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Polemic and apocalyptic in the Cromwellian invasion of Scotland¹

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In summer 1650, the English Parliament attempted the last invasion of Scotland, and the Kirk came to terms with 'the reproach of a Sectarian Army.' Over the last thirty years, the invasion has generated substantial scholarly discussions, the most useful of which have included within their accounts of this conflict a description of its cultures of print.³ But these analyses share a tendency to read in binary terms both cultures of invader and invaded, framing the relationship between the publications produced during the conflict as straightforwardly one of contest between two clearly defined and tightly controlled political machines. There is some justification for thinking of Scottish print culture in those terms, for after 1638, when the Kirk began to use mass printing to influence public opinion, religious publications were censored by the General Assembly and there were periodic purges of whatever unauthorised material had managed to enter the country. 4 But this system of control began to break down in summer 1650. In England, by contrast, throughout the period, army political publications continued to be 'remarkably sophisticated, their manifestos mature, and their sense of justice white hot,'5 even as newsbooks and pamphlets continued to offer competing perspectives upon and interpretations of 'the Onions and Leeks of a Scotish Monarchy.' English polemic ranged in tone from high-minded legal opinion to expressions of mockery and horror. This multiplicity of perspectives is most evident in a close reading of the pamphlets produced both by the Scottish institutions and the English army through late July and early August of 1650. These texts suggest that the divisions within the two camps came to be as important as the divisions between them. 8 As is well known, the army of the English parliament represented an often uneasy combination of religious opinion, but this variety was not something that Scottish propagandists sought to exploit. By contrast, English

propagandists' 'political-theological offensive' did seek to open and then take advantage of differences among the Scots, but, even as they did so, they could not conceal their own divisions. The invasion literature emanating from Oliver Cromwell, his senior officers and chaplains, and (ostensibly) his soldiers did identify a common purpose in the invasion, but could not disguise a wide variety of motivations for it. The free play of ideas among the English soldiers, which Cromwell celebrated in his famous letter to the General Assembly, permitted the circulation of an ultimately un-reconciled series of justifications for invasion. ¹⁰ Military might succeeded where coherence and persuasion did not, however, and when, in Edinburgh, in late November, John Owen rose to preach a sermon which celebrated the submission of the Scottish capital, he must have realised the complexity of his task. His immediate duty was to consolidate in religious terms the English advance by presenting a biblical exposition that would promote the army's agenda amongst the Scots by redacting its rather varied justifications. His sermon, published as The Branch of the Lord, the Beauty of Sion (1650), therefore represented the divisions as well as the ambitions of its sponsoring military force, while also illustrating Owen's sense of the limits of Cromwell's toleration of the free play of ideas. Our reading of The Branch of the Lord, the Beauty of Sion should qualify our understanding of the purpose and role of print propaganda during the invasion and occupation of Scotland. 11

This article will offer a reconsideration of ideological conflict during the Cromwellian invasion of Scotland. It will focus on divisions within the English army, while also paying attention to divisions within the Scottish institutions which sought to counter its invasion. The article will argue that texts produced during this period illustrate the divisions between the *mentalité* of the Cromwellian rank-and-file and that of the rather small and probably unrepresentative body of opinion formers who initially permitted and eventually sought to control its culture of expression. The article will also draw attention to the extent to which the

free play of ideas tolerated among the English soldiers in the period before and during the invasion came to be limited thereafter, as print solidified Parliamentary ideas during the conflict but did not continue to do so after English dominance had been established. Perhaps most significantly, this article will argue against assumptions that Cromwellian justifications for the invasions of Ireland and Scotland were prompted and guided by 'regionally distinctive approaches,' 12 which assumptions imply that the invasion of Ireland was driven by an apocalyptic anti-Catholicism while the invasion of Scotland proceeded with a cautious and nuanced appreciation of its Reformed heritage. 13 In fact, an under-noticed strand of apocalyptic thinking in the Cromwellian justifications for the Scottish invasion illustrates the extent to which English military and religious leaders were prepared to use apocalyptic language to denounce Scottish Protestants. Historians should, therefore, pay more attention to the interplay of apocalyptic, polemic and print culture in the Cromwellian invasion of Scotland.

Ι

By early 1650, Scotland's unified government had collapsed, and its church and state were in turmoil. The 'Kirk party' continued its campaign against the Engagers throughout the spring: Montrose was defeated at Carbisdale, Sutherland, at the end of April and was executed in the following month. ¹⁴ Charles, who had been secretly negotiating with the Covenanters during Montrose's campaign, continued his political manoeuvring, and agreed a draft of the Treaty of Breda while resisting pressure to subscribe to the covenants. These manoeuvrings were not necessarily understood by his enemies: English observers reported that the king 'behaves himself like an obedient Son of the Kirk, is very modest, and as silent as midnight; He never moves but like a Puppet, upon the wire of the Covenant, and ambles altogether after their

