

Edwards, *Gangraena*, and Presbyterian Mobilization

In his long exculpatory Preface to Part Three of *Gangraena*, Edwards presented himself as an unworldly author, concerned only with the struggle against error, and not greatly involved with practical campaigns for Presbyterian church government:

I have beene willing to forsake my fatnesse and sweetnesse, to neglecte my profit, health, benefit of my Familie, all advantages, and in a sort to sequester my selfe from freinds, and all worldly enjoyments to spend my time, strength, spirits, estate, and all in reeding, writing, studying of the Controversies of these times . . . And as for Domination and affecting of Rule and Government, I have little meddled in that kind, beene at few meetings of that nature, and do professe I am so farre from being ambitious in that way, that I should account it a great happinesse to have a call to a place only to preach and write, and a yeerely Pension for the maintenance rather then Tythes.¹

Despite Edwards's lack of interest in the details of church government, this was mostly special pleading. We have seen that his account of radical sectarianism in London focused on error actively promulgated and its practical implications rather than on intellectual heterodoxy as such. Edwards was not an organizational leader of London Presbyterianism, but like all heresiographers he intended his work to have a definite impact on the world of domination and government. *Gangraena* clearly both reflected and sought to influence the programme of the city's zealous Presbyterians. Edwards feared shameful compromises would be made between Independents and Presbyterians: 'We have too many wounds with which we have been wounded in the house of our friends; many Ministers have and do undo us; some by their total silence, others by speaking too favourably of the sects'. The most fundamental principles of true religion were at stake: 'tis high time now to speak out, when the truth of God, the

¹ *Gangraena*, iii. sig.)(4^v.

Faith once delivered to the Saints, more pretious then our lives is almost lost, three Kingdoms almost ruined, and all the Reformed Churches in their truth and peace hazarded. Ministers that would 'let the wolves come freely, and not bark', deserved to be denounced as 'dumb dogs'. So 'all godly orthodox Ministers who would not have all run to ruine' should 'lift up their voices like trumpets . . . for he that is not now with God in his Cause, is against him'. Edwards's programme for action was addressed not simply to ministers but to all in authority: 'Magistrates, Ministers and other Christian Masters of Families, Parents etc have been asleep and too careless'.²

Edwards's friend Robert Baillie expected *Gangraena* to aid the orthodox cause. Writing in February 1646 as Part One was published, he rejoiced that

truely the body of the city is a zealous and understanding people, fully apprehensive of the mischief of the Sectaries among them. Their ministrie are faithfull watchmen; and some late books have done them good; especially Mr Edwards's *Gangraena*; which must either waken the Parliament, and all others, to lay to heart the spreading of the evill errors, or I know not what can doe it. The city is in so good a temper these two moneth as we would wish.³

Retrospectively, and from the opposite religious perspective, Edwards's targets or victims also credited him with significant influence. The journalist and future republican John Hall, briefly mentioned by Edwards, offered a rather detached, hostile summing-up, published in London in August 1647, a day or two after Edwards himself had fled the city, in the face of its occupation by the New Model Army, all his hopes in ruin:

This congregationall way never thought on till within a few yeeres, being free and leaving a scope to men's consciences, was much entertained by many Sectaries; nay some who carried only the character of pious and orthodox, and some under the colour of it broached opinions which were as new as the government. That occasioned the detestable Mr Edwards with a great deale of waspish and violent rancour to write his *Gangrena*: questionlesse this booke did a great deale of harme, for being full of falsities, and almost monkish forgeries did engage many to a justification who it may be would otherwise after the first evintitation of their fancies have sate still.

In particular, Hall argued, Edwards inflamed the soldiers of the New Model Army, thereby provoking the fatal confrontation with the Presbyterians in 1646–7. The army 'muttered at this booke, and some pro-

² *Ibid.* i. 155; ii. 198.

³ *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 352, to William Spang.

ceedings of the same nature, insomuch that the Presbyterian Party, which by some countenance of the State grew haughty, sought to oppose them, and in pursuance of it, wrought so farre upon the consciences of the Aldermen and Common-Counsell (men verst in little else but their trades, and utterly ignorant of State affaires) thought the greatnesse of their Citie sometimes engaged them, that they petitioned the Parliament to disband the Army.⁴ William Walwyn, friend of Clement Writer, advocate of toleration and Leveller, writing in 1649, also blamed *Gangraena* for the emergence of bitter, self-defeating cleavages amongst parliamentarians:

In the year 1646, whilst the army was victorious abroad, through the union and concurrence of conscientious people, of all judgments, and opinions in religion; there brake forth here about London a spirit of persecution; whereby private meetings were molested, & divers pastors of congregations imprisoned, & all threatened; Mr Edwards, and others, fell foule upon them, with his Gangreen after Gangreen, slander upon slander, to make them odious, and so to fit them for destruction, whether by pretence of law, or open violence he seemed not to regard; and amongst the rest, abused me, which drew from me *A whisper in his ear*, and some other discourses, tending to my own vindication, and the defence of all conscientious people.⁵

Edwards was thus blamed for smearing the (sectarian) godly and inflaming divisions, or alternatively praised for bolstering the zeal of the (orthodox) godly. Modern scholars can be quoted to the same effect as Edwards's contemporaries. He was, concluded Valerie Pearl, 'the man who did so much to embroil the religious parties in London and to split the nation into factions'.⁶ The accumulation of quotations does not amount to a conclusive argument for the influence of *Gangraena*. The difficulties in isolating Edwards's precise role in political transformations and intensifying bitterness are obvious.

⁴ L. L. N. [John Hall], *A True Account and Character of the Times* (London, 1647), BL E401 (13), Thomason date 9 Aug. 1647, 4–5. This work is discussed in David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 71, and see also Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 187–90, for Hall as an apostle of rationalism and 'Baconian modernity'. This idiosyncratic pamphlet called for Edwards and Burgess and other 'hotter spirited men' to be punished as incendiaries, argued that Presbyterian government was incompatible with 'our civill government' and supported moderate episcopacy. It finally proposed the reopening of the theatres.

⁵ *Walwyn's Just Defence* (London, 1649), here taken from Haller and Davies (eds.), *Leveller Tracts*, 352.

⁶ Pearl, 'London Puritans and Scotch Fifth Columnists', 526–7.

This book, taking Edwards's *Gangraena* as its focus, inevitably risks crediting it with too great an influence on contemporary events. The danger of seeing the world only through Edwards's eyes and in his terms cannot wholly be avoided. Readers may well need to be more sceptical than this author. Edwards died in exile, a disappointed man; his positive impact fell far short of his own hopes, and it may plausibly be argued that the most clear-cut result of *Gangraena's* arguments was the negative one of uniting the opponents of the Presbyterian programme. It is rarely possible to decide whether Edwards is reflecting, exacerbating, or creating religious divisions or to credit him specifically with particular initiatives. In Chapter 4 I argued that *Gangraena* was the most notorious and widely discussed work of zealous Presbyterian polemic in this period, but I have also shown that it took its place amongst a large body of intertextual, mutually reinforcing printed work by Bastwick, Prynne, Ricraft, and Vicars attacking 'toleration' and 'sectarianism'.

But 'either-or' solutions to questions of influence are not appropriate to the complex processes of mobilization and fragmentation amongst parliamentarians in the mid-1640s: *Gangraena's* three parts arose from, had an impact on, and were influenced by the religious and political cleavages of city and nation. As a polemicist, Edwards often described the world as he wished it to be, hoping Presbyterians would live up to his account of their zeal; analysis must focus on interactions between author, book, and context, and on affinities of language and theme, rather than on direct, demonstrable influences. In this chapter I will begin with some general discussion of how *Gangraena* affected mid-seventeenth-century alignments and how it has influenced our own understandings of politics and religion in the 1640s.

What follows is a combination of narrative for 1645–8 with thematic analysis of particular initiatives and turning points. Particular attention is paid to London, the headquarters of the Presbyterian vanguard, and the site of Edwards's own activities. In London, Edwards was both chronicler of and participant in Presbyterian victories and setbacks. The information and appeals for a zealous orthodox fightback that filled the pages of *Gangraena* are integrated with an account of religious divisions and Presbyterian campaigns in the city based on alternative sources such as Juxon's Journal, and major recent accounts of London by Robert Brenner and Keith Lindley. For London, and beyond, I shall highlight Edwards's own role and suggest affinities in language, priority, and changes of emphasis between *Gangraena* and Presbyterian campaigns in city, provinces, and parliament.

EDWARDS AND PARLIAMENTARIAN DIVISIONS

Antapologia was published at almost the same time as parliament's crushing victory at Marston Moor, a victory for which, in the view of men like Edwards and Baillie, the 'Independent' troops of Cromwell were given all too much credit. By this time Edwards and Baillie already saw the world in terms of two sharply polarized religious groupings—parties even—of Presbyterians and Independents, whose fortunes depended on a contest for support in parliament and the city of London, and on the relative success (or perceived success) of their military counterparts, the Scottish army and the Eastern Association Army commanded by the Earl of Manchester, but identified increasingly in 1644 with Oliver Cromwell. In London it was well known by spring 1644 that Colonel Charles Fleetwood permitted the heretical speculations of John Boggis or Laurence Clarkson in Great Yarmouth. These two, like Richard Beaumont who was made captain in the summer of 1644, were to be made notorious by Edwards's *Gangraena*. On the other hand, in Lincoln Colonel Edward King (already a man with a reputation as an enemy of the sects, already a friend of Prynne) had emerged as a determined enemy of the radical John Lilburne. We know from the careful work of Clive Holmes and Anne Laurence that the Eastern Association Army as a whole was not as radical as many contemporaries believed. But their perceptions, made credible by specific dramatic incidents, helped to structure contemporary writing and political action. Robert Baillie is a well-documented example, complaining from May 1644, that the army had been 'seduced to Independencie, and very many of them have added either Anabaptisme or Antinomianisme or both.'⁷ Baillie's (and Edwards's) habit of connecting the twists and turns of their religious fortunes to military success was shared by more radical commentators such as the London militia commander and broadly 'Independent' sympathizer Thomas Juxon. From the autumn of 1644, Juxon put the conflicts in the Eastern Association Army in a religious context: Cromwell's quarrel with Manchester was provoked by his 'beinge firme to the Scotts and their Church Discipline'. On the other hand, Juxon placed religious developments in a military context. When Essex's army surrendered in Cornwall, 'Independent' influence increased and parliament ordered the Westminster Assembly to set up a committee for accommodation between Presbyterians and Independents: 'This was much

⁷ Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 188–9, 199–203; Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains*, 28; *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 146.

stomached at by the Scotts and or Rigid Presbyterians and delayed. The moderate Partie inclined much to ye Independents'. But when the Presbyterian Scots took Newcastle, 'The Parliament crouch soe farr as to saende by severall of the Lords with the Mace their love to the Assembly' and suspended their former order. 'Thus', concluded Juxon grimly, 'the Scotts inroach uppo us'.⁸

Military reform in the spring of 1645 did not alter such perceptions. Although Holmes and Kishlansky have variously argued that the Self-Denying Ordinance and the creation of the New Model Army were a means, in the short term at least, of containing the religious conflict unleashed in the quarrel between Manchester and Cromwell, the army in general, and Cromwell in particular, were increasingly linked to the cause of liberty of conscience. In July 1645, Baillie complained of the 'retardment we may have from this great victorie [Naseby] obtained most by the Independent partie'.⁹ In September 1645, Cromwell's postscript in his letter to the House of Commons announcing the fall of Bristol, rejoiced in the fact that 'Presbyterians, Independents, all have here the same spirit of faith and prayer, the same pretence and answer; they agree here, know no names of difference; pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere . . . As for being united in forms, commonly called Uniformity, every Christian will for peace sake study and do, as far as conscience will permit, and from brethren, in things of the mind, we look for no compulsion, but that of light and reason.' According to George Thomason, 'This was printed by the Independent party and scattred up and downe the streets last night, but expresly omitted by order of the House'.¹⁰ Had the Scots army done better service in the summer, Baillie felt, the Assembly's attempts to strengthen the Presbyterian ordinances would not have been condemned by parliament as an arbitrary power.¹¹

Throughout the pages of *Gangraena*, Edwards's disappointment at the limited impact of *Antapologia* is palpable. Sects continued to multiply, errors to spread, while orthodox plans for reformed government and discipline were stillborn. Through the lucky success of a dangerous army and the failures of the zealous, a Presbyterian sell-out in the discussions on

⁸ DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 24^r, 26^v; (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 59, 61).

⁹ Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 209–11; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, ch. 2; *Letters of Baillie*, ii, 291.

¹⁰ The illicit broadside is BL Thomason 669, fo. 10 (38); the postscript was omitted in the *Lords Journals*, and the official publication (Thomason, BL E301 (18)). It was reprinted in Rutherford, *Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist*, 250, to show how dangerous Cromwell was.

¹¹ *Letters of Baillie*, ii, 325.

'accommodation' renewed in November 1645 seemed a real possibility. Baillie condemned the Committee for Accommodation in his *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, and worried especially about the moderation of its chairman, Stephen Marshall, who was proving the Independents' 'most diligent agent', urging Presbyterians to grant 'much more than my heart can yield to'. The committee was still sitting when *Gangraena*, Part One came out and Edwards's remarks about Presbyterian lukewarmness, or want of courage, are to be read in this context.¹²

In the three parts of *Gangraena*, Edwards elaborated his polarized world view. In Part One he summed up the Presbyterian party as 'the Assembly of Divines, the Representative body of the City, the Court of Common Council, the Ministry of the kingdom, thousands and ten thousands of godly well-affected persons, the Kingdom of Scotland, yea all the Reformed Churches own that way'. In Part Three, he predicted violent confrontation, albeit through the indirect reporting of London gossip:

The sectaries in the Moneth of May last raged extremely, and spake desperately . . . one sectary a kind of Gentleman belonging to a Parliament man said in the hearing of some, that the King, the House of Lords, the City, the Scots, and the Assembly were joyned together, but they had the House of Commons and the Army; and gave out some such words as if some three or foure thousand horse should billet in the City.¹³

In Part Three also, Edwards discussed at length the political attitudes of Lilburne and Overton, and was concerned at several points to emphasize the close relationships between city and army sectaries, and their mutual hostility to Presbyterianism.

Through his descriptions, his calls to action, and his labelling or name calling, Edwards constructed a misleadingly simple account of the religious and political divisions of the later 1640s. His account of the 'Independents and sectaries' in city, country, and army blurred or ignored many significant differences, most obviously between respectable Independents such as Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, and the wilder sectaries, but also between John Goodwin's congregation of 'Saints' and the campaigners for popular power congregating around Lilburne and Overton, or between the army and the city radicals. Edwards's account of Presbyterianism also was wishful thinking as much as description; his repeated laments—'such a time have we fallen into of Lukewarmnesse'—designed

¹² *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 326, 343; *Gangraena*, i. 141–2; for the revival of the Committee for Accommodation: Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 128.

¹³ *Gangraena*, i. 57; iii. 182.

to ignite Presbyterian campaigns as determined and united as he believed the radical 'party' to be—'Oh if so few have done so much, and that in a bad cause, what might not we doe in a good cause'. He ignored divisions on the precise arrangements for church government, alluded only in passing to those amongst the orthodox who believed in 'accomodation' with Independents rather than confrontation, and never suggested that there were English 'Presbyterians' who lacked his own enthusiasm for the Scots.¹⁴

Edwards's account of divisions should be seen as invocation, as an attempt to bring polarization into being, rather than as dispassionate description. We can thus mobilize a great deal of evidence that does not fit Edwards's categories. We have already seen that he misrepresented the position of relatively moderate provincial figures such as Eaton or Durant, and the account he gave of the progress of his arch-enemy John Goodwin to separatism and Arminianism did not do full justice to the complexity of Goodwin's journey. In his belated reply to *Antapologia*, Goodwin insisted that he, like Edwards, had preached 'agst the faces of three of the more predominant Errors (as I judge them) or sects amongst us' (these were Antinomians, Anabaptists, and Seekers), and was now in his Lord's Day lecture busy 'about the pulling downe of the error of the Anti-Scripturists (more dangerous and pestentiall then all the rest)'.¹⁵

Although he made some opportunist comments on how even Independents disapproved of Burton's tactics or John Goodwin's theology, Edwards was not concerned to explore the complex positions of those who did not fit his labelling. The London Independent Nathaniel Holmes, briefly mentioned in *Gangraena*, attacked Goodwin's views on salvation, and defended infant baptism, although he was to associate himself with radical millenarian politics in the 1650s.¹⁶ A modern study of Giles Firmin, the New England returner who became an Essex minister, sees him as working for peace and godly unity. In *Gangraena*, he features in the letters from Harmar as 'an Independent Apothecary Physitian', whose only previous preaching experience was on board ship, and his attempts at peace-making are dismissed as 'jesuit-like'. A credulous reader of *Gangraena* would have been surprised to learn that Firmin was the son-in-law of the virulent anti-army preacher Nathaniel Ward, that although he rejected the labels of either Independent or Presbyterian, he was licensed as a

¹⁴ Ibid. iii. Preface, sig. []^r, 281.

¹⁵ *Apologesiates*, Preface sig. A^r; More, 'New Arminians', chs. 6, 7.

¹⁶ *Gangraena*, i. 72; cf. Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 109–10, 123; Liu, *Puritan London*, 95 n. 91, 108; Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 273, 563.

Presbyterian preacher in 1672, and that he wrote critically of Hugh Peter to Winthrop, in July 1646: 'I could wishe hee did not too much Countenance the Opinionists which wee did so cast out in N. England. I know he abhors them in his heart, but hee hath many hang upon him, being a man of such use'. Firmin claimed he had been singled out by Edwards precisely because he did not fit the radical New England stereotype.¹⁷ On the other hand a reader would have wondered how the Assemblyman William Strong, who passed on Richard Baxter's letter concerning the army to Edwards, could be generally described as an Independent. The degree to which respectable Independents agreed with Presbyterians on doctrine, even as they differed on church government, is masked throughout Edwards's writing. Edwards's Cambridge contemporaries Thomas Goodwin and William Bridge defended doctrinal orthodoxy in the Assembly. In a debate on sins liable to excommunication in January 1645 Bridge insisted that Arminians and Socinians were heretics and blasphemers.¹⁸

We must be wary of ignoring chronological changes in the relationships between Presbyterians and respectable Independents. Practical cooperation was much easier after 1647 or 1649, once attempts at an authoritarian, compulsive church government had been decisively defeated, and Presbyterians needed all the protection they could find. Nonetheless it is worth rehearsing some of the extensive evidence of men with very different labels working together as John Brinsley and William Bridge did in Yarmouth in the 1650s. In London members of gathered churches were often prepared to contribute to the running of their parishes: Edmund Rosier, the pastor of an Independent church, acted as a churchwarden in his parish of Mary Abchurch in 1655; another pastor, Praisegod Barebone, and the militia Colonel Rowland Wilson, Peter's host during a debate reported in *Gangraena*, both audited parish accounts throughout the period.¹⁹

But even in the mid-1640s there are men whose actions and beliefs do not fit the Presbyterian–Independent cleavage, of whom the most inter-

¹⁷ Susan Hardman Moore, 'Arguing for Peace: Giles Firmin on New England and Godly Unity', in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in the Church (Studies in Church History, 32, 1996)*, 251–61; Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 197; *Gangraena*, i. 68–9 (2nd sequence); ii. 63, 99; *Winthrop Papers* (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1947), 89.

