returned to the gate and gained entry through the assistance of Good Will. He spent time learning from the Interpreter and finally reached the cross and sepulcher where he looses his burden and received new clothing, a new parchment roll, and a mark upon his forehead. Christian set out to warn others of their mistakes and how to lose their burdens. He rested in the Palace Beautiful and here he received the weapons used to defeat Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. Christian continued his journey joined by another pilgrim, Faithful. Evangelist warned the two pilgrims that they had not yet resisted unto the shedding of blood. The town of Vanity Fair arrested the pilgrims and executed Faithful. Christian escaped with

⁵⁹ Ibid, 287-288.

⁶⁰ Lumpkin, 213.

another pilgrim, Hopeful, and they continued on their quest to reach the Celestial City—by passing giants, Ignorance and an Atheist. The two passed over the river of death and were welcomed with the call of horns to the Celestial City.

Faithful and Christian’s trial in Vanity Fair implied criticism of the Stuart state. The indictment against the pilgrim was reminiscent of the charges laid on many dissenters prosecuted under the Clarendon Code. “That they were enemies to and disturbers of their Trade; that they had made Commotions and Divisions in the Town, and had won a party to their own most dangerous Opinion in contempt of the Law of their Prince.”⁶¹ The trial in Lord Hategood’s courtroom in Vanity Fair used informers, just like in the Conventicle Act. Envy spoke against Faithful proclaiming:

He neither regardeth Prince nor People, Law nor Custom; but doth all he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in general calls Principles of Faith and Holiness. And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm *That Christianity and the Customs of our Town of Vanity were diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled.*⁶²

Pickthank, another witness against Faithful made the argument that the gentlemen of the town took offense at the words of the defendant. He accused the pilgrim of speaking against the prince and speaking “contemptibly of his honorable Friends, whose names are the Lord Old Man, the Lord Carnal Delight, the Lord Luxurious, the Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my old Lord Lechery, [and] Sir Having Greedy.”⁶³ The royal court was a decadent place and caused many of the dissenting sorts to wonder about the integrity of their king. The Stuart gentry were Royalist to a large degree and distrustful of religious dissenters placing blame for the “late troubles” on the shoulders of nonconformists. Bunyan illustrated a fear of the gentry—social upheaval in

⁶¹ John Bunyan. *The Pilgrims Progress*. (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003). 99. Unabridged reprint of 1678 version. Italics placed by Bunyan.

⁶² Ibid, 98.

⁶³ Ibid, 99-100.

Pickthank's words. "That if all men were of his mind, if possible, there is not one of these Noble men should have any longer a being in this Town."⁶⁴

Bunyan was critical of the Church of England as well as the larger society in which he lived. Before Christian entered the gate, he encountered Worldly Wiseman who offered an alternative solution for the removal of burdens. He directed Christian to the town of Morality to meet with Legality or his son, Civility. Upon reaching the hill where the men lived, Christian feared for his life and Evangelist explained the error of his ways. Worldly Wiseman named such for his love of the doctrine of the world that always attended church in Morality. "He loveth that doctrine best, for it saveth him from the Cross. And because he is of this carnal temper, therefore he seeketh to prevent my ways, though right."⁶⁵ Bunyan identified with the Evangelist—he was in prison and thought his methods correct. Legality represented the clerics who made the motions of religious devotion and had great knowledge about spiritual things. However, no man could escape his burden by such means.

Bunyan's sojourn in prison ended in March 1672 with the issuing of the Declaration of Indulgence. The quest for complete religious freedom in England remained years removed from Bunyan and his contemporaries. They carved a place for themselves in English religious life despite persecution from the state and forced a weary admittance from the church that the dissenters could not be silenced. Burnet offered this commentary of the state of religious matters.