Interpretation.' 15 The Kirk party agitated for the expulsion of 'Malignants' from Charles' court, meanwhile, and succeeded in removing former Engagers from the army, with disastrous effects on morale. 16 The threat of invasion continued to grow. English newsbooks capitalised on the crisis, reporting that 'our neighbours of Scotland are much startled at the report of our Armies march Northwards.' ¹⁷ But Scottish institutions polarised in response to the threat. On 21 June 1650 the Commission of the General Assembly called for a public fast, recognising the 'great danger the land and work of reformation are into, by the sudden and unexpected approaching of the Sectarian Forces in our neighbour Kingdom of England.' The prospective invasion, they feared, 'threatens no less then the ruine of this Kingdom and obscuring of the work of God within the same.' 18 A successful invasion would lead to 'Tyrany,' they believed. 19 Scots were instructed to pray against the invaders, 'that wee may neither be infected by their errours, nor harmed by their violence.' ²⁰ Four days later, on 25 June, the Commission justified its call for a fast in A Seasonable and Necessary Warning Concerning Present Dangers and Duties (1650). This much longer polemic warned against the 'insolent and strange actings of that prevailing party of Sectaries in England these years past, in reference to Religion and Government.'21 The Independents were guilty of the 'vast toleration of many grosse errors,' the Commission complained, 'whereby so many and so monstrous blasphemies and strange opinions in Religion have been broached and are vented ... as the like hath not been heard of almost in any generation.'22 They feared that 'if the Lord in his righteous and wise dispensation shall suffer them to invade this Land,' as seemed increasingly likely, then 'the Gengrene of their errours may take hold upon men of ignorant and unstable minds, who have not received the love of the truth.' The result, they worried, would be 'confusion and desolation,' with 'the Pillars both of Religion and Government ... ruined and razed in this, as well as in our neighbour land.'23 But even as the Commissioners castigated the religious opinions of the English army, they recognised that the claims of the

Independents did appear plausible. 'Sectaries' masked themselves 'under a vale of seeming holinesse,' and many of them did appear to 'walk ... circumspectlie.' But the majority were 'loose and dissolute,' the Commissioners insisted, and 'love to walk in the Immaginations of their own hearts, and in the light of their own fire, and in the sparkes that they have kindled, corrupting the truth of God, approving errors in themselves, and tolerating them in others.' ²⁴

The Commissioners framed their rejection of the Independents by means of a litany of biblical allusions, and ultimately encouraged Presbyterians to interpret current events through the lens of prophetic Scripture. ²⁵ They reminded their adherents that the Antichrist 'makes many drunk with the cup of his abhominations, which yet for the most part are covered with a vail of externall devotions,' and argued from this premise that 'the many antichrists now in England' will 'partake of these plagues, who in so great a measure partake of his sinnes.' ²⁶

The threat of the Independents was apocalyptic, they argued, but God's intervention to save Scotland would be sudden and irreversible.

A Seasonable and Necessary Warning would have been very widely disseminated: like other official productions of the Kirk, its text should have been read from pulpits.²⁷ But its attempt to consolidate Presbyterian hegemony was disrupted. An 'utterly new discussion' of religious options began with the circulation of A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland (1650, Wing / D637).²⁸ This text was composed and printed in Newcastle on the army press, most likely on 16 July, and some 800 copies were sent into Scotland. It was deliberately framed, and precisely designed, with a first edition abandoned sometime after 11 July and a second edition printed by 16 July.²⁹ It was 'signed in the Name, and by the Appointment of his Excellency the Lord General CROMWELL, and his Councell of Officers,' among whose number John Owen may have been included.³⁰ It emphasised the religious unity of the invading army, and addressed itself to 'all that are Saints, and Partakers of the Faith of Gods Elect in Scotland,' rather than to any of the institutions of church or

state. 31 Its authors presented themselves as having 'bowels full of love, yea ... of pity to the Inhabitants of the Country,' and they claimed that they were being motivated by 'tendernesse towards you, whom we look upon as our Brethren.'32 Its rhetoric was moderate – in sharp contrast to the apocalyptic denunciations of the Commission of the General Assembly – but its intention was evidently divisive. Its authors hoped 'to make a distinction & separation' between 'those that are godly' and those other Presbyterians who refused to understand the significance of the 'great and wonderfull transactions wrought amongst us, and brought to passe, by the meer finger of our God.'33 The army declaration was meeting the General Assembly's total rejection of the Independents' cause with what was designed to appear as a heart-felt appeal to spiritually minded Scots. Thus the *Declaration* defended the English army against the malicious claims of the General Assembly. Firstly, its authors argued, the actions of the army were not in breach of the Solemn League and Covenant, to which the English Parliament was still committed. Secondly, they denied that the Covenant required the forcible imposition of Presbyterian government. Of course, they continued, that did not imply that the army opposed Presbyterianism per se, for 'we are desirous that they who are for the Presbyteriall Government should have all freedom to enjoy it,' and the army itself was 'ready to imbrace so much, as doth, or shal be made appear to us to be according to the Word of God.' ³⁴ The claim for the army's toleration of Presbyterianism appeared plausible, for English soldiers, while marching north, had been appealed to by the movement's apologists in Lancashire: 'The Clergie in these parts would drive us all into the Presbyterian fold, but will hardly do it,' a correspondent noted, 'for here are diversity of Opinions, and many that are of publick spirits, true lovers of their Countrey and holding for the power of godliness.'35 Presbyterian ideas would be tolerated, but they would not be imposed, the army insisted. Not that this meant religious opinion would be entirely unconstrained, they continued:

we doe own those sound Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion, Preached and held by the Generality of godly Ministers and Christians of these later times; abhorring from our hearts, and being ready to beare a witnesse against any detestable Blasphemies and Heresies lately broken out amongst us; we have already punished some amongst us for Blasphemy and are further ready to doe it.³⁶

It was an important point, and instances of the punishment of blasphemy were being reported in the press. One important newsbook with links to the army forthrightly rejected 'the strange meetings and practices of those commonly called Raunters.' Another reported the punishment of a soldier at Mordington, on 24 July, who was sentenced by court martial to be whipped 'through foure Companies of his Regiment, and afterwards to be boared through the tongue with a hot iron. His offence was great, for blaspheming God.' But the army's claim that blasphemy was being punished was being made without any recognition that the criteria for blasphemy might be relevant to the dispute. Thirdly, the *Declaration* continued, God had already demonstrated his approval of the English actions, for the soldiers had witnessed the 'eminent actings of the providence and power of God, to bring forth his good will and pleasure, concerning the things wherein he hath determined in the world.' The army's language was not apocalyptic, but, the pamphlet insisted, prophecy was being fulfilled.