¹⁸ For Strong see *DNB*; his funeral sermon (in 1654) was preached by the 'Presbyterian' Obadiah Sedgwick who had attacked heresy in 1647. Mitchell and Struthers (eds.), *Minutes*, 41; Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 101. Thomas Goodwin lectured in favour of infant baptism in 1644, according to John Tombes, *Apology*, 9.

¹⁹ For Yarmouth see *DNB*, John Brinsley; for London, Liu, *Puritan London*, 185–6. I owe the qualifications to discussion with Peter Lake. For a good summing-up of the contrasts between the 1640s and the 1650s in London see Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 569 n. 15.

esting is the London preacher Joseph Caryl, usually defined as an Independent, and a clear opponent of the enterprise represented by *Gangraena*, yet willing to cooperate with city Presbyterianism in 1647. Caryl, preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and pastor of Magnus parish, preached, with Hugh Peter, at the April 1646 thanksgiving to mark the reconciliation between city and parliament. Caryl took the opportunity to criticize heresiography. He accepted there were 'errors amongst us and some very dangerous, destructive and damnable', but there were perhaps not as many errors as the heresiographers claimed: 'I shall never believe all Heresiographers for his sake who put Aerius into his Catalogue for opposing prelacy. There may be an error in taxing some with errors'. Wherever heresy and error opposed sound doctrine, the godly should use 'all the penalties which Chirst hath charged upon it', but the 'artillery, ammunition and weapons' were to be found in the Gospels not in the 'Pope's forge'. The godly should not use 'Antichrist's broom to sweep Christ's home'. For Caryl, classical Presbytery was apparently among the Gospel weapons against error: he attended the fourth London Classis until 1649. He took a particularly active part in the rigorous examination of the Independent Joseph Symonds, recently returned from Rotterdam, who was chosen in December 1646 by the vestrymen of Michael Cornhill (with Ralph Smith and John Bellamy amongst them) to take over Burroughs's place as the expository lecturer there. Questioned on his rumoured support for toleration, Symonds insisted he 'hath preached ye contrarie doctrine this last summer'. Nonetheless the Classis' demand for written assurances in the end led Symonds's backers to move the lecture elsewhere. Here Caryl, working with the determined Presbyterian Henry Roborough, took a harder line than Edwards who regarded Symonds as 'one of the moderatest and modestest of that way'.²⁰

As Chapter 2's discussions of preaching on heresy have suggested, there were men labelled as Presbyterians who did not live up to Edwards's definitions. Richard Vines, we remember, did not want in April 1644 to 'proclaime open warre against lesser differences', while Thomas Hill preaching the next day presented a similarly balanced view, denouncing error, but showing insight into how the godly might flounder: 'Many desiring to runn farre from Popery and prelacy, (which formerly oppressed their spirits) have now before they were aware, ingaged themselves in the very

²⁰ Caryl, *England Plus Ultra*, 23–5; for his career see *DNB* and Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, 103–4; Surman (ed.), *Register Booke of the Fourth Classis*, 5–6, 8–10, 77; Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 186–8; *Gangraena*, iii. 243. Edwards had severely criticized proceedings in Rotterdam, however.

quarters of the Arminians and Socinians'. He argued that 'Before wee speake or think of tolerating or banishing', the orthodox should try to reconcile differences and reclaim people from error through education, preaching, and catechizing.²¹ Attitudes hardened, not least through Edwards's *Antapologia*, but in July 1645, Hill was still preaching unity, hoping to avoid both the 'Confusion' of Independency and the 'Severity' of Presbyterianism. For Hill, unity against the ceremonies and episcopacy, and in favour of parish discipline, should overcome division on church government.²² As late as March 1647, there was some hesitancy in Richard Vines's treatment of heresy, as we shall see below. Finally of course, the 'Presbyterian' Stephen Marshall, proponent of 'accommodation' in 1644–5 and the principal peacemaker of 1647, was a perennial source of anxiety and disappointment to his more single-minded brethren. One acquaintance of Edwards's certainly never forgave him; Robert Baillie wrote to Simeon Ashe in December 1655, 'I am sorie Mr Marshall is a-dying: he was ever in my heart a very eminent man', but he had 'long ago lost the hearts of our Nation', through his betrayal of the Covenant and his rapprochement with Cromwell.²³

The orthodox godly did not spend the 1640s concerned only with church government or even the struggle against heresy; a positive concern with godly reformation and their own spiritual fulfilment remained equally important and cut across 'party' lines. Amongst the preachers regularly heard in the 1640s by Walter Yonge, junior, son of a parliamentary diarist, were Cranford and Jenkyn; the notes he took focused on the pursuit of holiness and sanctification. Jenkyn preached a whole series on these themes with texts from the Song of Solomon, urging his hearers not to rely on outward ordinances, 'many belive that ye hearing of ye word and formall duties will effect or salvation, this is a poor weak means'. At this level there was common ground with Dell. Nehemiah Wallington, whose pride in his election as a parish elder prompted him to write a book, heard Independent preachers like Hugh Peter as well as Presbyterians. In the same spirit Alderman William Underwood, a ruling elder in Stephen Wallbrook, left bequests to the Independent pastor George Cockayne as well as to his Presbyterian parish minister Thomas Watson.²⁴

²¹ Vines, *Impostures of Seducing Teachers*, 30; Hill, *Good old Way*, 41–6.

²² Hill quoted in Cliffe, *Puritans in Conflict*, 121–2. ²³ *Letters of Baillie*, iii, 302–3.

²⁴ BL Add MS 18781–2 (quoting 18781, fo. 40, Mar. 1644); Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 147–9 and n. 241, 171–2; Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 162. In the later 1640s the Worcestershire gentleman Nicholas Lechmere heard a range of city preachers including Richard Vines, Simeon Ashe, Stephen Marshall, William Strong, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Manton, and

From one angle—Edwards’s angle—we discern bitter religious divisions; from another we can see a broader unity of purpose amongst the orthodox godly. It is unsurprising then that modern accounts differ sharply, or that there is a very strong correlation between reliance on Edwards as a source and a polarized view of religious divisions. For Murray Tolmie, Edwards’s account of an Independent–sectarian coalition was an accurate judgement, revealing the Independents’ own disingenuousness in concealing the full extent of their commitment to religious liberty and gathered churches. Tolmie’s account of the 1640s draws heavily on both *Antapologia* and *Gangraena*: ‘Thomas Edwards complained bitterly, and justly, that the *Apologeticall Narration* was far from being the frank and full statement of the Independents’ differences from the Presbyterians that it professed to be’, and criticizes those like Nuttall who have ignored *Antapologia* in their stress on what ‘Independents’ and ‘Presbyterians’ had in common. Tolmie suggests, like Edwards, that the ‘deliberate reticence’ of the *Apologeticall Narration* was tactical; the Independents’ hopes of gaining parliamentary support ‘depended in part at least on concealing from their secular allies the full degree of their commitment to the gathered church.’²⁵ On the other hand, for those who stress the common ground amongst the godly, or the late and hesitant emergence of divisions, Edwards is not a useful or valid source. Where Tolmie regards ‘the assumption implicit in this policy [of accommodation] . . . that the moderate English Presbyterians and the Independent Clergy had more in common than the latter had with the sects’, as misguided or even dishonest, for others, such as Zakai and Bremer, who do not make much use of Edwards, it was a simple fact. Bremer, unlike Edwards and Tolmie, takes the *Apologeticall Narration* at face value, and emphasizes the role of moderates such as Marshall, Herle, and even Calamy. For him, ‘the failure to achieve a mutually acceptable settlement has often obscured the degree to which most who would later be designated Congregationalists and Presbyterians wished for such an agreement and sincerely worked for it in the period before 1644.’²⁶ Kishlansky’s rejection of ‘biased’ sources like *Gan-*

John Tombes: BL Add MS 39940–2. I am indebted to Stephen Roberts for giving me a copy of his notes on Lechmere.

²⁵ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 94–9, 128–9, 218 n. 49 (for the comment on Nuttall), 226 n. 31.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 126; Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 131–7, at 131; in other passages Bremer argues that accommodation remained a real possibility until late 1645. Avihu Zakai, ‘Religious Toleration and its Enemies: the Independent Divines and the Issue of Toleration during the English Civil War’, *Albion*, 21 (1989), 1–33; this does not use *Gangraena* at all, and misspells

graena clearly contributes to his overall account of the painful emergence of adversary politics, at least a year later than Baillie's or Edwards's accounts of the implications of Marston Moor.²⁷

The existence of a 'reality' at odds with that presented by Edwards, and the rival modern accounts based on these contrasting bodies of evidence, bring us closer to a provisional assessment of Edwards's impact. This requires a more sophisticated understanding of political identities, both individual and collective, as more fragmentary, contradictory, and contingent than dominant modes of analysis imply. To oversimplify, three main approaches can be found in discussions of civil-war political and religious division since the 1960s, based on boxes, linear developments, or factions. There is a drive to fit people into hard and fast categories; they are Presbyterians, members of a 'war party', or Levellers, and once the definitions are clarified they can be put in the right boxes.²⁸ On the other hand, there is a search for a clearly defined turning point, the time when once and for all religious and political divisions emerged, party alignments were fixed, or adversary politics sprang into life. The main alternative to the boxes or the timeline is to see politics in terms of shifting factions, based on practical matters such as patronage connections or regional interests.²⁹

Thinking about the impact of a piece of polemic like *Gangraena* may help us move away from these oversimple categories without jettisoning the importance of principle.³⁰ Political identities are not self-contained or coherent, political alliances are not fixed or given, but are always under construction, and never more so than in a period of massive and traumatic disruption, such as civil war. The developments of the 1640s brought

Antapologia. Some of the judgements here—that Caryl was an Independent, and John Goodwin a sectary—need refinement. Zakai stresses Independent opposition to unlimited toleration, and their support for the authority of the civil magistrate in religion. Liu, *Puritan London*, presents a view of shifting alliances amongst the godly in the city although he argues it is unwise to distinguish too sharply between 'middle way' Independents and sectaries.

²⁷ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 139–50.

²⁸ See e.g. the controversy over Presbyterians, Independents, and 'Presbyterian-Independents' variously interpreted in the 1960s, and wisely discussed in Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, ch. 3. Some discussions of the 'Levellers' also work with rigid, self-defeating definitions, see Hughes, 'Gender and Politics in Leveller Literature'.

²⁹ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, traces the emergence of adversary politics. For accounts based on patronage or regional networks see J. S. A. Adamson, 'The Baronial Context of the English Civil War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 40 (1990); David Scott, 'The "Northern Gentlemen": The Parliamentary Independents and Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Long Parliament', *Historical Journal*, 42 (1999). All these works are more subtle than my summary suggests.

³⁰ See Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, 16–23.

shifting possibilities and dilemmas as different groups competed to make the parliamentary cause identical with their particular religious and political aims. Edwards and his associates experienced the bitter fragmentation of old friendships—seen most starkly in the defection of the martyr Henry Burton from his fellow sufferers Bastwick and Prynne. They engaged in intensely fought contests over the meaning of the experiences of harassment, nonconformity, and exile in the 1630s, and faced the sabotage (as they saw it) of the long-hoped for reformation of the church by men who also claimed to represent parliamentarianism and godliness.

Edwards's labels and alliances may have involved as much wishful thinking as accurate reportage, but, to put it naively, polemical definitions have a way of coming 'true' through their capacity to constrain possibilities for debate and action, limiting what it was possible to say or the alliances it was feasible to form. Discursive strategies have the power to effect change, interacting of course with more obvious structures—in city government, parliament, and army. The labels insisted on by zealous polemicists were appeals for support, attempts to transform fragmented aims and identities into coherent programmes and parties, not boxes into which people automatically or easily fitted. Polemicists do not simply reflect, or act as tools of, a pre-existing power base. Polemical strategies, such as that headed by Edwards's *Gangraena*, worked like the shaking of a kaleidoscope, turning a complex mixture into a momentarily simpler pattern, which then dissolved and formed again in a subtly different fashion.³¹

Many scholars of the mid-1640s have rightly stressed that the majority of MPs, Common Councillors, and ministers were 'not party men', having more confused or contradictory aims.³² But the central issue is not how political actors should be classified, but how minorities are able to impose their vision or programme on those whose views are less developed or less committed. Political groups often coalesce in the face of a perceived common enemy as much as in agreement around particular programmes, and here vivid propaganda like *Gangraena* had its effect, offering an all too plausible sectarian-Independent 'other' against which 'Presbyterians'

³¹ Cf. Zaret's comment on how, in printed petitions, 'public opinion is nominally constituted in texts for the purpose of influencing individual opinions': 'Petitions and the "Invention" of Public Opinion', 1532–3. In a most illuminating study Anthony Milton shows how Peter Heylyn's polemic helped to create a vision of Laudianism within a shifting and unstable ideological process: Anthony Milton, 'The Creation of Laudianism: A New Approach', in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity: Early Stuart Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³² See e.g. Mahoney, 'Presbyterian Party', 30–1; Underdown, *Prides Purge*, 46–7.

could unite. It thus helped to create clear-cut polarities out of a muddled 'reality'. In the process Edwards (and those with whom he was allied) constructed a coherent aggressive Presbyterianism as well as a sinister Independent coalition, encompassing horrible blasphemy and terrible error, threatening civil authority and backed by a powerful army. The cleavage of 1646–7 was not permanent or stable and its terrible climax in August 1647 when the New Model Army occupied London was not inevitable. The city zealots drew back from the brink of armed conflict; but for a crucial period, Edwards's fatal simplifications sabotaged rival possibilities for alliance amongst the orthodox godly.

One enlightening if dangerous exercise is to explore an alternative 1640s chronology to that of increasingly bitter division between 'Presbyterians' and 'Independents', a chronology based on the undoubted common ground on Calvinist doctrine, the need for godly reformation, and an educated and ordained ministry, between men who preferred a Presbyterian church and those who believed in the autonomy of the gathered congregation. This—we could call it the Bremer chronology—might start with the agreement at Calamy's house in 1641, and continue with the attempts at 'accomodation' in 1644–5, regarding them as genuine negotiations with some chance of success, rather than, as Tolmie suggests, dishonest postponements of an inevitable breach.³³ The successful intermediary role of Nye and Marshall in August 1647 would also feature in this framework as would the continuing attempts to construct voluntary associations of provincial ministers, 'Presbyterian' or 'Independent', and to achieve national agreement on 'fundamentals' of doctrine, throughout the 1650s.³⁴ This counterfactual exercise suggests that the Presbyterian–Independent split seen as inevitable by Tolmie and others was in fact the product of contingent polemical competition within an unstable

³³ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 128, should be contrasted with Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 155. An alternative view of the divisions of the 1640s, which will no doubt qualify some of the argument here, is found in Como, 'Puritans and Heretics', 408–9, which stresses divisions between formalist/legalist Puritans (who turned to Presbyterianism as a way of controlling behaviour) and those (including Nye and Thomas Goodwin) who stressed an assurance that came from the spirit and the gospel rather than from outward duties: 'the battles over church government masked a more fundamental intellectual and emotional bifurcation within puritanism, a split over that most basic of Christian antinomies, the relationship between Law and Gospel'. But some Presbyterians (including the zealous Jenkyn) stressed the spirit, and some Independents, in New England at least, attacked anti-formalism in Antinomian form.

³⁴ See e.g. Blair Worden, 'Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate', in W. S. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Studies in Church History, 21, Oxford, 1984); Hughes, 'The Frustrations of the Godly', in John Morrill (ed.), *Revolution and Restoration*.

spectrum of opinion. That the alternative chronology remained unrealized was in part because of the panic over error and the bitterness at its toleration generated by Edwards's *Gangraena* and other polemic, although amongst other factors one might point to the incoherence of the respectable congregational position within a developed Protestant state as opposed to an exile community in the Netherlands or the 'wilderness' of New England. We know that in practice anxiety about separatism and heresy divided the orthodox godly in the 1640s, as the Quaker 'threat' in the 1650s brought them closer together. The division that prevailed in the 1640s was between Independents and sectaries, on the one hand, and Presbyterians, on the other; in the 1650s Presbyterians and Independents were set against sectaries and Quakers. Was this the only possible trajectory, or had Edwards's success in linking schism and heresy so closely in 1646 done much to eliminate more positive developments for the supporters of godly reformation?³⁵ The following detailed treatment should help provide some answers.

EDWARDS, GANGRAENA, AND LONDON PRESBYTERIANISM

Edwards completed Part One of *Gangraena* as city Presbyterians and members of the Westminster Assembly began a dynamic petitioning campaign against the inadequacies of parliament's ordinance of August 1645 on church government, a campaign that led to a bruising collision with parliament and ultimately a humiliating climbdown. From its earliest sessions, the majority of the Assembly linked the dangers of heresy and schism, discussed in Chapter 3, to delays in the settling of church government. From the start London ministers, of whom Edwards was one, worked closely with allies in the Assembly. A petition from London ministers in November 1643 prompted the Assembly's Declaration against the gathering of churches the following month. The Common Council planned to reinforce the ministers' petition through their own petition to parliament:

that they would be pleased to speed the settlement of church government for the quieting of the minds of the people, and that private persons may be prohibited to anticipate the wisdom of both Houses of Parliament by assembling themselves together and exercising of church discipline without the warrant of the civil power,

³⁵ Cf. Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 162–3, 235.

which tends much to the dishonour of Parliament and the disturbance of the church, City and kingdoms.³⁶

The city ministers themselves petitioned the Commons in September 1644 for the expedition of the Directory and a settled church government, and again the following March urged they be given effective powers to keep back the ignorant and scandalous from the sacrament.³⁷

But zealous Presbyterian ministers in city and Assembly considered the August 1645 ordinance to be wholly inadequate, especially as it established lay commissioners as the final court of appeal for those denied admission to the sacrament, rather than a national assembly as in a fully Presbyterian system. With fears already sharpened and tempers rising, through the Assembly's concern with Paul Best and John Archer's book, the 'Savile affair', and Cromwell's appeal from Bristol for religious liberty, the London clergy began a petitioning campaign and Edwards, presumably, hastened to finish his catalogue of religious error. The unsympathetic Juxon believed the campaign was 'fomented by the severall Ministers . . . against the Independents', while Baillie blessed God for the steadfastness of city and people.³⁸ There are many parallels in language and preoccupation between *Gangraena* and the city campaigns, and many personal connections. Central to the campaign was the conviction—Edwards's conviction—that lack of discipline and uniformity prompted the diseases of radical separatism and vicious error.