The Dissenters at that time were divided into four main bodies—the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Anabaptists, and the Friends or Quakers...the Presbyterians were not so adverse to Episcopal Ordination and a Liturgy and were friends to civil government and a limited monarchy; whereas the Independents were for a commonwealth in the State, and a popular government in the Church, and no set form of worship...the Anabaptists were generally men of virtue and

⁶⁴ Ibid, 100.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 26.

universal charity; but, being at too great a distance from the church of England, they were for toleration of all religions...the Friends, or Quakers, had set up such a visible distinction in the matter of the hat...that they were generally supposed...to be for the toleration.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Burnet, 259.

Conclusion

The Restoration began with jubilant celebrations and great expectations; it ended with an abdicated catholic monarch and a Glorious Revolution. Religious debates marked the beginning and end of the reigns of the sons of Charles I. Charles II sought a comprehensive religious settlement, but political practicalities ended the quest for religious comprehension. Fears of a catholic monarch coupled with an intractable personality led to the downfall of James II. The religious unity of England changed irrevocably—the Church of England split into two different ideological camps and numerous legal dissenters were allowed freedom of worship.

The Church of England split into the High Church and Low Church factions. The High Church members aligned with the Tories and conservative programs. The Low Church faction drifted into the Latitudinarian camp or as time progressed into deism and Unitarian beliefs. The numerous dissenting groups present in seventeenth-century England transformed into modern denominations or faded into history. The dissenters found religious toleration offered freedom to worship, but little else. That freedom had many restrictions. The most reminiscent of the laws of Charles II was the licensing of places of worship. The act provided “...that no congregation or assembly for religious worship shall be permitted or allowed by this Act until the place of such meeting be certified to the bishop of the diocese.”¹ The Toleration Act excluded Roman Catholics and any group which denied the doctrine of the Trinity. Full political rights for Catholics and non-Anglicans were still generations away.

The cavaliers in Charles’s parliaments aided by the clergy restored to the House of Lords attempted to turn back the clock and remake prewar England. Bishop Sheldon urged the suppression of dissenters due to their association with republicanism. Sheldon lost his place and position as royal chaplain with the fall of the king. He spent time in prison and agitated for the

¹ Browning, 403.

king's cause. He staunchly defended his church against all who it attacked from the early 1640s onward. His interregnum experience led him to develop a no-toleration policy and he desired to strengthen the position of the monarch by supporting it with the church. The members within the Cavalier Parliament pushed through religious legislation affirming the prayer book while clerics still debated changes. They endorsed the increasingly severe acts of the Clarendon Code and looked with displeasure upon Charles II offering individual indulgences. They forced the revocation of the *Declaration of Indulgence* and the passage of the Test Act eliminating all non-Anglicans from governmental positions. The most notable victim was James, duke of York.

The experiences of the dissenters under the returned Stuarts were not pleasant. The Anglican establishment tarred moderate dissenters and extreme dissenters with the same label. All who dissented were potential rebels in the opinion of the new government. Venner's Fifth Monarchy men only fueled the belief that dissenters were violent and treasonous. The dissenters who had slight connection with the Fifth Monarchists soon found themselves under scrutiny. Experiences varied even among dissenting groups with moderates feeling the pressure of the government less severely than the most radical brethren did. Enforcement of the penal laws against nonconformists was uneven and sporadic; much of it depended upon the willingness of the community to inform the local JP.

The Restoration policies toward nonconformists pulled from a variety of concerns. Fear of rebellion and personal revenge motivated MPs and clergymen. They sought to return society to its proper ordering by forbidding any group or ideology associated with the interregnum. Many of the cavaliers could not return to life in prewar England; if their estates were confiscated and sold the lands were difficult to reclaim in the courts. They also remembered the privations and loss of respect under Cromwell's regime. The clerics lost everything they valued from the

use of the prayer book to the means to make a living. The religious policies developed by these men derived partial motivation from the experiences of the civil war and interregnum. The blame for these events was given to nonconformists who rose to places of prominence in the government and army. This thesis has attempted to draw connections between religious policies and personal experiences of those creating and enforcing the legislation. The religious policies were unsuccessful in halting the tide of the nonconformist's organizations. The world changed and it took years for the government and church to realize they were chasing after an era that would never return.

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