It is not clear how and where the army *Declaration* was circulated. Much of its success may have been occasional: one newsbook reported that on 23 July four Scottish soldiers were captured, disarmed and 'sent ... back with some of our Declarations, to their own homes.' But the declaration must have been enough of a threat for Scots to feel the need to respond with a publication of their own. This text, which emanated from political rather than religious spokespersons, was entitled *A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, in answer to some printed papers, intitled, The Declaration of the*

Parliament of England, and the Declaration of the Army of England, upon their March into Scotland (1650). 41 The pamphlet interacted directly with the English army's declaration. It complained that the declaration was deliberately divisive, not being 'directed to those in Authority, more then to any other persons in the Kingdom, but ... To all that are Saints and partakers of the Faith of Gods Elect in Scotland.' This was an entirely unprecedented strategy, the Committee of Estates continued: 'Can there be a more lively portraytour of Anarchie in the World then this? and that varnished over with the colour of Piety and Religion!'⁴² Ironically, the English enthusiasm for liberty of ideas allowed Scots polemicists to turn the rhetoric of the army declaration back upon itself: the Committee of Estates deconstructed English emphases by presenting contradictory material from Cromwell on the issue of the witness of providence and in its complaint that the army's intention to impose its ecclesiological principles on an uncooperative Scotland was 'disagreeable ... to their own principles of liberty and toleration.'43 The Scots highlighted the rhetorical nature of the dispute, complaining of the army's 'fig-tree leaves of flourishing words' which 'seem to serve for a covert, wherein to lurk from the eyes of men.'44 The defenders of the Independents 'begin with sugared words, wishing like mercy and truth, light and liberty with themselves,' they noted, even as the Independents were 'marching with an Army to conquer and subdue us cruelly, under errour, darknesse, and slavery. 45 The difficulty was that the language of the English pamphlets was too unstable to provide a basis for critique: Presbyterians simply could not trust the 'smooth pretences and dangerous insinuations of the Sectaries.'46 At root, the Scots believed, the conflict concerned the nature of language itself. They warned their readers to 'be ware that they be not deceived and insnared with the fair offers and smooth pretences of the Sectaries, whose words are soft as butter and oil, but gall and bitternesse is in their hearts and actions: they have the smooth voyce of Jacob, but the rough hands of Esau.'47 Again the language resonated with allusion as Scots polemicists

sought to draw their denunciation of the Independents from the words of Scripture itself.⁴⁸

And they contrasted the biblical character of their rhetoric with the demonic character to that of the Independents. The English pamphlet might appear plausible, the Scots continued, but it possessed a legion of demonic voices, 'like that madman in the Gospel that brake all bands, so as nothing could hold him fast.'

The Scottish response to the declaration of the English army put the moral character of political language at the centre of the debate, but could not conceal its own competing voices. On 22 July 1650 there were published two other responses to the English declaration. The first text, A Short Reply unto a Declaration intituled the Declaration of the Army of England (1650), emanated from the Commission of the General Assembly, and was intended to assure its domestic audience that the cause of the Kirk was good. The second text, An Answere from the Committee of Estates, To a Printed Paper directed to the people of Scotland, and signed in name of L.G. Cromwel, and his Officers (1650), was designed to be given to common soldiers in the invading army. Again the Scots critique of English propaganda centred on questions of language. The Commission complained that the lack of detail in the English material 'seems to threaten a dart and yet hits no where.' 50 A third response, undated but arriving with English soldiers by 31 July, presented itself as emanating from the common people. 51 This text, For the Under-Officers and Souldiers of the English Army, from the People of Scotland (1650), warned English troops 'not to imbrue your hands in the blood of the Lords people without a cause.'52 But its concentration of legal arguments suggests that it reflected the interests of a privileged constituency more accurately than it did those of the common people. This series of responses suggests that the English tactic had succeeded in dividing the Scottish population, for institutions were responding individually, and other unidentified parties were claiming to speak for the people at large. This lack of cohesion highlighted the tangled and perhaps panicking production of print within the capital

as the English advance continued. And the advance could not be stopped. For on the same day as these pamphlets were published, on 22 July, Oliver Cromwell crossed into Scotland with 16,000 troops.⁵³

The English advance continued through the second half of July, with pens almost as busy as swords. One day after the invasion, on 23 July, at Berwick on Tweed, there was published A Declaration of the Army of the Commonwealth of England, to the People of Scotland (1650, Wing [2nd ed., 1994] / D639).⁵⁴ That the text had been signed off by John Rushworth, and published in London in the previous day's issue of *Perfect Diurnal*, suggests a sophisticated degree of coordination between the army's print centres, as well as an acknowledge that it was as important to win the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of London as those of the 'people of Scotland' addressed in the title.⁵⁵ Denying their enemies' claims that the English soldiers were 'rather Monsters then Men,' 56 and lamenting the 'unavoidable necessity of entring into Scotland,' 57 the pamphlet sought to reassure the inhabitants of Scotland that the invading force would be as well behaved as it had been in similar circumstances several years before, and that the inhabitants of the border region could continue to live quietly while the invasion took place. This reassurance might have been threatened one week later, on 1 August, when the 'under-Officers and Souldiers of the English Army' published their response To the People of Scotland. 58 The soldiers who produced this text had been in conversation about its contents with some of the most radical Independent churches in London, including those led by the emerging Fifth Monarchist leaders Christopher Feake and John Simpson, and it certainly resonates with their concerns.⁵⁹ The text began by reminding its intended readers of the heritage shared by the godly on both sides of the border, the fact that nonconformists in both nations had once been dismissed as 'Puritans, Sectaries, Schismaticks.' 60 The English soldiers remembered the joy with which they had received news of the Covenanter revolution at the end of the 1630s, 'understanding