Attempts to get official city backing for a petition on church government in September foundered when the House of Commons voted the petition scandalous. The petition was coordinated, according to Juxon, by Lawrence Brinley, a zealous parliamentarian and Presbyterian new merchant, and was 'sent in to every parishe for to be subscribed by all that had

³⁶ CLRO, C CJ 40, fos. 86^{r-v}, (Jan. 1644) discussed in Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 468; DWL, MS 24.50, Juxon's Journal, fo. 6^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 43). At the same time the great dinner and thanksgiving at Christ Church was supposed to cement parliamentarian unity.

³⁷ BL Thomason, 669, fo. 10 (13) and *CJ* iv. 73, for the Sept. 1644 petition.

³⁸ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 45^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 85); *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 326. The story of the Presbyterian campaign can be traced in many modern works, with W. A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth* (London, 1890), remaining the authoritative general version. For London, Lindley, *Popular Politics*, ch. 8, gives the fullest account and has been very useful for this chapter. Still useful are Ian Gentles, 'The Struggle for London in the Second Civil War', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), 277–305; Argent, 'Aspects of the Ecclesiastical History', 135–7, 294; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 78–90; Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 110–16. Edwards is a crucial source for Tolmie and Lindley; Juxon for Kishlansky, Brenner, and Lindley.

taken the Covenant & that there Qualities should be allsoe sett downe'. On its failure handbills were pinned up in the Royal Exchange and other key city arenas, urging a tax strike because effective measures were not taken against the 'damnable doctrines being broached daily to the scandal of our religion'.³⁹ The next month the Presbyterians had more success. As Juxon had it (in his third attempt at a narrative of events):

The ordinance for the choice of Elders came forth where in every Classis in London was appoynted 3 ministers & 6 others or Tryers to trye those that should be made elders in every parish etc. But the ministers were not well pleased wuth it, therefore mett at Sion Coll and founde the Parliament had putt as many more laymen as Clergy which shewd what they intended. And besides had not given enough power to them.

On 20 October 1645, the Common Council read through the ordinance and established a committee to confer with the ministers on their 'doubts' over its procedures. Spurred on also by renewed citizens' petitioning on 'many woofull divisions touching matters of Religion', the Common Council resolved to petition parliament for an improved ordinance. Eighty-eight ministers put their names to the 'Desires and Reasons', recorded by the Common Council. The list was headed by George Walker, the veteran hard-line controversialist; it included Ashe, Gower, Calamy, Samuel Clarke, Cranford, Roberts, and Christopher Love. Thomas Edwards's name was in sixtieth place. The ministers' desires were simply for the establishment of Presbyterian government and an eldership with 'sufficient' powers. Their fundamental reason for objecting to current proposals was that they ignored the 'Intrinsicall power' in ministers and elders, but 'rune in such a straine as if all of it were only of Political Constitucon, and merely to be derived from the Civill Magistrate'. The powers of the eldership to exclude parishioners from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for scandal were unclear, and those scandals themselves were enumerated in a 'very defective manner'. Consequently the ministers would be forced to 'dash themselves upon one of these two Rockes' of admitting the scandalous, or exercising an usurped, illegitimate jurisdiction. There was 'noe Power at all settled for rooting out of Schisme and divisions; which is our greate disease. Nor for reduceing us to unities . . . which is our vehement desire. But rather the defects of this power will (as we apprehend) extreamlie confirme and increase Sects and division

³⁹ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 45^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 85); Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 79, followed by Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 357. For Brinley see Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 365, 397–8, 399 n., 425 n.

amongst us, and s[e]peracon from us, more then ever heretofore'. Disclaiming any aspirations for 'Arbitrary, unlimited and exorbitant Power', the ministers insisted that their allegiance to the Solemn League and Covenant and the need to be 'faithfull to the Church of Christ wherein we are Stewards and Watchmen', drove them on.⁴⁰ Likewise the sixty citizens who petitioned the Common Council insisted unity had to rest on 'puritie of Ordinances', for separatism was justified on the basis of the existing impurity, so that there were 'manie woefull divisions' over doctrine and discipline. 'Truth is cryed downe, error cryed upp, Brotherlie love abated, unbrotherlie variance increased'. John Jones, Ricraft, Vicars, and Widmerpole were among the friends and associates of Edwards who put their hands to this petition.⁴¹

Despite fierce opposition from some Aldermen and Common Councilors who argued that it was impertinent to attack an ordinance long and carefully considered by parliament, the Common Council petitioned parliament as the ministers urged, receiving a testy response from the Commons, and more conciliatory thanks from the Lords.⁴² But no changes were forthcoming, however, and religious divisions played a role in the annual Common Council elections in December. In *Gangraena*, Part One, Edwards claimed that lobbying in Farringdon within Ward (where Christ Church was located) showed 'what stirring fellows these Sectaries are'—for they scattered papers around the ward, listing eight 'OUTS', sitting councillors, to be rejected, eight 'INS' for election. Edwards does not seem to have been perfectly informed, and he was, characteristically, unduly pessimistic about Presbyterian fortunes. Although most of the 'outs' were Presbyterian sitting Councillors and many of the 'ins' can be identified as radicals, there were anomalous figures in each category. At least half of the 'outs' won re-election; none of the eight 'ins' were successful.⁴³ Baillie agreed with Edwards that 'The Independents are sticking too openly to have the Common Counsell of London modelled to their mind', but other

⁴⁰ For these events see Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 79–80; DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 48^v–49^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 89–90); CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 148^r, 149^r, 150^r, 151^r–153^v.

⁴¹ CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 153^v; Mahony, 'Presbyterianism in the City of London' for the lay petitioning.

⁴² Juxon described the 'longe debate' in Common Council: DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 49^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 90); CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 154^v. The following day rival petitions were presented to Common Council, one calling for the release of 'notorious delinquents', imprisoned without trial (presumably Lilburne and others); the second praising the Council for their 'faithfulness and paines' in petitioning parliament over religion. For their presentation see Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 80.

⁴³ *Gangraena*, i. 105; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 360–1, for the evaluation; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 80–1.

evidence suggests the Presbyterians themselves mobilized most determinedly for these elections. At the ward-mote where Common Councillors were chosen, 'A Representation' was circulated urging those elected to push for certain 'desires' at the first meeting of the new Common Council. These desires were the familiar ones for the settling of church government according to the Solemn League and Covenant, 'before we be utterly ruined with Rents and Divisions', and for 'no toleration, either of Popery, Prelacy, Schisme, Heresie, Superstition, Prophaneness'—again in conformity with the Covenant. The aim was to get another petition to parliament. According to Juxon, 'to this ende there was a sermon in every ward, all of them drove one & the same way, not to choose men of Erroneous opinions. The Petitione was Principally against scisme etc and all wrott by the same hande'.⁴⁴

On 8 January the new Common Council, at the urging of the inhabitants of several wards, referred the drafting of a new petition to a committee, probably the one established in October 1645 to confer with city ministers. On 14 January, the Councillors reflected on the failure of the November petition, and on how 'Inhabitants of most of the wards' had urged further addresses to parliament during the elections. Their own petition evoked the horrors of religious division in terms similar to Edwards's. Private meetings on the Lord's day—at least eleven in one parish—multiplied; orthodox ministers were 'neglected and contemned' as anti-Christian, as if the 'tiryany of the prelatical government' had not been overthrown: 'by reason of such meetings and the preaching of women and other ignorant persons, supersticon, heresie, schismes and prophanes are much increased, families divided, and such blasphemies as the petitioners tremble to thinke on uttered to the high dishonour of Almighty God'. They had heard that petitions were being organized for liberty of conscience and urged parliament to oppose toleration and settle church government speedily.⁴⁵

This petition, like the ward-mote representations, drew freely on the authority of the Covenant to legitimate city Presbyterian demands. The Council met after an intimidating ceremony was held in the morning at

⁴⁴ *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 344; *To the Right Worshipfull, the Aldermen and Common Councillmen of the Ward of Farrington Within at their Ward-Moot, 22 December 1645*, BL 669, fo. 10 (41); a copy was inserted in the CCJ (CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 161^r) on 14 Jan. when the petitions to parliament were finalized. DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 56^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 97).

⁴⁵ CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 160^{r-v}. On 8 Jan. the Common Council also made arrangements for the ceremonial retaking of the Covenant, discussed below.

the church of Michael Bassishaw, where after rousing sermons by Calamy and Ashe 'the Solemn League and Covenant was renewed . . . with prayer and fasting' by the city governors and their officers.⁴⁶ Both sermons stressed the dangers of Covenant-breaking, the need for settlement of church government, and opposition to error. 'A city without wals is exposed to every enemy, so is the Church without a government', urged Calamy in his dedication to Mayor Adams and the rest of the city governors. He hammered away at the duties of the city authorities to succour true religion. As Esther had saved the Jews, 'Who knoweth whether God hath not raised you up to be Mayor, to be Sheriffs, Aldermen and Common Councill men for such a time as this is', asked Calamy. 'My prayer shall be (and oh that God would hear me!) that you may be able to say, when I was first Mayor, or first Sheriffe, or first Common Councill man, I found a City full of errors and heresies, but now I shall leave it full of truth, full of holinesse, and a City at unity within itself'. Auditors were enjoined to think of the Covenant 'in your bed, in your closets, in your walks'.⁴⁷ More aggressively Ashe demanded:

Have you not connived at the spreading of pernicious errors in this City? Hath not your zeal against schisme and sinfull separations from our Church Assemblies been very much cooled? Is not your love towards our Brethren of Scotland in a great measure lessened? Have not your vigorous endeavours to promote the settling of Christs government in our Congregations been wofully diminished? And have you not been lamentably wanting in labouring the thorow reformation of your selves and families?⁴⁸

These were avowedly partisan sermons, as Ashe's reference to the Scots suggests. Despite a rhetoric of unity, it was unity on Presbyterian terms that was proposed. Both Ashe and Calamy shared Edwards's twin fears about the spread of error and the pusillanimity of the orthodox. Extending his wall metaphor, Calamy warned:

Our enemies also raise false reports to weaken the hands of the builders, and to make us afraid, as they did Neh.[emiah] 6. 6 10. They say that the Presbyterian Government (which is the Government that comes nearest the Word, and the

⁴⁶ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 81; P. J. Anderson, 'Presbyterianism and the Gathered Churches in Old and New England 1640–1662: The Struggles for Church Government in Theory and Practice', D.Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1979), 149. Ashe, *Religious Covenanting Directed*; Calamy, *Great Danger of Covenant refusing*. The quotation is found in both title pages. The sermons were published before the end of Mar. for Thomason amended the dates of his copies from 1646 to 1645: BL E327 (5–6).

⁴⁷ Calamy, *Great Danger of Covenant refusing*, sig. A3^r–A4^v.

⁴⁸ Ashe, *Religious Covenanting*, 4.

Government of the best Reformed Churches) will prove Tyrannicall, and Episcopall . . . our seeming friends seek to undermine us. . . It is impossible (say some) to purge our Churches according to the rule, they are so full of rubbish, and therefore it is better and safer to study Separation from, rather then Reformation of our Churches.

Rather, Calamy insisted, 'though God hath given us glorious victories over our enemies, yet the Churches of Christ lye desolate, Church-reformation is obstructed, Church-Discipline unsetled, Church-divisions increased. The famous City of London is become an Amsterdam, Separation from our Churches is countenanced, Toleration is cried up, Authority lyeth asleep. And therefore it is high time to take the Covenant again'. The covenant enjoined them to achieve uniformity in religion and the extirpation of popery, heresy, and schism, so toleration was 'as contrary to this clause of the Covenant as Heaven is to Hell'.⁴⁹

These were also profoundly controversial sermons. In his preface Calamy noted the 'many harsh and bitter censures' he had suffered. In the sermon itself he acknowledged that some refused the Covenant out of 'unnecessary scrupulosity', but pointedly continued that 'I conceive that those who scruple it, are amongst those that are absent, and therefore I should but idle away precious time to satisfie the objections'.⁵⁰ The Common Council agreed on 9 February (at the same meeting where Peter and Hawkins were complained of) that the names of those who had not retaken the Covenant should be noted and the oath should be solemnly read quarterly at their meetings. Tempers in the Council were already frayed by the conflict over what response to make to an overture from the Scottish parliament and, according to Juxon, the Independent minority eventually 'tould them they had once taken it, and did beleve it was enough & sayd no more'.⁵¹

For the time being, the city's petition fared better than those of the previous autumn. Both the Commons on 15 January and the Lords on the following day gave the city thanks and promised measures against women

⁴⁹ Calamy, *Great Danger of Covenant refusing*, sig. A2^{r-v}, 3, 30-1. A sermon the following month by Matthew Newcomen to the same audience (at Paul's church) urged unity, but argued that those who disagreed with Presbyterians on minor matters should keep their views private and avoid schism. Those who erred on fundamentals should be suppressed: Newcomen, *The Duty of such as would walke worthy of the Gospel*, 14-17, 39-41.

⁵⁰ Calamy, *Great Danger of Covenant refusing*, sig. A3^v, 8-9; Juxon was perhaps one of the absentees for he does not mention the ceremony.

⁵¹ CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 166^{r-v}; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 502; DWL, MS 24,50, fo. 61^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 102). See below for the Scots.

and mechanic preachers.⁵² A new crisis was looming though as a result of the Commons' orders in January for the city to choose commissioners to hear appeals from those excluded from the sacrament, a matter referred after 'much debate' to the committee established to confer with the ministers. In a much-quoted passage, Thomas Juxon alleged that 'in London 'twas not the Cittie nor the Comon Counsel, But a few ingaiged men there that are Triers' who mobilized for the Presbyterian cause in the winter of 1645/6, relying on some '30 or 40 hands for the Affirmative . . . five for the Negative & the rest where are the Major pa[r]te are silent as either not willing or not dareing to appeare'.⁵³

There is no reason to doubt that Edwards, although never named by Juxon, was amongst the 'engaged men', the rigid ministers who urged the city authorities to push parliament into action against religious error, heresy, and schism and in favour of a powerful Presbyterian church settlement. Edwards's networks and sources, his participation in the ministers' petition of November 1645, and his knowledge—albeit and perhaps deliberately partial—of the Common Council elections in December locate him within the zealous Presbyterian lobby. The focus on sectarianism and error as a spur to the settlement of church government, the fearful harping on the dangers of 'toleration' (in contrast to Independent talk of liberty of conscience), and, in general, the very high profile given to religious issues in the city are all characteristic of *Gangraena*. What is missing, as Tolmie noted, is any concern with detailed questions of church government as such. As the first part of *Gangraena* was completed, and published, it was the dangers of religious radicalism, the necessity of adherence to the Covenant, and the threats from hesitant friends as well as open enemies which exercised Edwards. As we have shown, Part One was entered in the Stationers' Company Registers on 8 January 1646, but not published until some six weeks later. The book reflects the circumstances of its completion during this time of high excitement of meetings, petitioning, oath-taking, and argument, along with more specific irritations—such as the bitter spat between Calamy and Burton after the latter was removed from a lectureship at Mary Aldermanbury.⁵⁴

Gangraena, Part One discussed and commended the city petitioning campaigns, and also articulated fears that the Presbyterians were losing ground because Independents and sectaries were more energetic, and

⁵² CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 166^v; BL Add MS 31116 fo. 254^v.

⁵³ CLRO, CCJ, 40, fo. 161^v; DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 64^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 106).

⁵⁴ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 132–3. See also Ch. 4, above.

some Presbyterians were foolhardily acquiescing in proposals for accommodation. Edwards quoted the city's 16 January 1646 petition 'that Church Government may be speedily settled before we be destroyed one by another through rents and divisions', appealing also to parliament's own declarations, going back to February 1644, 'now two yeers past wanting but three weeks' for expedition. Uniformity and discipline were essential to 'restrain mens nature and wantonnesse'.⁵⁵ He was critical of the Stepney Independents Burroughs and Greenhill for their attempts to obstruct the Presbyterian petition of September 1645. They had attacked the Presbyterian incumbent Joshua Hoyle, when he had ordered the petition read after Burroughs's morning lecture, while Thomas Alleys (actually, as we have seen, Alle), who had tried to gather signatures in the parish, had been 'baited and rated by several of the Sectaries and them of that way that he met with; both in the street and upon the Exchange'. In a fast on 24 September Mr Greenhill 'fell upon this Petition in a bitter manner', claiming that Presbyterian government would be more tyrannical than the bishops, and asked whether his audience wanted to 'return into Egypt again?' (Was it this sermon Calamy had in mind when preaching on the Covenant in January?) Burroughs denounced it as an affront to the 'Army that had done so much for us?', while his wife 'said it was a second Binions Petition' (after the petition organized by the royalist George Benyon against parliamentary control of the city militia in February 1642).⁵⁶

The fears of a Presbyterian sell-out over accommodation that haunt Part One are echoed by Baillie and Juxon; both felt that city petitioning against toleration was prompted by fears that toleration would be established by law, which alarmed the 'Independent' Juxon as much as Baillie: 'now the buisnes comes to bee: Not whither they shall connive at a Tolleration but whither they shall by a Law allowe them one . . . And indeed to doe that were a thinge as without a president soe oposite & destructive to aney settlement of Discipline'.⁵⁷ Edwards knew that, unwisely, some Presbyterians had attended city meetings in December, of 'several Sects, Seekers, Antinomians, Anabaptists etc, to consult about Liberty of Conscience'.

⁵⁵ *Gangraena*, i, 116–18, 121.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 109–10; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 128–9. For Alle see Ch. 4, above. Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 201, for Benyon. Edwards also indignantly recounted another slur implying royalist allegiance—that it was a 'Digby's' petition—and attacked Independent newsbook accounts.

⁵⁷ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 54^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 107–8). Juxon did believe that the Presbyterian clergy had only themselves to blame; their ambitions had so alarmed the Parliament that they were determined never to grant Presbyterianism *jure divino*. *Letters of Baillie*, ii, 344.

He reassuringly suggested in one passage that the Presbyterians were there to find out what the others were up to, but it looked alarmingly like another example of how ‘we may thank a great many moderate men (as they would be called) that things are at that bad passe as they be’. The ‘earnest pressing of Accommodations, Tolerations and other wayes of compliance, have undone us’.⁵⁸

The last few pages of the first edition mentioned events and books as recent as 13 February, while the Appendix to the hasty second printing included breathless reports on city divisions, and rumours of an Independent counter-attack:

I have been within these last few dayes from good hands informed that in this last week of February there have been some meetings of Sectaries in the City to consult and to draw up some Petition to the Parliament to counterworke the Common-Council, and their consultations and debates were to this effect that seeing the Common-Council and the Scots agree so together for settling Church-Government, and that now new Votes and Resolves of both Houses are come forth to settle the Government of the Church, it was needfull for them to do something.

Edwards had heard that the petition would insist to parliament that the Common Council represented only a minority, and that the city should not correspond with foreign powers (presumably the Scots). Far from criticizing parliament’s legislation on church government, this petition ‘thanked them for their deliberation’, and asked them to take direct control of the city militia. Edwards had grasped or anticipated some of the ways in which Independents and other radicals would appeal to parliament’s authority against the corporate interests of the city from the spring of 1646. There does not seem to be any evidence that this petition was ever presented despite (according to Edwards) hoping for support from forty or fifty thousand hands, from moderate Presbyterians, malignants, and ‘all those that keep separated meetings’.⁵⁹

Gangraena thus took its place amongst the city campaigns and the preaching offensive against sectarianism on official city and parliamentary occasions in January and February 1646. Edwards clearly reflected or summed up important aspects of the city’s Presbyterian mobilization, and his stories of radical error and excess encapsulated and publicized the alarming implications of toleration. The degree to which he shaped the Presbyterian programme, and the practical influence of his work are more intractable questions. Edwards’s vivid narratives picked out Lilburne,

⁵⁸ *Gangraena*, i. 83–4, 14–15, 141–2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 121 (2nd pagination).

Goodwin, Writer, Peter, Lambe, and Walwyn as dangerous men to be carefully tracked by the orthodox. He provoked several radical city figures, notably John Goodwin and William Walwyn, into indignant and rapid rebuttal, and Robert Baillie, as we have seen, offers contemporary backing for Edwards's importance. From the publication of Part One, Edwards was to be the most notorious of Presbyterian propagandists.

Gangraena, Part Two, despite Edwards's preoccupation with answering Goodwin and his other critics, nonetheless reflected in its early and later sections the rising tension between city Presbyterians and parliament. It was registered with the Stationers' Company on 4 April, a week before the Westminster Assembly's petition on church government was voted a breach of privilege by parliament in an unmistakable, shaming rebuff. Edwards as usual took longer to finish than expected and Thomason noted receipt of a copy on 28 May, two days after the presentation to parliament of the city's Remonstrance, which considerably raised the political stakes.⁶⁰ During the three months or so between Parts One and Two the pivotal events were the city's March petition against the lay commissioners and the Common Council's humiliating climbdown when the House of Lords voted it too a breach of their privileges. Baillie's hopes for the city were dashed but then revived when a Remonstrance replaced the self-defeating tactic of petitioning on issues already determined by parliament. It will be argued here that the Remonstrance, and the ensuing city debate over its aims and methods, shows increasingly close affinities with *Gangraena*.

Following renewed petitions from citizens, prompted, alleged Juxon, by the clergy, the Common Council resolved on 11 March to petition parliament against the commissioners, whose role 'tends much to the discouragement of such as are willing to submit to the Presbyteriall governm[en]t'. The Council asked to be excused from exercising any church discipline 'contrary to the scripture'—an insult, in Juxon's view, given that the commissioners had been debated ten times in the parliament.⁶¹ The next day, despite bitter debates in the Common Council and warnings the petition would be seen as an attack on parliamentary privilege, the city authorities went to the Lords 'in gr[ea]t pompe' to present it. The Lords duly,

⁶⁰ *Stationers' Register*, 1. 223; BL E338 (12).

⁶¹ CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 173^v–174^r; DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 65^{r-v} (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 107–8). The citizens' petition claimed one hundred signatures but only twenty-four are included with the copy in the *Journal*. They are analysed in Mahony, 'Presbyterianism in the City of London', 101. For these events see also Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 473; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 365–7.

with some dissent, voted it a breach of privilege and more moderate opinion, led by the city Recorder and MP John Glyn, successfully counselled against any attempt to deliver it to the Commons who had already agreed with the Lords' vote. The Council indeed begged the two Houses to expunge any record of their presumption from their records. Baillie was bitterly critical of this retreat: 'by a few fair words from the houses they were made all as mute as fisch'; while Juxon noted 'great murmurings' against the Recorder, 'much encouraged', as usual, by the ministers. Their 'frinds without and the Ingainged Party wthin the Courte reproach them . . . they had betrayd their frinds and asked Pardone when they should have Justified the Actiones'.⁶²

The immediate aftermath of this debacle provided one of the vivid set-pieces of *Gangraena*, Part Two. Wishing to minimize the conflict with the city, members of both Houses came to the Guildhall on 17 March to explain to the Common Council their votes against the petition. Thomas Juxon typically offered a very polished account of how the parliamentary committee won over the city governors. Although 'nothing w[a]s expected but a sad breach . . . Each man that spake did soe dexterously apply there discourses with all sweetnes & love that they founde them selves overcome by them'. Edwards remembered the day differently:

Tuesday March 17 on the day that a Committee of Lords and Commons came down to Guildhall to the Common-Councell concerning their late Petition; many Secretaries from all parts of the City and Suburbs, came to Guild-hall, where, from about four a clock, till about nine, the Sectaries in severall companies and knots in the Hall, 30, 40 and more in some companies, vented boldly and pleaded for all sorts of opinions, the Antinomian opinions, the Anabaptistical opinions, etc, pleading for a generall Toleration of all Sects, yea some maintained that no immortal spirit could sinne . . . many other horrid opinions were maintained at the same time, so that 'tis beleevd, that never since Guild-Hall was built, there was so much wickednesse and errorr broacht and maintained openly in it.

One godly citizen told Edwards that his opposition to the sectaries on that day had cost him work from an Independent woollen draper after an association of twenty years.⁶³ John Farthing, an informant for Part One, was so

⁶² BL Add MS 3116, fo. 259^v for the parliamentary proceedings; DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 65^v-66^s, 67^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 108-10). *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 366.

⁶³ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 66^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 109). Samuel Browne's speech was especially commended. Juxon has the meeting on 16 Mar., but most authorities prefer Edwards's 17 Mar. date. *Gangraena*, ii. 8-9; Bodl., Tanner MS 60, fo. 554-5, is 'Heads from the Lords to be spoken of at the Common Council'. Other details are in BL Add MS 3116, fos. 259^v-260^s; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 366-7, 381-2; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*,

alarmed by 'so great an appearance of Independants and separatists', and by the Common Council's retreat, that he denounced Thomas Hawes, an associate of Paul Best, as a blasphemer in 'hot and mallitious expressions' at the Guildhall and had him committed to prison.⁶⁴ According to Edwards it was two days after this meeting that a radical Independent pamphlet *The last warning to all the Inhabitants of London*, denouncing 'all Kingly government, receiving the King in again, and against all established Ecclesiasticall government' 'came abroad in Print' and was circulated especially by 'Samuel Fulcher an Egge man' and General Baptist, and the Independent booksellers Henry Overton and 'One Calvert'.⁶⁵ In the same week Goodwin's *Cretensis* and two of Walwyn's attacks on *Gangraena*, Part One, were available in London, according to Thomason's dating.⁶⁶ Edwards work was already both chronicling and featuring in city disputes.

From its earliest meetings, the Westminster Assembly had been concerned with error and schism, as was shown in Chapter 3. In December 1645 the London ministers sent a letter to the Assembly decrying 'that great Diana of . . . a Toleration', in language echoed by Edwards in *Gangraena*.⁶⁷ For most of the Assembly's members, the rise of heresy was facilitated by inadequate proposals for church government. On 25 December, angered by Bachelor's licensing of Tombes's attack on Marshall, the Assembly set up a high-powered committee including Vines, Ley, and Gower, to draft a declaration, 'concerning the blasphemies and heresies and other dangerous opinions printed and published and spread abroad, and many of them licensed, together with dangerous and schismatical practices'. Throughout

82–4. Scepticism about pamphlet sources leads Kishlansky to leave out the sectarian demonstration. CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 175^v for the Common Council's report of the meeting, and plans for the 2 Apr. thanksgiving as a symbol of their reconciliation with the parliament.

⁶⁴ *The Afflicted Christian Justified. In a Letter to Mr Thomas Hawes, An Honest and Godly Man* (London, 1646), printed date 18 May, BL E337 (26). The pamphlet refers to events from 5 Apr.; Hawes's offending words against the Trinity pre-dated the 17 Mar. meeting. *Gangraena*, i. 81, 112 for Farthing's material; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 289–90, 382 n.

⁶⁵ *Gangraena*, ii. 9; Thomason's copy of this pamphlet is in BL E328 (24), no publisher is given. Thomason's date was 20 Mar. This pamphlet did indeed attack 'compulsive Church-Government', and the Scots, and defended the English army against its critics. The radical bookseller William Larnar was questioned about the tract after copies were seized at his shop on order of the Commons, but the author was apparently Richard Overton: see Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 382. A pamphlet response of late May denounced the sectaries as 'but the Jesuites Apes', a view that is briefly canvassed in *Gangraena*, and insisted that Presbyterian government was 'most congruent to holy Scripture, most orderly and uniforme': *An Alarum to the last Warning Peece to London* (London, 1646), BL E339 (6), Thomason date 30 May, 12, 18.

⁶⁶ BL E328 (2, 20, 22), *A Whisper in the Eare of Mr Thomas Edwards* (London, 1646), 13 Mar.; *Cretensis*, and *A Word more to Thomas Edwards* (London, 1646), both 19 Mar.

⁶⁷ *A Letter of the Ministers of the City of London*. See Ch. 3, n. 87, above.

the winter and spring the Divines continued to press for action against Paul Best. On church government, the Assembly cooperated closely with the London campaigns; the Assembly too petitioned against the lay commissioners, and received the same response as the city. On 20 March 1646, after a long debate, in which even the accommodating Marshall said there was much in the ordinance on church government 'which did lie very heavy upon his conscience', the Assembly decided on a petition, delivered on 23 March, which argued that commissioners were contrary to the form of government 'which Christ hath appointed in his Church'. Parliament's anger was by now predictable, although it took a day-long bitter debate before this petition in its turn was voted a breach of privilege, on 11 April, when as a sympathetic MP noted laconically, 'The Saints went out, I remained'.⁶⁸

The city's climbdown or reconciliation with parliament in March 1646—cemented by a thanksgiving at which the distinctly unPresbyterian Hugh Peter and Joseph Caryl were the preachers—reveals the limits of city zeal over church government.⁶⁹ Although the most engaged ministers and citizens could push the city into giving priority to the settlement of the church, when it came to the crunch the Common Council drew back from confrontation with the parliament, as it was to shun renewed bloodshed in August 1647. The hopes raised and then dashed by the city emphasize the urgency of Edwards's insistence that the want of effective church government played into the hands of sectaries. The fear of betrayal that haunted his work, the danger of being 'wounded in the house of our friends', is all too comprehensible. The events of March therefore to some extent encourage scepticism over the influence of *Gangraena*. But from another perspective, shifts in the tactics and priorities of city Presbyterians following the March debacle suggest that Edwards's work had a significant impact.

On 14 April 1646, the Common Council resolved to continue its campaigns by way of a Remonstrance, entrusting its drafting to John Bellamy and John Jones amongst others.⁷⁰ As finalized on 22 May and presented, in

⁶⁸ Mitchell and Struthers (eds.), *Minutes*, 172–3, 208–11, 225, 252–3, 257, 448–55; *Diary of John Harrington MP*, 18; BL Add MS 31116, fo. 264^r; Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 90–9, for general cooperation between City and Assembly.

⁶⁹ Peter, *Gods Doings and Mans Duty*; Caryl, *Englands Plus Ultra*. Thomason's copies are BL E330 (11–12). See Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 95–102, for discussion of how men like Baillie overestimated the influence and the unity of the city.

⁷⁰ CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 176^r; Bellamy, *A Justification of the City Remonstrance and its Vindication*. The subheading was *An Answer to a Book, written by Mr J. P. Entituled the*

slightly different versions, to each House of Parliament on 26 May, the Remonstrance spent much more time attacking sectaries (defined, Edwards-style as non-Presbyterians) than on the precise shape of any Presbyterian government of the church. The Remonstrance's stress on political themes was also shared with Edwards. The Remonstrance began with a by now familiar appeal to the Covenant, and praised parliament (using the words of its own Grand Remonstrance of November 1641) for the determination not 'to lette loose the golden reynes of discipline and Government in the Church', and its opposition to separation, Brownism, and Anabaptism. Yet, despite all parliament's ordinances on the directory and church government, they found

private and separate Congregacons daily erected in divers parts of the City and elsewhere . . . all maner of Herisies, Scismes, and Blasphemies, boldly vented and mainteyned by such as to the point of Church Government professe themselves Independent, wee cannot but bee astonished at the swarme of sectaries which discover themselves everywhere, who, if by their Endeavours they should gett unto places of profit and Trust in Martiall and Civill affaires, may tend much to the disturbance of the publike peace both of the Church and Commonwealth.

The running together of heresy, schism, and blasphemy and the attempt to implicate Independents in all three; the 'swarms' of sectaries; and the insinuation that sectaries–Independents with craft, guile, and all too much success had sought to insinuate themselves into powerful military and civilian positions parallel the arguments of *Gangraena*.⁷¹ Edwards was not the only writer or preacher to touch on these themes in these months, but his works offered most clearly a programme for action, and extensive, frightening, city-based evidence that made it clear why action was so necessary.

Like Edwards, the drafters of the Remonstrance praised 'our Brethren of Scotland', who had come to the aid of the English parliament in its darkest hour and were now scandalously traduced by the enemies of peace and settlement. The Remonstrance demonstrated also a coming together of city concerns with that of the emerging political 'Presbyterian' grouping in

City Remonstrance Remonstrated, Thomason date 21 Aug.; Thomason also noted that J.P. was John Price of John Goodwin's congregation: BL E350 (23), sig. A2^{r-v}.

⁷¹ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 86–9, on the novelty of the Remonstrance; Gentles, 'The Struggle for London', 280, on the ominous absence of any praise for the army. See also Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 133–6; Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 367–70. The text of the Remonstrance is available in pamphlet form (BL E338 (7), E339 (1)); in *LJ*, viii, 332–4; and in CCJ 40, fos. 178^v–179^r. Extensive extracts are in Keith Lindley (ed.), *The English Civil War and Revolution: A Source Book* (London: Routledge, 1998), 332–4.

parliament, with its stress on the need for a speedy peace and a reduction in taxation. This close association is seen in Juxon's belief that on 22 May Bellamy went to the House of Lords and consulted Essex over the timing of the Remonstrance's presentation, 'whoe ordered it to bee on Tuesday following'. We have no corroboration for this, although most modern scholars, as usual, believe Juxon, but it is in any case significant that someone writing close to the event believed it. Finally the Remonstrance emphasized the need to defend city privileges, including regaining control of their militia.⁷² It concluded with a set of requests covering all these matters; the first four focused on religious issues, mostly expressed in the negative terms also favoured by Edwards. The Remonstrance asked that some 'speedy course' be taken to suppress private and separate congregations; that 'all Anabaptists, Brownists, hereticks, Schismaticks, Blasphemers, and all such sectaries as conforme not to the publick discipline established or to be established by Parliamt may be fully declared agst and some effectuall Cause settled for proceeding agst such persons'. All should be 'equally required' to obey church government as established by parliament, and 'noe persons disaffected to the presbiteriall Governmt sett forth or to be sett forth by the parliament may be employed in any place of publike trust'. *Gangraena* of course had done much to show why this last issue was urgent, denouncing Independents' 'seeking and getting into all sorts of offices and places they are any way capable of (being Sequestrators, Collectours, Receivers, Surveyers, Excisers, Customers, Secretaries, Clerks, etc. . . . not a man almost of late coming into any place or office but an Independent or Independentish'.⁷³

The May Remonstrance focused on the enemies of Presbyterian reformation and uniformity, rather than arguing positively for particular forms of church government, and located city concerns clearly within the increasingly polarized politics of two or three kingdoms. These were Edwards's perspectives also and his text surely had an impact on the shifts in city politics. The change of focus, however destructive of godly unity in the long run, was in the short and medium term a successful strategy.

⁷² DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 79^r; A few weeks earlier Juxon had presented the Remonstrance as a stratagem of the 'Ld Essexes Ptie . . . to advance ymsels & Ruine ye Scollicters pty': fo. 77^v, (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 123, 122). The solicitor was Oliver St John. Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 368; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 139–42, for political Presbyterianism in 1646. Tensions between city and parliament were shown in the Remonstrance's hostility to the activities of the Committee for Advance of Money, and to the immunity of MPs and their servants from prosecution for debt.

⁷³ CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 179^{r-v}; *Gangraena*, i. 62.

Groups in the city and parliament could coalesce against the sectarian ‘threat’, when they could not so easily agree over forms of government. The Remonstrance was welcomed in the House of Lords, and although the Commons gave a more reluctant and equivocal answer, this was warmer than the response to the petitions. The John Glyn whose counsel of caution over the January 1646 petition had so annoyed city hardliners was by the summer of 1647 one of the eleven leading Presbyterian MPs whose impeachment was sought by the army. More generally, it is telling that the same House of Commons that rejected the impertinent petitions from city and Assembly over church government also spent many hours in these same weeks discussing the appropriate punishment for the ‘Socinian’ Paul Best, and measures against heresy in general.⁷⁴ ‘Presbyterianism’ as a political movement in parliament and city could encompass many who had no particular commitment to Presbyterian church government, but feared the rise of schism and heresy. There are clear parallels with Edwards’s construction of a Presbyterian community in print, a community that comprehended men like the ‘Erastian’ Coleman or the sceptical Prynne, as we have seen in Chapter 4.