by the manifold gracious promises in the Word of God, that a time of Deliverance was to be expected to the Church of Christ, & Destruction and ruine to Babylon,' and how that they, 'together with all the truly godly in England, were exceedingly stirred up to pray to the Lord even day and night, that he would arise to destroy Antichrist, & save his People.' One decade later, they believed, that final conflict had begun. Charles I had proved himself to be 'a man of blood,' and they were 'perswaded ... that he and his Monarchy was one of the ten hornes of the beast.' The present 'Civil War,' they argued, was an attempt to ensure the 'destruction of Antichrist, and the deliverance of his Church and People.' The invasion of Scotland was therefore an attempt to help the Scots realise their true eschatological identity. They were invading Scotland for the good of the Protestant faith:

we do above any thing in the world desire the Union of the two Nations, and it is our prayer daily that those that feare the Lord in England and Scotland, may become one in the hand of the Lord, and joyn together in the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and throwing down and tramping upon the seat of the Beast, why should not Scotland as well as England rejoyce to see the horns of the Beast cut off, that we may joyn together to hate the whore, and to burn her flesh with fire.

But the Scots had to be brought to the realisation of their eschatological destiny by force. The English soldiers, entirely convinced of their own righteousness, declared their intention to 'march to any Engagement' with the Scots 'with the Covenant on the tops of our Pikes, and let the Lord judge who hath observed the ends of the Covenant best.' While the Scots had been invoking the apocalyptic theme from the earliest stage of the conflict, it was only gradually and never uniformly manifested in English texts. Its appearance marked the polemical movement from persuasion to denunciation, an appeal to the ultimate binary, the

construction of a rhetorical field in which ambiguity or denial could not be allowed to exist. *A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland* became a 'manifesto' of the Fifth Monarchist movement, and provided the foundation for the Fifth Monarchists' later critique of the 'declension of the Armies first Principles, and former Declarations.' For, as Christopher Feake later put it, 'when the light of the Lord seemed to shine upon their tabernacles, with greatest splendour,' it was as if the soldiers were 'Fifth-Kingdom-men at the highest rate.'

But Cromwell did not share the apocalyptic approach of his soldiers. He adopted an entirely different method, when, two days later, on 3 August, and as the army advanced steadily upon Edinburgh, he wrote his famous letter to the General Assembly, in which he appealed to them to 'think it possible you may be mistaken.' The language of his address pressed relentlessly upon the providential evidences of divine support for the invading troops that the Scots had found so easy to dismiss. 'The Lord hath not hid his face from us since our approach so near unto you,' he argued. 67 Cromwell's appeal to providence and spiritual experience was primary. He entirely avoided the covenantal register, which had dominated the Scottish response from the beginning; he also avoided the apocalyptic register, which had dominated the Scottish response from the beginning and which had come to exercise increasing influence in English writing. English soldiers now spoke readily of a war against Antichrist, while Cromwell still preferred to appeal to the witness of providence and his experiences of elation. Pamphlets could not disguise the multiple and changing perspectives of English military opinion.

The English administration sought to take advantage of this plurality of perspective when, on 16 August 1650, the Council of State reprinted the General Assembly's *Short Reply* with *A Vindication of the Declaration of the Army of England upon their march into Scotland* (1650). The strategy of allowing the circulation of Scottish ideas was by then firmly in place.

Over a month earlier, Perfect Passages of Every Daies Intelligence from the Parliaments Army had reprinted 'A declaration of the Parliament of Scotland,' and followed this with a commentary insisting that the declaration demonstrated 'that the Common-wealth of England have just cause to provide for their own safty ... which under pretence of a Covenant-right would usher in that Government, which with great expence and effusion of blood, hath been extirpated.'68 Similarly, on 14 August, Cromwell had written a letter to David Lesley, the Scottish commander, which described his having Lesley's letter read to 'so many Officers as could well be gotten together,' and which hoped that Lesley would facilitate the same oral publication of this re-statement of Parliamentary war aims and policy of toleration. Even as these incidents reinforce Cromwell's limited permission for the circulation of ideas, they remind us that publication could involve scribal as well as printed forms.⁶⁹ But there was no mistaking the intention of A Vindication of the Declaration of the Army of England upon their march into Scotland. The pamphlet offered a clearly organised response, moving from point to point in an orderly and often ironic way. Cromwell later explained that this Vindication was composed with the help of 'some godly Ministers' who were travelling with him, among whose number Owen was present. 70 The Council of State's decision to reprint the General Assembly's text in full was a very clear example of the extent to which English propagandists wished to position the Parliamentary army as a site facilitating the free exchange of ideas. But the Vindication was clear in its rejection of the claims of the Kirk, which were 'filled with calumnious Reproaches and Insinuations, false and mistaken Narrations, suited to a subtile carrying on of a corrupt and desperate Design, without manifestation of any great respect had unto truth, sincerity, and simplicity of Spirit.'71