Tolmie, as we have seen in Chapter 2, claimed Edwards ‘substituted for a dogmatic a social conservatism’, but the Presbyterian mobilization in London should not simply be labelled conservative.⁷⁵ The city’s Remonstrance, like all three parts of *Gangraena*, exhibited alarm at the breakdown of religious, and by implication social, discipline, encapsulated in an abhorrence of mechanic preaching. The immediate problem with Independents and sectaries in this framework, however, was not their social obscurity, but their increasingly close links with the rich and powerful. In the opposition to parliament’s plans for church government from October 1645, or the electioneering for the Common Council in December, it was Presbyterians rather than Independents or sectaries who took the initiative, deploying all the techniques of early 1640s parliamentarianism—preaching, petitioning, pamphleteering, lobbying meetings, street-corner and vestry debate—to win supremacy within the parliamentarian cause. Furthermore, it is by no means clear that it was city ‘radicalism’ that had the most widespread, or the most socially diverse support. On the contrary, the campaign over the Remonstrance seems to have been the most popular (in numerical terms) of any in the London politics of the 1640s, even if we cannot verify John Bellamy’s

⁷⁴ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 86–7.

⁷⁵ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 133; cf. the reference to ‘lay conservatism’ on 136.

very precise claim that 8,634 hands were put to a petition in support of the Remonstrance presented on 23 June (no signed copy survives). The Remonstrance did not counterpose the interests of humbler people to those of their governors or social superiors. The Common Council noted that ‘many grave Citizens of worth and quality’ attended the presentation, with many thousand others in support, ‘all Citizens of the best ranck and qualitie, freemen and Inhabitants’.⁷⁶ While reflecting and reinforcing the social hierarchy of the city, the leaders of Presbyterian campaigning acknowledged that the issues should concern London householders, and even inhabitants in general. Presbyterianism in London was clearly popular in the common sense of the word—widely supported if not socially subversive. It was also radical in its methods and, it can be argued, in its aims. Although most recent scholarship insists that it was (future) Independents who were most prominent in forwarding the city’s parliamentary war effort in the early 1640s, it is equally striking that several of the most active Presbyterian campaigners—Jones, Bellamy, and Brinley most obviously—were equally militant. These are not politically conservative figures in the overall spectrum of English politics in the 1640s, neither were they failed or renegade parliamentarians. Rather they were parliamentary activists who had fought the war for a reformed state church and city privileges, not for religious liberty and military domination.⁷⁷ The Presbyterian vision involved radical moral and cultural change through the participatory parish-focused discipline of a re-structured church; it is the post-Enlightenment association of radicalism with individual liberation that has obscured this point.

It should not be assumed that the city’s Remonstrance was written on the basis of a blueprint found in Edwards’s *Gangraena*, Part One. The only individual singled out for punishment in the Remonstrance—the Southwark semi-separatist Roger Quartermayne, whose conduct of the office of City Provost Marshall had affronted the authorities—is not one of

⁷⁶ Bellamie, *Justification*, 6; CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 184^r. There are two versions in the Thomason collection: *The true Copy of a Petition, delivered to the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London* (London, 1646), BL 669, fo. 10 (58, 63). On the first, briefer version, Thomason has written, ‘Composed and finished June the 5th, I having a hand in it’. Thomason, of course, owned *Gangraena* and had at least scanned Part One.

⁷⁷ Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 391; Vernon, ‘Sion College Conclave’, 303–20. Vernon, ‘The Quarrel of the Covenant: the London Presbyterians and the regicide’, in Jason Peacy (ed.), *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I* (Basingstoke: Palsgrave, 2001), for eloquent arguments that in their protests against the regicide, city Presbyterians put forward their own version of parliamentarianism, not a royalist position. They rejected the Independents’ claims to be *the* guardians of the parliamentary cause.

Edwards's targets.⁷⁸ The sources do not exist to demonstrate direct influence in any conclusive way. Nonetheless it would be excessively scrupulous to deny Edwards some credit for the content and tactics of the city's Remonstrance. Furthermore the subsequent controversy was entangled at many points with the debate on *Gangraena*, also dominated by Londoners and particularly fierce in May and June. Thomason noted the receipt of Thomas Webbe's *Mr Edwards Pen no Slander* (an attack despite its ambiguous title) on 21 May; he obtained copies of further attacks on *Gangraena* by Saltmarsh and Walwyn in June. Defences of Edwards by Josiah Ricraft and John Vicars, Presbyterian petitioners and pamphleteers, appeared in the same months.⁷⁹

Several attacks on the Remonstrance are strikingly similar to the responses of Goodwin, Walwyn, and others to *Gangraena*. It was denounced, as Edwards was, for 'insinuating into the people that all manner of heresies, schismes, and blasphemies, are tolerated . . . swarmes of sectaries are encouraged'. When the king denounced Anabaptists he 'did alwayes Intend the Parliaments' friends, and besides these, whom you mean we cannot tell'. One man's heresy was another's truth:

For Brownists and Anabaptists, they are a people that shame not to shew themselves, their profession and practice in Religion, being in their account an honour to them. For Hereticks, Schismaticks, Blasphemers, they are words at Liberty bestowed, and may be retorted: That which some judge Heresie and Schisme, others judge sound Doctrine and warrantable separation.

Such labelling might have fatal consequences, 'to the Prison, to the Pillory, to the Fagot, to the Fire with the Puritan, the Non-Conformist, the Round-head, the Separatist, the Sectary, the Schismatick, the Heretick, the Independent, names at pleasure bestowed upon Godly men'.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 368.

⁷⁹ Webbe, *Mr Edwards Pen no Slander*, BL E337 (4); Walwyn, *An Antidote against Master Edwards his old and new Poyson* (London, 1646), BL E1184 (4), 10 June; Saltmarsh, *Reasons for Unitie, Peace and Love* (London, 1646), BL E340 (30), 17 June; Ricraft, *A Nosegay of Rank-smelling Flowers, Such as Grow in Mr John Goodwins Garden* (London, 1646), BL E336 (5), 6 May; Vicars, *The Schismatick Sifted*, BL E341 (8), 22 June. Thomas Alle's *A breif Narration*, on Edwards's account of Burroughs and Greenhill also came out in late June (BL E341 (27)). *An Answer or Confutation of Divers Errors Broached and Maintayned by the Seven Churches of the Anabaptists* (London, 1646), by the Presbyterian layman Thomas Bakewell, was also issued in May: BL E336 (10), Thomason date 7 May. For Bakewell's commitment to combating error see Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 157, 264.

⁸⁰ *A Moderate Reply to the Citie Remonstrance* (London, 1646), BL E340 (20), Thomason date 12 June, no pagination; *The Interest of England Maintained . . . Certaine Observations upon a Dangerous Remonstrance lately presented* (London, 1646), printed date 8 June, BL 340

The debate over the Remonstrance was thus also a debate over the validity of Edwards's enterprise. Defences of the *Remonstrance* covered themes very reminiscent of *Gangraena*, and usually made direct reference to Edwards. John Bellamy contrasted John Price's raking-up of faults from his much earlier life, with Edwards's scrupulous focus on recent outrageous errors, and demanded of Price, in words that might come from *Gangraena*, whether he really wanted blasphemers and heretics in places of public trust: 'such as deny that there is a God . . . say God is the author of sin . . . such as hold that all Religions, Worships, Consciences, whether Paganish, Jewish, Antichristian etc should be tolerated'.⁸¹ In his defence of the Common Council's right, as the city's representative body, to petition or deliver remonstrances to parliament, John Jones also praised 'Those truths published in the Books of Mr Thomas Edwards, Mr Bayly, and divers godly Divines, and other honest men, published on purpose (as I do this) to unmaske you, and to give a caveat to well-meaning people, who are apt to be cheated with your counterfeit coynes, and great pretence of holiness, liberty and pure Ordinances, the old engines and artifice of Hereticks and Scismaticks'. He also defended Edwards against the criticisms of Burroughs.⁸² On the other hand, pamphlets in Edwards's defence contained overt references to London Presbyterian campaigns such as John Vicars' extravagant praise for Presbyterian Lord Mayor Thomas Adams's fighting, 'in the Cause of Truth and Righteousnesse, backt with the sacred Suffrages and faithfull Affections of very many thousands of most peaceable honest-hearted and God honouring Covenanters'. Josiah Ricraft's *Nosegay*, a pamphlet attack on John Goodwin's *Cretensis*, denounced the radical tracts 'Martine Marpriest, The Arraignement of Mr Persecution . . . Londons Warning Peece, and the rest of the lying, railing, blaspheming rabble rout, who speake naturally M. John Goodwins language'.⁸³

The people who argued over the Remonstrance were the same as those who debated *Gangraena*. Particularly prominent in the assault on the Remonstrance were members of John Goodwin's congregation, led by John Price, as author, and Henry Overton as publisher of most of the extended arguments against it, as well as Goodwin's and Webbe's responses to *Gangraena*. Walwyn, the most inveterate pamphlet attacker of Edwards,

(5), 6–7. Prier, *A Crystall Looking-glass*, attacks both Edwards and the Remonstrance, and seems to have been written some time before its publication: see 353.

⁸¹ Bellamy, *A Justification of the City Remonstrance and its Vindication*, sig. A3^v, 11.

⁸² Jones, *Plaine English*, 6–10, 17.

⁸³ Vicars, *Schismatic Sifted*, sig. A2^v; Ricraft, *A Nosegay of Rank-smelling Flowers*, 4.

was also active in the politicking around the Remonstrance. His *A Word in Season*, noted Thomason, was 'Intended against ye Remonstrance now in hand' in mid-May, while a second edition was 'Given about Westminster Hall by Lilburne the day the cittie remonstrance was presented, which was 26 May'.⁸⁴ Goodwin was, as we have seen, the single most important target of *Gangraena*, while Walwyn, treated more obliquely in Part One, gained as much fame by his responses to Edwards as he did from anything Edwards actually wrote about him. The relationship between Edwards's work and city politics is, of course, circular. He presumably treated Goodwin and his church so extensively because of their perceived importance to both the spread of error and the city's emerging radical politics; it is then predictable that Price and the others were to be found resisting the Remonstrance. On the other hand, the assault on Independent congregations and religious liberty, spearheaded by Edwards's *Gangraena*, in itself spurred his victims into action. Like Lilburne's long imprisonment in 1645–6, for which Prynne as much as anyone was blamed by radicals, Edwards's *Gangraena*, turned into a political programme in the city's Remonstrance, underlined the urgent need for a radical response.

London campaigns over Presbyterian church government and the Remonstrance were increasingly bound up with tensions over the city's close relationship with the Scots, and, following Charles's surrender to the Scots in May 1646, with 'Independent' fears that a city–Scots–royalist axis would impose a shameful peace. By 1646, the polarization apprehended precociously by Edwards and Baillie from summer 1644 had become a commonplace of political life. In February the Scots commissioners brought a letter to the city from the parliament of Scotland, thanking Londoners for 'expressions of love to them'; their 'forwardnes in this Comon cause of religion', and particularly for 'their zeale & Indeavours towards the settling the Government of the church accordinge to ther Covenant'. The propriety of transacting business with another nation without consulting parliament caused much heart-searching, and subsequently great anger in the Common Council when the goldsmith Francis Allen, an Independent Alderman who was also an MP, reported on city debates to the House of Commons. The MPs took especial exception to the report that the city

⁸⁴ Walwyn's works were usually produced by the radical printers Thomas Paine, and William Larnier, sometimes in conjunction with Giles Calvert for whom Saltmarsh's books were printed. *A Word in Season To all sorts of well-minded People in this Miserably Distracted and Distempered Nation* (London, 1646), BL E337 (25), 18 May 1646. Thomason also noted it as 'Written by Mr Sadler', but most commentators attribute it to Walwyn: Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 383–4. BL E1184 (3), for the 2nd edn.—in 16mo format.

accepted the Scots had been smeared by ‘incendiaries’. In the subsequent angry meetings, on Juxon’s testimony, ‘Nathaniel Fiennes told them the Cittie was there wife & they could not but take it ill an other should come to draw away her affections from them. Twas replied if the addresses to their wife had bin in seacret, then might be cause of Jealousies but to doe it openly & in their sight there was no danger’.⁸⁵ The king’s secret flight from Oxford in late April 1646 spawned panic-stricken fears that he intended to come to an apparently sympathetic city, but his ultimate resort to the Scots was little better. The printing by David Buchanan of the Scots version of their fraught negotiations with the English parliament over peace propositions to be given to king caused bitter fury. Buchanan—Baillie’s ‘most sincere and zealous gentleman’—was voted an incendiary by the parliament and his work was burnt by the public hangman but not before it had sold three or four thousand copies—again according to Baillie.⁸⁶

Edwards’s books reflected but also contributed to the construction of these alliances and polarities. There are fragmentary and intriguing hints that his writing was linked to the highest of politics. We have suggested he may have been close to Essex through his chaplain, while one of his minor victims, Robert Bacon, a preacher in Gloucester and Bristol, alleged Edwards attacked him as a way of attacking his patron the Independent Viscount Saye and Sele, ‘the most constant Patriot of his Countrey, and lover of good men’. He dared not denounce Saye directly, ‘others having sped so ill before him’—the marginal reference to ‘Mr Cr’, presumably an allusion to Cranford and the Savile affair. Nedham, at that time an associate of Saye, gave Edwards a prominent place in his attack on clerical intolerance, while the anonymous author of *To the High Court of Parliament. A Dilemma from a Parallel* compared *Gangraena*’s attitude to parliament to the king’s 1642 Declaration against the militia ordinance. Both Edwards and the king blamed parliament for allowing the spread of sectaries, and both were guilty of breach of parliamentary privilege in presuming to dictate to the Houses. These views were characteristic again of the Saye circle in 1646–7.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 59^{r-v}, 60^v, 61^r, 62^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 100–4); CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 170^r–171^r, 172^{r-v}; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 473, 502; BL Add MS 31116 (*Whitaker’s Journal*), fos. 255^r, 256^r.

⁸⁶ *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 364, 367, 369–70; DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 75^v–76^v, 79^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 119–20, 123); Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 85, 96–7. Buchanan was the main target of Saye’s *Vindiciae Veritatis*: Adamson, ‘*Vindiciae Veritatis*’.

⁸⁷ For Balsome see Ch. 3 n. 64, above; Bacon, *The Spirit of Prelacy Yet Working*, 31–2. This dealt mainly with conflicts in Gloucester in July 1644. It carried a fulsome imprimatur from John Bachelier, who described it as a ‘remarkable Relation, penned with a sweet spirit of

One would hesitate to describe Edwards simply as a tool of Essex and the Presbyterians, but his much repeated descriptions of city, Assembly, and Scots, opposed by sectaries and an increasingly dangerous army, with a divided parliament in the middle, threatened to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁸⁸ Edwards publicized the details of William Hawkins's offending words against the Common Council in February, 'that the King, the Scots, and the Common Council, did drive on one designe'. He denounced 'persons known to be most desperately opposite to the Presbyterians, to the Covenant, to our Brethren of Scotland, the Assembly, to the godly orthodox Ministers, the men in great request, walking boldly in Westminster Hall, at the House of Commons door daily; familiar with some Parliament men, preferd to places of trust and honour, having favour in things wherein other men can find none'.⁸⁹

The last few pages of *Gangraena*, Part Two were taken up with an extended comparison between the sectaries and the Scots, to the benefit of course of the latter. Edwards rejoiced that God 'in his wonderfull providence gave the King to them', for the cause of peace, and on his very last page, in tiny type, he extracted with glee from the speeches of St John, 'a prime able member of the House of Commons', and 'Master Burroughs a chief man among the Dissenting brethren' in support of the Scots alliance. These speeches, originally delivered in the city in October 1643 when the alliance was first proposed, were published by John Bellamy, only days before *Gangraena*, Part Two came out, presumably to embarrass the now anti-Scottish St John and Burroughs. For his own part, Edwards concluded, 'I had a great deal rather fal and perish with the Kingdom of Scotland and the Presbyt[erian] party in England, standing for the Covenant and the truth professed in all the Reformed Churches, then to grow and flourish for awhile with the Sectaries standing for a Toleration of all Sects and Opinions, yea then to be a King among them, as John of Leyden was at Munster'.⁹⁰

meeckesse, one of the most Sovereigne remedies for all our divisions, in my judgement deserves to be Printed. [Nedham], *Independencie No Schisme and To the High Court of Parliament: A Dilemma from a Parallel* (London, 1646).

⁸⁸ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, ch. 4, stresses parliament's resentment at Scottish pressure to agree with the Westminster Assembly on church government. On the other hand, Baillie was increasingly fearful that Independents in parliament such as Saye and Wharton would move the adjournment or effective dissolution of the Assembly: *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 344, Dec. 1645.

⁸⁹ *Gangraena*, i. 183; ii. 155–7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, ii. 211–12; *Four Speches delivered the sixth of October 1643* (London 1646), BL E338 (1), Thomason date 23 May 1646, compared to 28 May for his *Gangraena*, Part Two. Edwards

Juxon's Journal similarly constructed a polarization around the Scots, although he assessed it very differently. The founding of the New Model had been a victory for the 'Independent partie', and a setback for the 'Presbyterian and Lord Generalls & Scotts partie', while in the struggle over church government the following autumn, parliament faced an insoluble dilemma, because 'The Presbyterians are great & have the Scotts to them. And the Independents have done too good service to be soe ill rewarded as not to have there liberty'. In London, 'The Ministrs doe very much presse the Common Counsel forwards & make them Active. Now the Scotts are cried up more then ever & the Covenant pressd. The godly partie in the howse represented as men of no Justice as men that would have no peace. No Government nor no kingly power & as men that would disunite the 2 kingdomes'. By this means 'good and consciensous' people 'beinge over credulous' as well as 'bad & intressd men' had come to doubt the commitment of the godly who were the great bulwark of the parliament.⁹¹

Much city pamphlet debate in the first half of 1646 covered the same themes. The epistle to the pamphlet in support of Thomas Hawes claimed his sufferings showed what dangers the godly faced if the 'inhumane fury and rage of these Blew-conspiring party of presbyters be not timely crush'd and smothered before all its theatning formidable events be delivered out of its Northerne Wombe'. The author asked 'whether a Blew Bonnet may not prove as dangerous a fashion as ever was the Episcopall Catter Cap', and urged that the Assembly be adjourned until the king was delivered up by the Scots.⁹² John Vicars, on the other hand, in supporting Edwards, also supported his 'loyall and loving Scottish Brethren, the work of the Assembly, and the Covenant. The Scots reciprocated such support with a letter of praise for the Remonstrance and the city's steadfastness 'amidst the many mists of error and herisie wch hath rise from the bottomlesse pitt'.⁹³

Opponents of the Remonstrance presented it as an attack on the authority of parliament, promoted by royalists with the ultimate aim of

may of course have seen it earlier. Edwards did not bother to quote from the more predictable and consistent praise for the Scots from Calamy and Obadiah Sedgewick.