The English strategy was careful and deliberate, though somewhat perverse, refusing to respond to publications by the Committee of Estates while focusing exclusively on the material produced by the General Assembly to show how political discourse should not be

conducted. The Vindication simply denied that the General Assembly should have any role in political discussion, considering it unthinkable that 'an Ecclesiastical Assembly ... should count it their duty, as such, to put forth Manifesto's, and make Reply's to States and Armies, in things of Civil concernment, relating to the Publique Affairs of Nations.'72 This choice of a polemical target allowed the Independents to attack the weakest point of the Scottish intellectual defence, permitting the ironic claim that the 'neer approaches which are made in Scotland to Spiritual Tyranny & outward Violence ... yield them outward Peace and Conformity, not unlike that under the Inquisition.'73 And the parallel with European Catholic oppression of course suggested the ultimate destiny of the Presbyterian party, which 'seems to savour of the old Babylonish Leaven, which in due time the Lord will remove.'74 But even as they heightened the violence of their register, the English texts were paradoxically heightening their register of appeal. Later publications offered increasing levels of detail in their attempts to reassure the Scottish concerns. The Council of State responded to Presbyterian fears about toleration, for example, by providing additional detail on their commitment to godly rule, citing the 'Acts of Parliament lately made against Adultery, Incest, against Swearing and Blasphemy, and the Acts for the strict keeping of the Sabbath, and for the better propagation of the Gospel in several parts of our Nation.' 'We take Religion to be a worshipping of God according to his Word, walking in our conversations according to the Gospel, attending upon the publique Ordinances of the Word preached, publique and private Prayer and Sacraments, when administered according to the Gospel,' they explained, without providing any level of detail, 'in which, to be conversant with Humility, Faith and Reverence, is the practice of the Army.'75 Or at least, from the distance of London, that was what they expected would be the practice of the army.

Perhaps the most significant English response to the multiple Scottish rejection of its Declaration was a compilation of texts, formally gathered in a substantial single volume, entitled A Declaration of the Army of England, Upon their March into Scotland, as also a Letter of his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell, To the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. Together with a Vindication of the aforesaid Declaration, from the uncharitable Constructions, odious imputations, and scandalous Aspersions of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, in their Reply thereto. And an Answer of the Under-Officers and Souldiers of the Army, to a Paper directed to them from the people of Scotland (1650). The decision to present material in a single volume was, of course, an implicit argument that the English responses were being coordinated, despite their obvious differences in theme and manner, in contrast to the occasional but much more consistently argued Scottish texts. The compilation was published in London and reprinted in Edinburgh by Evan Tyler – by then the official stationer of the new regime – after the occupation of the city. It was, in some sense, an official publication, a formal record of the pamphlet disputes which had accompanied the invasion. The text reproduced the original army declaration (dated c. 16 July) with Cromwell's letter to the General Assembly (dated 3 August), the Vindication (dated 16 August) and the response of the 'under-Officers and Souldiers' in To the People of Scotland (dated 1 August). ⁷⁶ The volume invited its readers to work through the texts in sequence, noticing the increasingly intemperate character of the rhetoric and the movement from covenantal through providential to ultimately apocalyptic arguments. But it was significant that the texts were not arranged in chronological order, a point made clear to the reader by the inclusion of dates of publication for several of the items, but in some kind of order of status, with the formal army declarations being followed by the informal appeal of the 'under-Officers and Souldiers.' At this distance it is difficult to be sure why the items were ordered as they were.

Of course, argument, polemic and appeal were all to no purpose. On 3 September, at Dunbar, the badly outnumbered English army dealt a crushing blow to the Scots, with the

loss of 20 English soldiers contrasting the loss of 3,000 and the capture of 10,000 Scots. The results of the battle had justified the apocalyptic escalation of rhetoric. It was, Cromwell noted on 4 September, 'one of the most signal mercies God hath done for England and His people,' and began the consolidation of power that would lead to the Cromwellian subjugation of Scotland.⁷⁷ We know, from Ireland and elsewhere, that Cromwellian policy recognised and attempted to exploit religious variety within the populations of the territories it sought to subject.⁷⁸ But the conquest of Scotland would be a greater challenge, for the new administration found it 'more difficult to manage its theologians than to conquer its armies,' and the conquering army could never quite conceal its unstable variety of religious opinion.

II

The literature of the invasion provides a critical context for John Owen's celebration of Independent ecclesiology, *The Branch of the Lord, the Beauty of Sion* (1650). The published material comprised the texts of sermons preached in Berwick and Edinburgh, but the pamphlet presented its contents as one seamless discourse. This signal of unity of intention across two sermons preached in different locations suggests that they were presented to a single audience – a moving congregation – the soldiers of the Parliamentary army. *The Branch of the Lord* reveals the extent to which the invasion literature represented a series of negotiated centres within the English ranks. We have already noted Scott Spurlock's suggestion that Owen may have been involved in the composition of *A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland*, and that the army pamphlets defend a very broad, somewhat undefined and finally unstable theological constituency against the much more clearly unified claims of the Presbyterians. *The Branch of the Lord* continues the attack

on the Presbyterians, but significantly moderates its defence of the broad consensus of the English army, and presents a much more robust critique of the radical claims within the army.

Owen argues that he had not set out to engage in controversy. 'It was with Thoughts of Peace, that I embraced my Call, to this Place, and Time of Warre,' he explained in his dedication to Cromwell, having intended to 'poure out a savour of the Gospel upon the Sons of Peace in this place.' Nevertheless he was resolutely opposed to the Scottish Presbyterian vision of covenanted uniformity. Owen's sermon presents the conflict as a war about ecclesiology, and deconstructs the Scottish Presbyterian consensus. His principal concern was to redefine the church as comprising not believers and their children, as the Presbyterian tradition claimed, but believers alone. 'Christ's Church of Saints, of believers, is God's House,' he argued, 'By the Church of Christ, I understand, primarily the whole Multitude of them, who antecedently, are chosen of his Father, and given unto him.' He argued that a true gospel church should be constituted only of 'elect, believers ... they alone are built on Christ, and thereby have union with him: not one dead rotten stone in all this Building, as shall be declared.' But he also presented himself as a convert, as someone who had only recently abandoned the Presbyterian assumption that the true church required the defence of the state:

Men looking upon the Church, do finde that it is a faire Fabrick indeed, but cannot imagine how it should stand. A few supporters it seemeth to have in the world ... Here you have a Magistrate, there an Army, or so think the men of the world, can we but remove these props, the whole would quickly topple to the ground: Yea, so foolish have I been my self, and so void of understanding before the Lord, as to take a View of some goodly appearing Props of this building, and to think, how shall the House be preserved if these should be removed.⁸³

The perennial problem, Owen believed, was that believers had a tendency to mistake their own inclinations for the commandments of Jesus Christ. 'Many attempts have been to set up light in this House, and not from Christ,' he explained. 'Some would kindle their Traditions or the Doctrine of this House: Some their Prudentials for the Government of it: Some their Ceremonials for the Worship of it,' but these were no more than 'Candles in the Sun.' And then he mounted his most searing critique of the Presbyterian position. Earlier in the summer, in A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, the Commissioners of the General Assembly had warned their readers of those who 'love to walk in the Immaginations of their own hearts, and in the light of their own fire, and in the sparkes that they have kindled, corrupting the truth of God, approving errors in themselves, and tolerating them in others.'84 But now, drawing explicitly on the same biblical texts, Owen enquired whether the Presbyterians should 'think to compasse themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of the fire which themselves have kindled, in the face of the Sun of Righteousness? shall not such men ly down in sorrow? Beloved, take heed of such *ignes fatui*, foolish misguided fires.'85 Of course, there were also 'foolish misguided fires' among the Cromwellian troops, Owen admitted, as he set out to explain the 'true light which lighteth every man' to resist the claims of the radicals. 86 But in The Branch of the Lord the contest between the Independents and the Presbyterians was a contest for the language of Scripture itself.

Owen believed that God would vindicate his use of the language of Scripture. The Presbyterians would certainly be destroyed, for 'an unjust Usurper had taken possession of the House, and kept it in bondage: Sathan had seized on it, and brought it, through the wrath of God, under his power. He then must be conquered, that the Lord Christ may have compleat possession of his own House.' Satan had conquered the Church of Scotland, but Jesus Christ would be its 'great Avenger.' Owen expected that 'he will not couch down, until he

eat and drink the blood of the slain.'⁸⁹ But shameful defeat could be avoided, for God 'beseeches them to be reconciled, who have done the wrong, and them to accept of *Peace*, who cannot abide the Battell.'⁹⁰

III

Many, it seems, were willing to accept that peace. In the aftermath of the invasion, when English victories defied the expectations of the Covenanters and appeared to vindicate the providential expectations of the Independents, a number of Scots withdrew their loyalty from the Church of Scotland. Alexander Jaffray was captured at Dunbar and imprisoned for six months, during which period, after conversations with Cromwell, Owen and John Fleetwood, he joined the Independents. 91 An anonymous convert published A Word of Advertisement & Advice to the Godly in Scotland by a Scotch Man, and a Cordiall Wel-wisher to the Interest of the Godly in Scotland, both in Civils and Spiritualls (1651) in order to help Scots learn the causes for which they had been 'so strangely deserted of God.' The pamphlet's appeal was moderate until its claim that the cause of the covenant 'hath the Mark of the Beast upon it.'93 The conversion of the anonymous pamphleteer paralleled that of Thomas Wood, whose ecclesiological convictions were recorded in *The Dead-Mans Testament: Or a letter written*, to all the Saints of God in Scotland (1651), which outlined the significance of the English conquest in the apocalyptic terms adopted by the under-officers and soldiers and in Owen's sermon, being, as its title page suggested, a 'view of the present Work of GOD against the Mystery of Iniquity ... in this day of the Lord's merciful dispensation, and of the judgement of the Whore.'94 Scots converts were picking up on the later apocalyptic denunciation of Presbyterianism, and making it their own.

But, of course, as Owen's sermon admitted, while these converts were sharing an apocalyptic register, they were not being required to adhere to a strictly defined or officially sanctioned creed. Those who switched their loyalty from the Church of Scotland to the Independents would have faced a bewildering variety of options in the marketplace of ideas that constituted the religious world of the army: 'Cromwell's army had become an immense debating society.'95 The printed texts justifying the English invasion did not advance a coherent political or religious ideology. But their manifold political style was eclipsed as the invasion succeeded, as a Cromwellian administration was established, and as senior members of the military staff, like Owen, faced down the language of the radical sects. What could be tolerated during the invasion could not be tolerated in its aftermath, and the free play of ideas which Cromwell had celebrated and defended in his communications to the Scots evolved into a more conservative appeal to the social and religious status quo. In some ways, we might see the closing down of broad religious variety in Scotland, and Owen's participation in it, anticipating the debate in England about the 'Humble Proposals' and the limits of official toleration – events in which Owen would again take a leading role. Nevertheless, as the invasion progressed, English Independents and their Scottish converts became increasingly persuaded that the Kirk had been right, and that the conflict did have apocalyptic consequences.

Notes

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² A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, p. 17; The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ed. W.C. Abbott, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1937-47), ii. 288. See, for context, Frances Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, 1651-1660 (Edinburgh1979), pp. 2-12; David Stevenson, 'Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland,' in John Morrill (ed.), Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution (London, 1990), pp. 149-80; J. D. Grainger, Cromwell against the Scots: The last Anglo-Scottish War, 1650-1652 (East Linton, 1997); John Morrill, 'Historical introduction and overview: The un-English civil war,' in John R. Young (ed.), Celtic dimensions of the British civil wars (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 1-17; Edward Furgol, 'The civil wars in Scotland,' in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds), The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland, and Ireland 1638-1660 (Oxford, 1998), pp. 41-71; David Farr, John Lambert, Parliamentary Soldier and Cromwellian Major-General, 1619-1684 (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 177-95; R. Scott Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland: Conquest and Religion, 1650-1660 (Edinburgh, 2007); Crawford Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English apocalyptic imagination, 1630-1650,' Scottish Historical Review 88:1 (2009), 34-56; Kirsteen McKenzie, 'Oliver Cromwell and the solemn league and covenant of the three kingdoms,' in Patrick Little (ed.), Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 142-67; Ian Gentles, Oliver Cromwell: God's Warrior and the English Revolution (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 121-34.

³ Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, pp. 2-12; Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland, pp. 7-38.

⁴ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, pp. 2-3, 16; R. Scott Spurlock, 'Cromwell's Edinburgh press and the development of print culture in Scotland,' *Scottish Historical Review* 90:1 (2011), 182-83.

⁵ Mark Kishlanksy, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 291.

⁶ Mercurius politicus, 11-18 July 1650, p. 88.

⁷ See, for example, 'the other night we received an Alarm, but it proved false; for we understand, the Scots Officers were that night only sitting in the Chaire of repentance,' and other reports which suggested that Charles and his aristocratic supporters 'do now feast and are jovial, yet in the midst thereof comes an alarm from England, which like a hand-writing on the wall, makes their joynts begin to tremble', *Perfect Passages of Every Daies Intelligence from the Parliaments Army*, 28 June – 5 July 1650, pp. 2, 7.

⁸ On the religious print culture of this period see David Stevenson, 'A revolutionary regime and the press: The Scottish Covenanters and their Printers, 1638-51,' *Union, Revolution and Religion in 17th-century Scotland* (Aldershot, 1997); A. J. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade, 1500-1720: Print Commerce and Print Control in Early Modern Scotland* (East Linton, 2000); Jason Peacey, 'Cromwellian England: A propaganda state?'

History 91 (2006), 176-99; Spurlock, 'Cromwell's Edinburgh press and the development of print culture in Scotland,' 179-203.

⁹ Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 134.

¹⁰ Cromwell invited the Scots to 'send as many of your Papers as you please amongst ours, they have free passage, I fear them not; what is of God in them, would it might be embraced and received;' *A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, as also, a Letter of his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell, to the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland* (London, 1650), Wing / D636, pp. 11-12; *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ii. 302. Given the similarity of some titles, I will distinguish between the publications of the English army by using reference numbers from the Short Title Catalogue.

¹¹ Copy in Glasgow University Library, Special Collections Ogilvie 728.

¹² Spurlock, 'Cromwell's Edinburgh press and the development of print culture in Scotland,' 180.

¹³ Recent scholarship has argued, by contrast, that Irish Cromwellian publications used apocalyptic language to describe Protestants as much as Catholics, and that the Cromwellian treatment of Irish Catholics was less homogenous than has been assumed; Gribben, *God's Irishmen*, pp. 3, 40, 49, 51, 94-95, 163, and R. Scott Spurlock, 'Cromwell and Catholics: Towards a reassessment of lay Catholic experience in Interregnum Ireland,' in Mark Williams and Stephen Paul Forrest (eds), *Constructing the Past: Writing Irish History, 1600-1800* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 157-79.

¹⁴ David Stevenson, 'Graham, James, first marquess of Montrose (1612-1650),' *ODNB*, s.v.

¹⁵ Mercurius politicus, 11-18 July 1650, p. 84.

¹⁶ Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, pp. 2-12.

¹⁷ A perfect diurnall of some passages and proceedings of, and in relation to, the armies in England and Ireland, 24 June – 31 June 1650, p. 1.

¹⁸ Causes of a Publick and solemn Humiliation appointed by the Commission of the General Assembly to be keeped through all the Congregations of this Kirk, upon the last day of June instant (Edinburgh, 1650), single page.

¹⁹ Causes of a Publick and solemn Humiliation, single page.

²⁰ Causes of a Publick and solemn Humiliation, single page.

²¹ A Seasonable and Necessary Warning Concerning Present Dangers and Duties from the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly unto all the Members of this Kirk (Edinburgh, 1650), p. 3.

²² A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, p. 4.

²³ A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, p. 5.

- ²⁸ Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. 283-88; Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland, pp. 3, 19; J. D. Ogilvie, 'Papers from an army press, 1650,' Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions 2 (1938-1945), 420-23.
- ²⁹ Letters from Roundhead Officers Written from Scotland and chiefly addressed to Captain Adam Baynes, July MDCL-June MDCLX, ed. John Yonge Akerman (Edinburgh, 1856), pp. 1-2; Perfect Diurnal, 22 July 1650, p. 393.
- ³⁰ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland (1650), Wing / D637, title page; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.288; Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland, pp. 20-30. The Declaration would be republished in London and Edinburgh.
- ³¹ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, p. 3; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.283.
- ³² A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, pp. 4, 15; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. pp. 283, 287.
- ³³ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, p. 4; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.283.
- ³⁴ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, pp. 10-11; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.286.
- ³⁵ Perfect Passages of Every Daies Intelligence from the Parliaments Army, 28 June 5 July 1650, p. 3.
- ³⁶ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, pp. 10-11; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.286.
- ³⁷ A perfect diurnall of some passages and proceedings of, and in relation to, the armies in England and Ireland, 24 June 31 June 1650, p. 324.
- ³⁸ Several Proceedings, 24 July 1650, p. 248.

²⁴ A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, p. 7.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 29:19; Jeremiah 3:17, 13:10, 16:12, 18:12; Isaiah 50:10.

²⁶ A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, p. 8.

²⁷ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, p. 17.

³⁹ A Declaration of the Army of England upon their March into Scotland, Wing / D637, p. 16; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.288; see Blair Worden, 'Providence and politics in Cromwellian England,' Past and Present 109 (1985), 55-99.