⁹¹ DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 38^{r-v}, 46^r, 61^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 76, 86, 103).

⁹² *The Afflicted Christian Justified*, Epistle, 10, 18–19; the same language is used in *The Interest of England Maintained*, 19. *Conscience Caution'd and so set at Libertie* (London, 1646), BL E341 (7), Thomason date 20 June, is another attack on the Remonstrance denouncing the clergy and the Scots while promoting the sovereignty of the people. Catter or Cater meant mitred.

⁹³ Vicars, *Schismatic Sifted*, sig. A2^v, 3, 19, 26; CLRO, CCJ 40, fo. 188^v (10 July).

destroying parliament's godly army. *Gangraena*, as we have seen, was attacked on similar grounds. The extended attack on the Scots largely written by the Independent peer Saye and Sele or his son Nathaniel in April–May 1646 (although not published until much later) warned the city 'to have a more watchfull eye upon their Malignants, who drive on the Court designs . . . having cajoled and deceived the honest meaning men they are for Reformation of Religion, the Presbyterian Government, and against Sects, Schisms and Heresies, (whereof they have no more care, than of their old shoes'. Excluding non-Presbyterians from office would eliminate many peers, most of the House of Commons, and nearly all the army, 'the most Victorious, Faithfull, Godly, just and vertuous Army that any age ever brought forth'. (John Bellamy indignantly referred to Essex, Waller, and the Scots as counter-evidence.)⁹⁴

On Juxon's account one of the most prominent critics of the Remonstrance, the Independent Stephen Estwicke, protested in Common Council, 'My Lord this Courte deales unjustly with the parliamt, before he could goe on was interrupted'. As part of a wide-ranging declaration explaining their plans for government in state and church, the Commons had insisted on 17 April that they were committed to a Presbyterian church, but not to giving an 'arbitrary and unlimited Power and Jurisdiction to near ten thousand Judicatories [parochial elderships]'. Nor, they continued, 'have we yet resolved how a due regard may be had, that tender Consciences which differ not in fundamentals of religion, may be so provided for, as may stand with the word of God and the peace of the kingdom'.⁹⁵ Edwards's palpable disappointment with parliament is thus reflected in the Remonstrance's expressions of regret that 'the said Secretaries doe encourage themselves, by their misconstrucon of that Expression in the late declaracon concerninge tender consciences to expect a tolleration (contrary to the Nationall Covenant, as we humbly conceive)'.⁹⁶ Petitions and pamphlets against the Remonstrance indeed drew attention to the 17 April declaration and urged that parliament be left to manage the affairs of the kingdom in accordance with it. The declaration offered a gloss on the commitment in the Covenant to reformation according to the 'word of God'; the oath itself had been intended as 'a more plaine

⁹⁴ [Saye], *Vindiciae Veritatis*, 26; *The Interest of England Maintained*, 7–9 (quotation is at 7); cf. *A Moderate Reply passim* and *To the High Court of Parliament*; John Bellamy, *A Vindication of the Remonstrance and Petition* (London, 1646), BL E343 (2), Thomason date 6 July, 26–7.

⁹⁵ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 78^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 122–3); *CJ* iv. 512–13.

⁹⁶ CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 178^v–179^r.

discovery of the Parliaments enemies, and not for a snare to the Parliaments friends'.⁹⁷

On 23 June 1646, the Common Council, as we have seen, accepted a well-supported petition in support of the Remonstrance. That same afternoon a committee was established to answer it and to draw up a letter to the king, who had written to the city attempting to get their support for a peace settlement in late May. As with communication with the Scots, the idea that the city might negotiate independently with Charles caused profound disquiet in parliament and weeks of heart-searching within the Common Council.⁹⁸ Some contemporary commentators did see in the city a yearning for the return of the king. The young royalist divine William Sancroft wrote to his father: 'the late breaches with the synod, Scotts and Citty, have much disposed mens minds to looke back from whence they are departed' so that 'ever since the voting downe of the synods and citties petition, the Assembly-men have praid very zealously for his Majesty'. Sancroft claimed Calamy, preaching before parliament, had told them 'they had brought us out of Babylon, and left us in Babel'.⁹⁹ But the relationship between city Presbyterianism and royalism, and the more specific question of Edwards's attitude to the king, are more contradictory and perplexing than a simple model of increasing rapprochement would suggest.¹⁰⁰

Edwards and the supporters of the city Remonstrance were obliged by the demands of the polemical and political context to reject Independent allegations that they were covert royalists. Their protestations were not thereby insincere. Bellamy insisted that while the House of Commons was indeed the representative body of the kingdom it was but one of the three

⁹⁷ *The Humble Acknowledgement and Petition of Divers Inhabitants In, and About the Citie of London* (London 1646), BL E339 (12), Thomason date 3 June (presented to the Commons, 2 June). On his copy Thomason noted 'Nicolas Mano & Salloman Simple who amongst other, subscribed this Independant petition'. Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 385–6, thinks these may be Nicholas Tew and Solomon Smith; *A Moderate Reply to the Citie Remonstrance*, for the quotation; *The Interest of England Maintained*, 6; [Price], *The City Remonstrance*, 14, for other references to the Declaration. A petition delivered to the Common Council on 22 May, and aimed at forestalling the Remonstrance, praised the 'constant courage and wisdom' of Parliament: *A Petition of Citizens of London Presented to the Common Councill* (London 1646), BL 669, fo. 10 (57).

⁹⁸ CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 184^{r-v}, 186^v. Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 369–70. In July the Commons forbade the city from sending any reply. Common Council proceedings over the answer to the king can be followed in Juxon's Journal: DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 79^{r-v}, 83^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 123–4, 128–9).

⁹⁹ Bodleian Tanner MS 59 fos. 121, 161; H. F. Cary (ed.), *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England*, 2 vols. (London, 1842), i. 17–18, 29–32, May 1646.

¹⁰⁰ See Gentles, 'The Struggle for London', for a very balanced account.

estates of King, Lords, and Commons, through whose coordination ‘the Prince’s Sovereignty, and the peoples free-dome and liberty are together preserved and maintained’. The King was obliged to obey laws passed by the Lords and Commons.¹⁰¹ When discussing sectarian attempts to sabotage Presbyterian petitioning in Part Three, Edwards insisted that the right to petition was ‘a great part of the liberty and priviledge of the subject’, and suggested that even many princes who had been ‘against al defensive Arms and other wayes of the peoples seeking their right, yet still granted them the liberty of petitioning’. If the sectaries ever came to power they would rule by force and make the people slaves. Edwards clearly endorsed here the mainstream parliamentary support for armed defence against royal infringement of the people’s rights. On the other hand, the potential for Presbyterian–royalist cooperation is revealed in his recognition that ‘The King was a true Prophet in what he spoke in his Declarations concerning Anabaptists, Brownists and Sectaries’.¹⁰²

In the end the Remonstrance could not be pressed on a reluctant parliament, and in the same weeks city ministers also decided to make the best of a bad job. On 19 June, following a ‘zealous and earnest seeking God’ in a special prayer meeting at Sion College, the London ministers decided, with qualifications, to act on the latest parliamentary orders to implement a Presbyterian system. It was ‘the present unspeakable miseries of the Church by wofull Divisions, Blasphemies, Heresies, abominable loose-nesse, Libertinisme, and Atheisme, and the Spirituall Ruine of many Congregations through false Teachers’ that largely motivated them, along with the clear impracticality of any further petitioning campaign. The ministers’ ‘Considerations and Cautions’ laid them open to the derision of some supporters of liberty of conscience who pointed out that any ‘heretic’ could conform as closely as the Presbyterians were prepared to. More importantly for the Presbyterians’ own priorities, this decision drew a line under the bruising debates on church government, and left the ministers free to focus on an Edwards-style agenda of action against ‘Blasphemies, heresies . . . Libertinisme’.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Bellamy, *A Justification of the City Remonstrance*, 2–4, 36, 41. See also Bellamy, *Vindication*, 12–14. *A Glasse for Weake ey’d Citizens or a Vindication of the Pious, Prudent and Peaceable Petition* (London, 1646), printed date 19 June, BL E341 (5).

¹⁰² *Gangraena*, iii, sig. lii^v, after 240, compared with 291. Cf. *To the High Court of Parliament*.

¹⁰³ *Certaine Considerations and Cautions Agreed Upon by the Ministers of London, Westminster* (London, 1646), BL E341 (11), Thomason date 22 June 1646. This pamphlet (published for Ralph Smith) outlined the ministers’ continuing disquiet over the measures for

GANGRAENA, PART THREE AND
PARLIAMENTARIAN POLITICS

The ambiguous compromises of June 1646 are evident in *Gangraena*, Part Three, received by Thomason on 28 December 1646.¹⁰⁴ Edwards's fears of betrayal haunted Part Three: 'I could have had more friends among the Presbyterian party to have beene more moderate (as they call it) (for such a time have we fallen into of Lukewarmnesse, and favour of Sectaries, that the being earnest against them hath made some who goe for Presbyterians not to owne me as otherwise they would.'¹⁰⁵ In Part Three Edwards was also conscious of how much things had changed for the worse in 1646. John Price's books on the city's Remonstrance could not have been written 'in the year 1645, but in the year 1646, that they agree so with Lilburne, Overton etc'.¹⁰⁶ It was all the more essential that lukewarm Presbyterians, especially in the city, roused themselves to fight for their cause in an increasingly polarized world. *Gangraena*, Part Three in its call to zealous action thus intensified the crisis it described.

Part Three reinforced the model of politics already clearly stated in the earlier parts, a bitter polarization constructed around Edwards's heroes—the Scots—and his villains—the New Model Army. The army and the civilian sectaries were threatening the stability of three kingdoms, in a variety of contradictory ways, as Edwards repeated different alarming rumours. Some said that when the Scots' army left, the Presbyterians in the army would be packed off to Ireland. Others had overheard Independents asserting that it was better that Ireland be lost, 'then England hazarded by sending away the Army'. The New Model's hostility to the Scots featured largely in an extended diatribe on the 'unsufferable Insolencies' of the sectaries, with perhaps self-defeating claims that they had accused the Scots of being mercenary, 'a false, dishonest, selfe-seeking People', who 'now demand more hundred thousand pounds then all Scotland is worth if it were to be sold'.¹⁰⁷ Opposition to the Scots was inextricably bound up for Edwards with sectarian hostility to the Assembly, to Presbyterian sympathizers in parliament, and especially to the city, conceived of as a Presbyterian stronghold.

administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but also their decision to act hoping that the magistrates (parliament) would eventually be brought round to their views. *Scottish Dove*, 17–25 June, for the meeting (BL E341 (19)). [Saye], *Vindiciae Veritatis*, 37, is a typical comment.

¹⁰⁴ Thomason dated his copy 28 Dec. 1646: BL E368 (5).

¹⁰⁵ *Gangraena*, iii, sig. []^r.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 47, 96, 193, 223–4.

In the interval between the publication of Parts Two and Three of *Gangraena*, the sudden death in October of the Earl of Essex, ‘the head of our partie’, wrote Baillie, ‘hes wounded us exceedingly’.¹⁰⁸ But there were also hopeful signs: a ‘heresy ordinance’, enthusiastically supported in *Gangraena*, began its long progress through the parliament, as we shall see, and Presbyterian campaigns emerged in several counties. In London Presbyterians continued to press the Common Council for action—against seditious books, and in support of ministers’ maintenance by tithes—but they overreached themselves in the autumn’s mayoral election. ‘We had laboured much, and were in full confidence’, reported Baillie, to have John Langham chosen but, ‘by the winning of some, Gayre is the man, a greater malignant than sectarie’. Juxon thought the violent Presbyterians had alienated many by their bitter attacks on the Independent John Warner. Juxon thought Gayre, despite not being ‘over well affected to the parliament’, might do more to promote ‘love and amitie’ in city government than Langham, the intemperate English mastiff.¹⁰⁹

In a famous passage in Part Three, Edwards summed up his fears about the impact of the radical programme:

in the stead of the Fundamentall Government Lawes and Constitution of this Kingdome, to set up an Utopian Anarchie of the promiscuous multitude, and the lusts and uncertaine fancies of weake people for Lawes and Rules; and if these audacious men and their daring books shall escape without exemplary punishment; and instead thereof, be countenanced and set free, I do as a Minister pronounce the plague of God will fall upon the heads of those who are the cause of it.¹¹⁰

The great threats of ‘utopian anarchy’ came from city radicals and a politicized army. It was in Part Three that Edwards offered his fullest account of lay preaching and wild religious speculation within the army, along with the plethora of stories of military harassment and abuse of godly ministers especially in the Midlands and the West Country. For Edwards the armies were the ‘Nurseries of all errours and all our evils’; all the most dangerous sectaries ‘smell of the Army’. Decent Presbyterians among the soldiers were being removed.¹¹¹ The prominence of the mystical army preacher William Dell in Part Three, with evidence of his preaching in Oxford perhaps solicited by Edwards from Nicholas Widmerpole and other Christ

¹⁰⁸ For provincial activities and the heresy ordinance see below; *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 401, to William Spang, 2 Oct. 1646.

¹⁰⁹ CCJ 40, fos. 187–8, 190^v, 193^v; *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 400, to William Spang, 2 Oct.; DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 91^{r-v} (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 137).

¹¹⁰ *Gangraena*, iii. 217–18.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 266, 273.

Church activists, was a sign of increasing alarm at radical influences in the army. Dell was a target for Prynne also, and for Christopher Love, the younger Presbyterian minister who became a royalist-Presbyterian martyr in 1651. Both Dell and Love preached before parliament on 25 November 1646; when Dell printed his sermon a couple of weeks later he added to his own text some comments on the ‘chief Contradictions’ in Love’s preaching. In mid-December, Love returned the compliment by publishing ‘Animadversions’ on Dell’s sermon and a reply to Dell’s criticism of his own performance. Love’s work, licensed by Cranford and sold by Bellamy, had a dedication to Fairfax urging Dell’s unsuitability as an army chaplain. It contested Dell’s views that only ‘heart reformation’ mattered and that it was wrong for magistrates to punish error and heresy. *Gangraena*, Part Three, published at the end of December, cited Dell’s sermon, but Love’s response came too late.¹¹²

Throughout Part Three Edwards emphasized the close relationships between city radicals and army sectaries, and their mutual hostility to city Presbyterianism, interweaving stories of London figures such as Attaway and Randall with the misdeeds of army preachers, then declaring: ‘Some who come from the Army tell me, that the Sectaries in the Army do exceedingly raile against the City and Citizens, and call them the Sect of the Adamites’, not because they adopted an Edenic nakedness as heresiology had it, but they because they followed the Presbyterian Mayor, Thomas Adams.¹¹³ Innumerable asides and conversations as well as extended treatment of central figures like Hugh Peter, with connections to both army and city, all reinforced a sense of the alliance between soldiers, sectaries, and proto-Levellers—an alliance which has appeared to historians to be more precarious than it usually appeared in *Gangraena*, Part Three (with some important exceptions as we shall see). Edwards referred to Overton’s and Lilburne’s ‘great Patrons, whether in the Army or out of the Army’, and accused Jeremiah Burroughs of preaching for the army and against the city. The sectaries were frequently guilty of ‘scoffing and scorning at fasting and holy exercises, speaking by way of reproach of the morning exercise’,

¹¹² Prynne, *Sword of Christian Magistracy*, sig. A4^r, 92; *Diary of John Harrington MP*, 46, 25 Nov. has, ‘Mr Del preach against Civil Magistrat. Mr Love oppose him’. Love, *Short and plaine Animadversions On some passages in Mr Dels Sermon . . . also . . . A Reply to Master Love’s Contradictions* (London 1646); Thomason, BL E366 (7) printed date 17 Dec. 1646, no Thomason date. Love’s answer to *A Reply* has continuous pagination with the critique of the sermon, but is labelled BL E366 (8). For Dell in *Gangraena*, iii. 9, 454, 64, 242, 266; his sermon *Right Reformation* and his reply to Love are mentioned on 262.

¹¹³ *Gangraena*, iii. 17–25, at 24.

conducted by the leading London Presbyterians. He reported that on 25 November when Master Case and Master Seaman had prayed on the public fast day, sectaries sent into them notes or 'bills' for prayers: 'You are desired to pray for the suppression of those Preistriden slaves who go about to get hands for disbanding of Sir Thomas Fairfax Army who under God have wrought the peace of the Kingdome'.¹¹⁴ In these polarities, Edwards himself often took centre-stage:

The City remonstrance, and my books, are exceedingly hatefull to the Sectaries in the Army; they speake desperately against the City, and the City Remonstrance . . . I have been told also from good hands, that my books are so hated among the Sectaries in the Army, that no Commanders nor Officers dare be knowne to have them, or to read them . . . some Presbyterians . . . have been forced to read them by stealth in the night in their beds, when they have been sure none should carry tales of them.

Presbyterians were in the same situation as Protestants oppressed by the Spanish Inquisition who had to read the Bible or the works of William Perkins in dangerous secrecy.¹¹⁵

Edwards insisted in Part Three that one of the most distinctive developments of 1646 was the increasingly politicized approach of the sectaries. In his Preface, Edwards warned 'The Reader shall find in this Booke the Sectaries designe and Practise, not to be only corrupting Religion . . . they have in Terminis in divers Pamphlets and some sermons declared against Monarchie and Aristocracie'. He had 'in this Third Part . . . discovered much more of their Anarchicall and Antimagistraticall spirit, many of these last Errors plainly showing they are enemies to all Government, Order, and Distinction, and would bring all into a popular confusion'. Not 'only one Book but many, not only one page but divers pages prove these

¹¹⁴ John Morrill, 'The Army Revolt', in Morrill, *Nature of the English Revolution*; Mark Kishlansky, 'The Army and the Levellers: The Roads to Putney', *Historical Journal*, 22 (1979). Both stress the distinctions between army and civilian radicals. Cf. now John Morrill and Philip Baker, 'The case of the armie truly restated', in Mendle (ed.), *The Putney Debates*. Mahoney, 'Presbyterian Party', 323–7, stresses the role of *Gangraena*, Part Three, in encouraging city hostility to the army. As Gentles suggests the earlier parts also had a role: 'The first two volumes of *Gangraena* both articulated and accelerated the deepening distrust between the army and political and religious conservatives': Gentles, *New Model Army*, 140–1. *Gangraena*, iii. 151, 182, sig. li4' (unpaginated section between pp. 240 and 241). John Price, *The Pulpit Incendiary* (London, 1648), in the spring of 1648 denounced the anti-army preaching at the morning exercise.

¹¹⁵ *Gangraena*, iii. 106. Compare iii, Preface, sig. *2', where sectarian abuse of the Scots, the city, the Assembly, and the parliament is connected to attacks on Edwards himself by Burton, Burroughs, and Goodwin.

Errors', so Edwards did not promise detailed citations. Amongst his 'political errors' was the opinion, cited from the Baptist Thomas Collier, that the Saints should have an external kingdom as well as a spiritual one, but the bulk of Edwards's political discussions were based on the works of Lilburne and Overton who were to become identified as the leaders of a 'Leveller' movement. The general 'political' passages presumably expanded as Edwards wrote for they continue, as already explained, into unpaginated sections.¹¹⁶

I have already suggested that the prominence of Richard Overton in Part Three, in contrast to his earlier obscurity, represents a genuine raising of his profile in the city. Five pages of stories began with 'There is one Richard Overton a desperate Sectary, one of Lilburnes Breed and followers, who hath printed many scandalous things against the House of Peers', and there were many other long sections based on his recent pamphlets. Overton and Lilburne are always coupled together by Edwards and the most focused treatment of Lilburne, 'an Arch-sectary, the great darling of the Sectaries, highly extolled and magnified by them in many Pamphlets', follows immediately on the discussion of Overton.¹¹⁷ Walwyn is not particularly associated with them by Edwards although the radical printer William Larner is, and it was to be a further year before the term Leveller was to be applied to this grouping of city radicals. Edwards was clearly alarmed by pamphlets arguing that the civil power had no jurisdiction at all over the conscience and that all legitimate power was derived from the choice of the people, and there is no reason to doubt that such ideas were circulating in the city in a manner hitherto unknown. It is nonetheless likely that Edwards's account of late 1646 presented a level of radical unity and organization that did not quite or yet exist; it was in the following year that anti-Presbyterian petitioning campaigns offered evidence of more effective radical coalescence.¹¹⁸

One of Edwards's rarer qualifications or distinctions was most precient, as he pointed to a large contradiction between Overton's and Lilburne's 1646 pamphlets on popular sovereignty and the supremacy of

¹¹⁶ *Gangraena*, sig. *4^v-(1^r; sig. c, d, following p. 16 (sixteen unnumbered pages); and sig. Ii following p. 240 (eight pages). The quotation is from sig. ci^v, following p. 16.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 148. Page after page was quoted verbatim from *The Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* in particular: see the long repetitive section on the 'unsufferable insolencies' of the sectaries, 193–233, 153.

¹¹⁸ Morrill and Baker, 'Case of the armie', date the label Leveller to the aftermath of the Putney debates in Nov. 1647. Walwyn and Lilburne are seen as allies in *Gangraena*, ii. 29–30. Lilburne (again from June 1646), Larner (from Mar. 1646), and Overton (from Aug.) were all in prison.

the Commons, and John Goodwin's arguments in *Theomachia*, that the House of Commons should have no power over religion 'because they are chosen by the raffe raffe of the Land, all sorts of men, worldly men, drunkards etc. having a right of nominating persons to a Parliamentary trust and power'. On this argument the Lords, 'of Noble Parentage and well bred', would have a better claim to power.¹¹⁹ Edwards also highlighted a rare disagreement between Goodwin and his usually loyal associate, John Price, 'Cretensis beloved Disciple', whose pamphlets against the city's Remonstrance had credited the House of Commons with supreme power, and supported the authority of the common people rather than the Saints. Edwards here was offering a clever and opportunistic attack on radical inconsistencies, but it was over just this choice—simply between the rule of the Saints and the appeal to popular sovereignty—that Goodwin (and Price) broke decisively with Levellers such as Walwyn, Lilburne, and Overton early in 1649.¹²⁰

This is an example of another characteristic specific to Part Three, which included extended responses by Edwards to radical errors. Edwards defended the House of Peers against the attacks of Lilburne and 'all the Sectaries wicked Libells, shewing the weaknesse of those Principles, That all power in Government is founded upon the immediate free election of all those that are to be Governed, and of a necessity that all who are to be subject and obey must be represented'. Such principles would unravel all order, discipline, and property rights: 'all the Acts, Lawes, Proceedings, Processes of former Parliaments, and of this present Parliamnt . . . are void and Null . . . all who possess any thing as Lands, Houses, debts, by judgements of Courts, have no Title to them; all men who exercise any power of Rule and Government over others are usurpers, intruders.'¹²¹ Edwards argued with great conviction against the appeal to abstract, natural law, making a repetitive but effective case for specific, positive law and historic customs. The sectaries denounced the laws and customs of this nation, and instead 'plead for naturall Rights and Liberties, such as men have from Adam by birth'. They 'speak of being governed by Right reason', Edwards mocked: 'Is it not rationally to be supposed that those Ancestors

¹¹⁹ *Gangraena*, iii. 159; Goodwin was quoted from Prynne's *Truth Triumphant*. Edwards also contrasted Lilburne's 1646 position with his earlier acquiescence in his trial before the Lords.

¹²⁰ *Gangraena*, iii. 161; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 181–91, offers the most convenient discussion; this is the context for the bitter pamphlet attacks on Walwyn by Price.

¹²¹ *Gangraena*, iii. 153, sig. c2'. Edwards's extended arguments are found in the unpaginated section after 16, and (repetitiously) 154–9.

who founded a Government for such a Nation, and those who have followed in a Succession having yeilded to and settled such Lawes, could better judge of right reason . . . [than] every mean man who knows no reason of Lawes and States, nor is capable of Government'. Edwards argued (mischievously citing Hugh Peter on the great contrast between England and Scotland) that nations had different climates, dispositions, and constitutions, while within every nation there were different privileges and freedoms, such as the complex tapestry of rights to vote in England. Thus Edwards presented the moderate parliamentary case for liberties rather than liberty, traditional rights not natural rights, adhering to the 'fundamentall constitutions of Government made many hundred yeers before, and ancient bounds set by Lawes, with birth-right inheritance', and denounced Overton and Lilburne, for attacking English laws 'as I beleeve neither Papists, nor any English men ever did before them'.¹²²

Edwards was as contemptuous of Lilburne's and Overton's concept of the people: did it comprise 'all the men, women, and children born in England, men-servants, maid-servants, poore people and beggars'? If so, where would they meet, how would disagreements be settled, what would become of the constitution of King, Lords, and Commons? Edwards's own answers were clear:

Does not a constitution of a Government for such a people and Nation, made by the wisdom of Ancestors some hundred years before, though not by election of the peopl [*sic*] once in every year, or seven, or more, but founded upon such and such good Lawes, and in succession of persons by birth and inheritance, bind a people to obey and subject, as well as if chosen by them?¹²³

The prescient but mischievous analysis of potential conflicts between Goodwin, the anti-hero of *Gangraena*, Part Two, and Lilburne and Overton, the villains of Part Three, should not overshadow the overwhelming thrust of Edwards's polemic in December 1646 which was to deepen a broader cleavage within parliamentarianism. Part Three revealed sectarian and military hostility to Presbyterianism in general and most particularly to its vanguard in the city of London. For Independents or more radical figures amongst the soldiers the situation was reversed: Edwards's *Gangraena* was the most prominent element in a campaign of vilification of non-Presbyterians in general and the army in particular, a campaign that in the heresy ordinance, the summonses to parliamentary committees (especially the Committee of Examinations chaired by the Presbyterian

¹²² *Gangraena*, sig. c2^v-C4^r, 194.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, sig. d1^r, 160.

Colonel Edward Leigh) and the grim sermons of February–March 1647, had all too real successes. Furthermore in Part Three, Edwards did not confine himself to a call for religious repression. In his challenge to the dangerously democratic opinions of Lilburne and Overton, he aligned himself very clearly with the populist Presbyterian political programme emerging under the leadership of Denzil Holles in parliament. Central to this was the dismantling of wartime administration with oppressive committees, heavy taxation, and a bloated army. If Overton and Lilburne wanted to argue that ‘power in Government be founded on immediate election of the people’, Edwards insisted they should go back and ask the people if they were happy with everything the Long Parliament had done:

whether they were willing such things should be, viz. Anabaptists, Brownists, and all kind of Sectaries to enjoy such freedom of meetings, all sorts of ignorant Mechanicks to be suffered to turn preachers, and to go up and down seducing people, whether so great an Army to be still continued in this Kingdom, and they assessed to pay such Taxes for their maintenance, and whether Committees shall be still continued in this Kingdom; whether great sums . . . shall be given away on men who little need it . . . and if things appear to be against the mind of the generalitie of the people, whether are the people bound to obey their Orders and Ordinances in such cases?¹²⁴

This amounted in effect to a call to rebel against parliament itself, a step that led the most zealous city Presbyterians to ruin in July–August 1647.

‘WE MAY BETHINK OURSELVES WHAT’S TO BE DONE’:
GANGRAENA, PROVINCIAL MOBILIZATION, AND
PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVES

Gangraena’s message was not intended for Londoners only, but directed to all in authority. The twelfth corollary in Part One offered a particularly comprehensive programme for action, calibrated for different groups:

Hence then from the consideration of all the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and practises of the sectaries in England; we may bethink our selves what’s to be done, if we would have the Kingdom saved . . . to turn away the wrath of God from this

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. d2^r (unpaginated section between 16 and 17). Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 142–60, for the Presbyterian programme under Holles. Kishlansky argues that Holles did not intend to ruin the New Model Army, but army perceptions, sharpened by *Gangraena*, and other assaults, were rather different. I am indebted to Phil Baker who is completing a Ph.D. dissertation on the origins of the Levellers for discussion of Edwards’s impact on the army.

Kingdom; which for the heresies, blasphemies, disorders, and confusions of these four last yeers, is ready to come forth upon us like fire, and burn that none can quench it: Now the remedies and directions that I shall give . . . are both to Ministers, Magistrates and people, which shall be such rules as more properly and peculiarly concern each of them in their several places.¹²⁵

Private Christians were 'First, [to] mourn and sigh in secret, be as the Doves of the vallies, mourning for the dishonour of God and his Name . . . Secondly, they should take heed . . . and beware least they be led away . . . beware of the sheeps clothing, of Satan transformed into an Angel of light', shunning the company of the seductive sectaries and their conventicles described in *Gangraena*. More publicly they

should in all humble manner petition the Magistrates, againe and againe, that some course be taken against the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies of these times, representing the sad condition of their countreys, parishes, families, and laying open how their Wives and Children are stollen from them, and taken away against their wills; how they have no command of their servants, no quiet in their families.¹²⁶

Lay men in London, as we have seen, lived up to Edwards's expectations in the petitioning campaigns of 1646.

Edwards's exhortations were directed more particularly, however, to ministers, as individuals and collectively. Edwards's programme of action in Part One began with many pages urging ministers to preach against error and to denounce toleration at every opportunity: 'Lets therefore fill all Presses, cause all Pulpits to ring, and so possesse Parliament, City and whole Kingdom against the sects, and of the evil of schism, and a Toleration, that we may no more hear of a Toleration nor of separated Churches.' They should also pray 'night and day' against 'all the errours, heresies, roots of bitternesse, poysonous principles got in among us, and to give a miscarrying womb to the sectaries, that they may never bring forth that misshaped Bastard-monster of a Toleration (which is part fish, part flesh, and part neither of both'. He also recommended collective action by the clergy, for 'as many eyes see more then one, and many hands build up more: So acts and wayes propounded by a Community, many Ministers carry more waight and authority, then done by one single Minister'.¹²⁷

We have seen at length how London ministers amply illustrated, and were perhaps inspired by, Edwards's descriptions of Presbyterian zeal. *Gangraena* can also be connected to provincial Presbyterian campaigns. *Gangraena* presented in print and helped to construct in practice a union

¹²⁵ *Gangraena*, i. 153.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 173–4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 164–6.

of city and provincial ministers against error. It both publicized and facilitated intimate connections between Presbyterianism in London and in provincial England. Edwards's letters and stories revealed that the conflicts and alliances of the city were being recreated in many parts of England. One letter in Part One, 'lately written' (in January 1646 and probably from Harmar in Colchester) claimed, 'I am much comforted, and so are all with us, that pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that the City both Ministers and people, are for the greater part so united in their desire of government, and for the suppression of Schisme, that gangrens our Church and State'. On the other hand a neighbour, 'One of our gravest Lecturers, (I wish I could say discreetest) hath ever since our meeting about Classical Assemblies, opened himself with much bitterness against the Parliament; Assembly and Scottish Government, calling the Parliament stout-hearted, the Assembly a rotten company, the government Ecclesiasticall in Scotland a filthy stinking government . . . Oh what promises have we had of Uniformitie in Religion, both in Doctrine and Discipline! but the sons of Zerviah are too strong for us'. This minister associated himself with Edwards's criticism of Jeremiah Burroughs, and was comforted by 'the unity of the City [which] raises up my hopes that God will confound all Machivelian policies'. Another Essex minister writing to a London minister on 19 February 1646 praised, as we have seen, 'the courage and constancy of the Ministers and Citizens of London'.¹²⁸

John Bellamy denied John Price's accusation that the city's Remonstrance had fomented differences in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk, but throughout 1646–7, there is evidence of campaigning on religious issues in several counties, often self-consciously linked to initiatives in London and support for the Scots. 'Divers Ministers about Colchester in the County of Essex' wrote to the Assembly of Divines in February 1646, as their brethren of London had done, in the hope that 'a blessed Reformation may be endeavoured against an intolerable Toleration'. On 29 May 1646 a petition from some three hundred ministers in Essex and Suffolk called for the establishment of church government, and action against separatism. The ministers described how 'Schisme, Heresie, Ignorance, Prophaneness and Atheisme, flow in upon us, Seducers Multiply, grow daring and insolent, pernicious Books poyson many souls'. They demanded action against 'seducing teachers, and soul-subverting Books', and associated the orthodox of those counties with the expectations of the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 101–2, Appendix, 120 [*recte* 220]. The sons of Zeruiah (2 Samuel 3: 39) killed Abner against the wishes of King David.

foreign reformed churches, the 'longing desires' of the brethren of Scotland, and the petitions of the Assembly and the 'great City' of the kingdom. Harmar, of course, was amongst the signatories. In February 1647 a Suffolk petition to the Lords supported the London petition of December 1646, urging, again, the establishing of Presbyterian church government, measures against sects and heresies, and a political purge of those who had not taken the Covenant.¹²⁹

Lancashire was predictably zealous. A petition supporting many demands of the city's Remonstrance and claiming more than twelve thousand signatures—of an 'active cruell and Anti-parliamentary spirit' according to a hostile account—was presented to the Lords in August 1646. Edwards's informants Hollingworth and Smith were prominent in its organization. It called for church government to be established in accordance with the Covenant, and described how 'schism, error, heresy, prophaneness and blasphemy wofully spread, separate congregations are erected and multiplied, sectaries grow insolent, confidently expecting a toleration through the misconstruction of the late declaration'. It is unlikely that the independent Samuel Eaton and a few companions had caused such alarm in the county, more likely that news from London spread by Edwards and others had intensified the fears of Lancashire Presbyterians. The petition overtly associated the county with the general Presbyterian programme calling for a 'safe and well-grounded peace', support for the 'renowned city of London' that had made so many sacrifices for the parliament's cause, and for 'our dear brethren of Scotland' who had come to England's assistance 'in depth of winter when our enemies were most proud and potent'. Like the London Remonstrance the Lancashire petition called for action against heretics, schismatics, and blasphemers and for the removal of members of separate congregations from 'all places of public trust'. It was not presented to the Commons until 15 September, the day an ordinance for establishing Presbyterianism in the county was introduced.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Bellamie, *A Justification*, 6; *A true copy of a Letter from Divers Ministers about Colchester in the County of Essex, to the Assembly of Divines Against a Toleration* (London, 1646), BL 669, fo. 10 (42, 44), written on 11 Feb. and published on 7 Mar. *The Humble Petition of the Ministers of the Counties of Suffolke and Essex, Concerning Church-Government* (London, 1646), presented to the Lords, 29 May 1646, printed 1 June: BL E339 (11); *The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the County of Suffolk . . . to the House of Peers* (London, 1647), BL E377 (4), Thomason date 17 Feb.

¹³⁰ *A New Birth of the City-remonstrance or A Lanchashire Petition* (London, 1646), BL E350 (12), 18 Aug. Thomason noted 'this is a false Copie', and the true copy was not yet delivered to the House or published. The *New Birth* quoted Hollingworth as preaching that 'none refused

In Norwich, a city whose ministers had sent reports to Edwards, an attempt by the Presbyterian clergy, with Thornbecke and Carter prominent among them, to present a Remonstrance parallel to London's was prevented by fierce opposition from local Independents and the caution of the city's MP Thomas Atkins. The opponents of the Norwich Remonstrance alleged Carter and others were the puppets of the London Presbyterian clergy, gathering at 'Sion College', and that their attacks on supposed 'sects, Sectaries, Heritiques, Schismatiques' presaged a 'Bellum Prebyteriale' to succeed the bishops' wars. Its supporters defended their London model and the necessity of preventing the further spread of religious error, which in Norwich led to 'the daily infection of divers, who though they be of the inferior sort of women etc, yet have equally immortal soules'. In general the Presbyterians attacked Norwich Independents as 'thirty men and fourscore women, and the best of them scarce a Common-councill man; with the rabble of poore mechanicks & silly women entrap'd in your snare'; their counter-petition was 'filled with maids and girles hands'. Like their rivals, the Norwich Presbyterians put the local struggle in a metropolitan context, associating the Norwich Independents with 'your saucy brother-Mar-priest and Lilbourn'.¹³¹ In Lincolnshire the Presbyterian Edward King, a friend of Prynne and long an enemy of religious radicals in general and Lilburne in particular, used similar language in October when

to subscribe but Malignants or Covenant breakers'. *A True Copie of the Petition of Twelve Thousand five hundred and upwards of the Well-affected Gentlemen, Ministers, Free-holders and others of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (London, 1646), BL E352 (3), 31 Aug. This included a commentary by another minister, John Tilsley, who attributed the attacks on the petition to 'insolent John Lilburne' (10), and prayed that not 'one fret of this Gangrene' might affect Lancashire (20). The demands are 3–5. *Minutes of the Manchester Presbyterian Classis* (Chetham Society, NS 20, 1890), 1–2, for its presentation and the establishment of the classical organization under an ordinance finally passed on 2 Oct. 1646.