- ⁴¹ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, in answer to some printed papers, intitled, The Declaration of the Parliament of England, and the Declaration of the Army of England, upon their March into Scotland (Edinburgh, 1650), p. 3.
- ⁴² A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 22.
- ⁴³ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, pp. 7, 12-13.
- ⁴⁴ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 19.
- ⁴⁵ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 23.
- ⁴⁶ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 34.
- ⁴⁷ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 40.
- ⁴⁸ This time to the violator of the covenant in Psalm 55:20-21, to Simon Magus' attempt to buy the gifts of God in Acts 8:23, and, perhaps problematically, to Jacob's deceitful scheme to cheat his brother of his inheritance.
- ⁴⁹ A Declaration of the Committee of Estates of the Parliament in Scotland, p. 33. One English newsbook complained of the text's 'uncivill and reviling language' and its excessive length 'above 40 leaves of paper;' Several Proceedings, 24 July 1650, p. 247.
- ⁵⁰ A Short Reply unto a Declaration intituled the Declaration of the Army of England, p. 12.
- ⁵¹ For the 31 July date, see *A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, as also, a Letter of his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell, to the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland* (London, 1650), p. 35.
- ⁵² For the Under-Officers and Souldiers of the English Army, from the People of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1650), single sheet.
- ⁵³ Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, p. 8.
- ⁵⁴ Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland, p. 24. This text was initially printed as A Declaration of the English Army now in Scotland, touching the Justness and Necessity of their present Proceedings in that Nation (1650), printed in London on 12 August; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. pp.290-91.
- ⁵⁵ Perfect Diurnal of some Passages and Proceedings of, and in relation to the Armies in England and Ireland, 22-29 July 1650, pp. 379-80.

⁴⁰ Several Proceedings, 24 July 1650, p. 247.

- ⁵⁶ A Declaration of the Army of the Commonwealth of England, to the People of Scotland (1650, Wing [2nd ed., 1994] / D639), sig. A2.
- ⁵⁷ A Declaration of the Army of the Commonwealth of England, to the People of Scotland (1650, Wing [2nd ed., 1994] / D639), p. 6.
- ⁵⁸ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, pp. 35-42. I am citing this text from the later anthology of army publications as it does not appear to have survived in any earlier copy. The text was forwarded to the Scots by Cromwell; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.302.
- ⁵⁹ A Declaration of Several of the Churches of Christ, and Godly People in and about the Citie of London (1654), p. 9.
- ⁶⁰ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, p. 35.
- ⁶¹ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, p. 35.
- ⁶² A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, p. 38.
- ⁶³ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, pp. 36-7.
- ⁶⁴ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, pp. 40-41.
- ⁶⁵ B.S. Capp, The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-century English Millenarianism (London, 1972),
 p. 105; A Declaration of Several of the Churches of Christ, and Godly People in and about the Citie of London (1654), p. 3.
- ⁶⁶ Christopher Feake, *A Beam of Light Shining in the midst of much darkness and confusion* (1654), pp. 29-30. I owe this reference to the generosity of Joel Halcomb.
- ⁶⁷ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, p. 12; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. pp.302-3.
- ⁶⁸ Perfect Passages of Every Daies Intelligence from the Parliaments Army, 28 June 5 July 1650, pp. 3-4.
- ⁶⁹ Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. pp.306-7. See, for example, Harold Love, Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England (Oxford, 1993).
- ⁷⁰ A Declaration of the Army of England, upon their march into Scotland, Wing / D636, p. 11; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. 302.
- ⁷¹ A Short Reply unto a Declaratp.ion entitled, the Declaration of the Army of England upon their march into Scotland, Together with a Vindication of the Declaration of the Army of England upon their march into Scotland (1650), p. 19.
- ⁷² A Short Reply unto a Declaration entitled, the Declaration of the Army of England, p. 39.

- ⁷⁷ Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, p. 8; Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. p.324; C. Sanford Terry (ed.), The Cromwellian Union: Papers relating to the negotiations for an incorporating union between England and Scotland, 1651-1652 (Edinburgh, 1902).
- ⁷⁸ Spurlock, 'Cromwell and Catholics: Towards a reassessment of lay Catholic experience in Interregnum Ireland,' pp. 157-79.
- ⁷⁹ Andrew Thomson, 'Life of Owen,' in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 24 vols (Edinburgh, 1850-53), 1: cx.
- 80 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. *2.
- 81 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 3.
- 82 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 5.
- 83 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 15.
- ⁸⁴ A Seasonable and Necessary Warning, p. 7.
- 85 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 21.
- 86 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 21.
- 87 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 24.
- 88 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 40.
- 89 Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. 41.
- ⁹⁰ Owen, Branch of the Lord, p. *2.
- ⁹¹ John Coffey, *Politics, theology and the British revolutions: The mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 221; John Coffey, 'Jaffray, Alexander (1614-1673),' *ODNB*, s.v.
- ⁹² A Word of Advertisement & Advice to the Godly in Scotland by a Scotch Man, and a Cordiall Wel-wisher to the Interest of the Godly in Scotland, both in Civil and Spiritualls (Edinburgh, 1651), p. 3.
- ⁹³ A Word of Advertisement & Advice to the Godly in Scotland, p. 16.
- ⁹⁴ Thomas Wood, *The Dead-Mans Testament: Or a letter written, to all the Saints of God in Scotland* (Leith, 1651), title page.

⁷³ A Short Reply unto a Declaration entitled, the Declaration of the Army of England, p. 29.

⁷⁴ A Short Reply unto a Declaration entitled, the Declaration of the Army of England, p. 40.

⁷⁵ A Short Reply unto a Declaration entitled, the Declaration of the Army of England, p. 32.

⁷⁶ The first two items are reprinted in Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ii. pp.283-88, 302-3.

⁹⁵ Rufus M. Jones, Mysticism and democracy in the English Commonwealth: Being the William Belden Noble
Lectures delivered in Harvard University, 1930-1931 (New York, 1965), p. 153.