¹³¹ *Vox Populi, or the People's Cry Against the Clergy. The Rise, Progress, Ruine of the Norwich Remonstrance Framed and Fomented by the Ministers of that City* (London, 1646), BL E351 (7), Thomason date 25 Aug., is a hostile, Independent account. On 2 Sept. it was condemned by the city governors who also felt it necessary to deny they had any hand in compiling it. (Quotes are from 4, 6, 9.) *An Hue-and-Cry after Vox Populi or An Answer to Vox Diaboli* (Norwich, 1646), BL E355 (13), Thomason date 25 Sept. 1646, with an imprimatur from Cranford, 2 Sept., was the main Presbyterian response to *Vox Populi*; quotations are from 11–12, 24–5. Other responses were *Truth Vindicated from the Unjust Accusations of the Independent Society in the City of Norwich* (London, 1646), BL E351 (4), Thomason date 22 Aug., imprimatur from Cranford, 10 Aug., a general argument against separation; and *Vox Norwici or the City of Norwich Vindicating their Ministers* (London, 1646), E358 (4), 19 Oct., signed by fifteen laymen who wrote in defence of their ministers. The account of the membership of the Norwich Independent church was remarkably accurate: see Ch. 3, above. The abortive Norwich Remonstrance is not discussed by Edwards. For a full account see Evans, *Seventeenth Century Norwich*.

he called on the Grand Jurors to present 'all Papists, Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, Antinomians and Hereticks, who take upon them to creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sinnes'.¹³²

In other counties, more radical opinion mobilized against the city Presbyterians. Captain John Jones, in the language of *Gangraena*, denounced the 'active Emissaries of the Sectaries' who had stirred up trouble over tithes in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. A petition to the Commons against tithes from Hertfordshire was 'much disliked' by mainstream MPs.¹³³ In Kent too, radical groups were better organized and there was certainly no enthusiasm for setting up Presbyterian church government in the county. In letters written to his friend Samuel Hartlib, shortly after he had read *Gangraena*, Cheney Culpeper described his efforts to get a petition from Kent that would attack any power not based on popular consent as embodied in the House of Commons, and oppose any compulsive Presbyterian church government. The attempts of the Scots and the city to put pressure on the parliament were explicitly condemned, and Culpeper hoped that Hartlib's contacts could mobilize the help of men like Hugh Peter in this design.¹³⁴

Gangraena contained stories from all these counties, and the very act of contributing evidence to Edwards was one means by which provincial ministers and laymen could become included in Presbyterian networks. Thereafter ministers read about the alarming and geographically wide-ranging activities of sectaries in *Gangraena*; they were then on the lookout for the men made notorious within its pages, and deployed Edwards's evidence in their own sermons and tracts. *Gangraena* showed why action was necessary and in itself contributed to ministerial organization. Several local petitions and remonstrances echo the concerns and the language of

¹³² King quoted in Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 244. For Lilburne's accusations that King conspired with Prynne to ruin him see e.g. *The Resolved mans Resolution, to maintain with the last drop of his heart blood, his civil Liberties and freedomes* (London, 1647), Thomason date 14 May 1647, 39: 'I am confidently perswaded Pryn was the maine instrument to provoke his treacherous Tyburne deserving comrade, and extraordinary great associate, Colonel Edward King, to arrest me upon the 14 of April 1646'. Prynne, according to Lilburne, also used his membership of the Committee for Taking the Accounts of the Whole Kingdom to harrass his enemies in general and Lilburne in particular.

¹³³ Jones, *Plain English*, 6. *Diary of Harrington*, 25; BL Add MS 31116, Whitaker's Journal, fo. 267^v. There is a copy of this petition in Bodl., Tanner MS 59, fo. 127.

¹³⁴ 'Letters of Sir Cheney Culpeper', Letters 104–5, 267–70 (26 Feb. 1645/6; 4 Mar. 1645/6). On 21 Apr. 1646, the Kent Committee reported to Speaker William Lenthall that at a meeting of twenty gentlemen and twenty ministers to discuss setting up a classical presbytery, we 'doe finde the ministers in generall and the major part of the gentry to be desirous yet a while to wayte the further directions of the Parliament': Bodl., Tanner MS 59 fo. 77.

Edwards's *Gangraena*, and presumably owe something to this most publicized work of Presbyterian polemic as well as to London models. And, of course, Edwards's collaborators were also active in general Presbyterian initiatives.

The most elaborate example of cooperation between London ministers and groups of provincial Presbyterian clergy came in the "Testimonies" against error signed and published in 1647–8. In his call to action in Part One Edwards specifically proposed that ministers should work to draw up remonstrances against error as county petitions against the bishops' errors in 'doctrine, worship and government' had been gathered together into a general remonstrance in 1640. Now there was 'a more fruitful field to walk in, more matter, stranger Doctrines, greater Blasphemies', and ministers should aim to do better than the eight hundred ministers' signatures collected in 1640:

it were good to set forth some Books against the errors of our times, with joynt consent in the name of all the Ministers, to send out some grave Admonition to the people, in the name of the City-Ministers subscribed by all, to warn the people, in the name of God to beware of the errors of these times, and to withdraw from sectaries, and to return again into the bosome of the Church; and lastly, for the Ministers to make a Remonstrance of all the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, Schisms, Insolencies, Tumults, that have been in England these last five yeers, out of all the Printed Books, publike Sermons, preachings in private Houses, discourses of the sectaries; and with a Petition humbly to present it to both Houses, with hands subscribed of all the Orthodox godly Ministers in this Kingdom.¹³⁵

This tactic came to fruition in 1647–8, starting predictably with *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, And to Our Solemn League and Covenant, As Also Against the Errors, Heresies and Blasphemies of these times and the Toleration of them*, signed by fifty-two London ministers in 14 December 1647. Edwards had by then fled to Amsterdam but many familiar friends put their names to the London 'Testimony': Calamy, Ashe, Cranford, Jenkyn, George Walker, Roborough, Roberts, and Christopher Love amongst them. The 'Testimony' made no mention of *Gangraena*, but its methods were reminiscent of Edwards's: a 'catalogue' of errors was provided, 'All of them being collected out of their Authors own Books alleadged in the margin and laid down in their own words', with a few more added from a disputation in Oxford in December 1646, and from evidence presented by the Assembly to parliament. Like Edwards, the

¹³⁵ *Gangraena*, i. 165–6.

London ministers justified their proceedings with reference to ‘Tertullian, Ireneus, Augustine, and many ancient Fathers’. The ministers regretted that many ‘old accursed heresies . . . dead, buried and rotten in their graves’, were now revived ‘to the poisoning and subverting of many thousands of precious souls’, but like Edwards they spent most time on recent abominations. Like Edwards, but not to the same degree, the ‘Testimony’ concentrated on attacking errors, leaving less space to elaborate on the positive arguments for Presbyterian church government and the Covenant. Webbe’s reply to *Gangraena* was amongst the works quoted, and much material highlighted by Edwards also featured: *Little Non-such, Mans Mortalitie* by ‘R.O.’, Clarkson’s *Pilgrimage of Saints*, Paul Best’s rejection of the Trinity, and the various offences of John Goodwin and John Saltmarsh, for example. The ‘Testimony’ was inevitably briefer and better organized than Edwards’s rambling works; it was up to date with references to works published since *Gangraena*, Part Three, such as Joseph Salmon’s *Antichrist in Man*; and it was more even-handed with many references to the works of the Anglican Henry Hammond who was taken as arguing for general redemption. The highly charged last few pages, which bewailed the falling hopes of the orthodox godly as ‘reformation’ turned into ‘deformation’, the nation swarmed with ‘noisome Errours, Heresies and Blasphemies . . . destructive schismes, separations’, and the ‘hideous and complexive evil’ of toleration heralded the destruction of ‘Magistracy and Ministry, and with them, all Religious and Comely Order in Church and Commonwealth’, contain many echoes of *Gangraena*.¹³⁶

In his copy of the London testimony, the Worcestershire Presbyterian Thomas Hall praised the ministers as ‘Haereticorum mallei’, hammers of the heretics, and as Edwards had hoped, the London testimony inspired other clergy into action. Thirteen other counties issued ‘Testimonies’ or ‘Attestations’ in support of the London initiative, published by the Presbyterian sympathizers amongst the London booksellers, Michael Sparke, Luke Fawne, Thomas Underhill, Christopher Meredith, and Ralph Smith. Lancashire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire were the earliest, in March 1648, with the others following in late spring and summer.¹³⁷ Some were

¹³⁶ *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ*, 30–4; much is reminiscent of the Preface to *Gangraena*, Part One. Nasu, ‘Heresiography’, 43–4, 173–6, has a useful discussion of the London *Testimony*. He describes Hammond’s indignation at his inclusion on the basis of a book licensed by John Downname—one of the signatories to the *Testimony*.

¹³⁷ Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, app. One, 553–8, provides a convenient list of the ministers’ testimonies and their signatories. Hall had several testimonies bound in the same volume with a range of other orthodox defences such as Love against Dell, or William Jenkyn against

relatively brief and almost formulaic manifestos, endorsing the Solemn League and Covenant and the London Testimony, and denouncing toleration. Despite similarities of form and even title (those from Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Gloucestershire, Shropshire, and Essex were identical) each county's manifesto included something distinctive. Wiltshire, for example, had a marvellous prologue:

In this time of Jacobs trouble, wherein the great red Dragon hath watched the woman cloathed with the Sun, to devour the man-child as soon as it should be borne, and wherein the serpent hath cast out of his mouth a flood of Heresies and Errors, to carry away the woman and the child, wee are much comforted to see that God hath raised up any help for the woman in the earth, and that there is a remnant of her seed which keep the Commandements of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.¹³⁸

The West Riding Attestation had conventional references to several books mentioned in *Gangraena*, such as those by Best, Clarkson, Biddle, and Archer; and these ministers vowed never to consent to the toleration of an Edwards-style list of errors from 'Arrianism' through Antiscripturism and Libertinism to 'Socinianism, scepticism, or any other Heresies, Sects or erroneous opinions whatsoever'. But they also drew attention to a local scandal, the recent religiously motivated murder of a mother by her son, daughter, and son-in-law who wanted to kill the evil spirits in her.¹³⁹

Testimonies issued later in 1648 included some troubled comments on the Scots' threats of renewed military intervention, this time against the English parliament, justified by English scorning of the Covenant. The ministers of Staffordshire hoped that their public adherence to the principles of the Covenant would nullify the accusations of Covenant breaking, 'by which means some in Scotland take advantage to pretend a just ground

Goodwin: Birmingham Reference Library, 094/1648, C/24. *The Attestation of the Ministers of Somerset joyning with the Reverend Ministers of London against the Errors and Blasphemies of the Present Times* (London, 1648), BL E457 (26), dated by Thomason 9 Aug. 1648, was apparently the briefest and the last. Full references for testimonies not otherwise discussed are: *The Gloucestershire Ministers Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant . . .* (London, 1648), BL E433 (25), 28 Mar. 1648; *A Testimony of the Ministers in the Province of Salop, to the Truth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1648), BL E442 (18), 14 May 1648; *The Warwickshire Ministers Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1648), BL E432 (14), 16 Mar. 1647/8.

¹³⁸ *The Concurrent Testimony of the Ministers in the County of Wiltes, with their Reverend brethren of London* (London, 1648), printed date 26 June 1648, BL E449 (27), 1.

¹³⁹ *Vindiciae Veritatis; or an Unanimous Attestation to Gods Truth* (London, 1648) from the West Riding of Yorkshire, BL E444 (5), 6 Apr., 4-7, 9.

of waging war against us (which God in his mercy avert)'. The Cheshire ministers praised the freedom of Scotland from the evils of error and heresy which they attributed to their enjoyment of 'the firme establishment of a subordinate Presbyteriall Government'. Yet they regretted that a new war in the name of the Covenant was threatened: 'wee are assured that such a warre as some would stirre up and carry on under pretence of asserting the Covenant against Independent Sectaries and Hereticks, would make the breaches of the Covenant wider'.¹⁴⁰ The very widely supported Essex Testimony confined its sharpest condemnations to the uncontroversial evils of Popery, Arminianism, and Socinianism and, slightly ambiguously, judged it 'most agreeable to Christianity, That tender Consciences of Dissenting Brethren bee tenderly dealt withall, yet we dare not carry in our bosomes such steely consciences and rockie hearts' as not to mourn the continuing spread of error despite the fasts against it.¹⁴¹

The most elaborate testimonies came from Devon, Lancashire, and Cheshire. The Lancashire 'Harmonious Consent' was a lengthy exposition in support of the Covenant, the Westminster Assembly, the Scots, and Presbyterian government. Like Edwards, the Lancashire ministers bemoaned the 'lukewarmness' of the godly, and the damage done by the fact that those holding errors 'pretend to more piety and holiness' than was the case under 'Prelatical tyranny'.¹⁴² The Cheshire 'Attestation', the longest of all, while clearly committed to Presbyterian government, displayed a caution, and a tactically moderate appeal to the Independents to seize the common ground with Presbyterians that marks it off from the others. The Cheshire ministers stressed the 'great doubt, much dispute and difficultie' in defining heresies, and noted that some writers against heresy had themselves fallen under suspicion. They acknowledged that many of their Independent 'Brethren' were 'learned, godly, charitable and kind even to their Presbyterian brethren (and some of them to be so adverse in a great measure to such a Toleration as you might terme intolerable and abominable)'. Yet Independency was an error in itself, and (echoing the language in *Gangraena*) 'if not the naturall mother, yet such a tender Nurse and Patronesse

¹⁴⁰ *A Testimony of the Ministers of Stafford to the Trueth of Jesus Christ and the Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1648), BL E453 (16), 14 July, 6; *An Attestation to the Testimony of our reverend brethren of London*, 'resolved on by the Ministers of Cheshire at their meeting May 2 and subscribed at their next Meeting, June 6, 1648' (not in Thomason; Thomas Hall's copy consulted), 13, 31.

¹⁴¹ *A Testimony of the Ministers in Essex to the Trueth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant* (London, 1648), BL E438 (4), 3 May 1648, 3.

¹⁴² *The Harmonious Consent*, BL E434 (7), Thomason date 30 Mar. 1648.

to hereticall opinions of all kindes'. Nonetheless, Independents like Jeremiah Burroughs were urged to join the Presbyterians, with whom they had more in common than those 'who under the titles of Independents (howsoever otherwise divided) are united together against the Presbyterianiall Government'.¹⁴³ The Northamptonshire ministers acknowledged that in their Testimony, errors were simply 'noted', rather than 'discussed and disproved', and this was the pattern of almost all counties.¹⁴⁴ The Devon manifesto was the exception, offering scriptural 'antidotes' to the errors listed in the London testimony—from those on God, the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ, to universal redemption, the mortality of the soul, and infant baptism. They presented extended arguments against toleration, remarking, 'Wee also leave the mysterie of Hollands and Polands prosperity by toleration, to bee judged when the cup of Gods indignation is put into their hand'.¹⁴⁵

In city and country 902 ministers ultimately testified against error, more than had signed the Remonstrance of 1640 though a little less than the thousand Edwards had hoped for. In many counties ministers with *Gangraena* connections were prominent signatories: in Lancashire, Richard Hollingworth was second after Richard Heyrick, the senior Manchester minister and Assemblyman.¹⁴⁶ In Essex where 132 ministers, more than in any other county, signed the Testimony, the predictable name of Robert Harmar is found with two other Colchester ministers.¹⁴⁷ In contrast only thirty-nine ministers signed the Norfolk 'Attestation', amongst them John Carter of Norwich and John Brinsley of Yarmouth.¹⁴⁸ In Northampton-

¹⁴³ *An Attestation to the Testimony of our reverend brethren of London*, 2–3, 13, 31. They also provided a brief history of heresy as discussed in Ch. 2, above. John Ley is usually credited with writing the Attestation which ran to 54 pages of text.

¹⁴⁴ *The Testimony of our Reverend Brethren, Ministers of the Province of London . . . attested by other Ministers in the County of Northampton* (London, 1648), BL E441 (29), Thomason date 11 May, 4.

¹⁴⁵ *The Joint Testimonie of the Ministers of Devon*, 4–23. The original sources given by the London ministers for these errors were also cited (Best, Biddle, *Little Non-such*, and so on). This distinctive testimony was perhaps drafted by George Hughes of Plymouth, the first signatory: see also *DNB*.

¹⁴⁶ *The Harmonious Consent*. It seems that Charles Herle the more conciliatory Lancashire representative in the Assembly (and licensor of the *Apologeticall Narration*) did not sign.

¹⁴⁷ *A Testimony of the Ministers in Essex*.

¹⁴⁸ *The Attestation of the Ministers of the County of Norfolk, and City of Norwich. In Vindication of the Ancient Truths of Jesus Christ, and prosecution of the Solemn Covenant: Against The spreading Errors, and prodigious Blasphemies that are Scattered abroad in these licentious Dayes. As it was Represented to the Ministers of the Province of London, June 9. 1648* (London, 1648), BL E447 (6), Thomason date 19 June. The first printing was for Michael Sparke while a second printing was produced for a Norwich bookseller, W. Franklyn.

shire, Thomas Ball, an old acquaintance of Edwards, Cranford, and other London ministers, as well as the long-suffering Thomas Andrewes, the butt of the radical soldiery, were amongst the sixty-nine signatories.¹⁴⁹

It is of course predictable that these works, concerned as they are with denouncing error and heresy, should show parallels with Edwards's methods and content, and one would hesitate before giving a great deal of credit for their organization to *Gangraena*. They may be no more than another example of the cooperation amongst ministers in the localities, and the close connections between provincial ministers and city clergy, which is evident also in the provision of material for Edwards's stories. As I have argued, Edwards both benefited from such clerical sociability and helped to foster it. Equally Edwards's methods of listing errors, his horror at the prospect of toleration, and his highlighting of particular individuals and books do seem to have had an impact on the testimonies of 1647–8.

Precise connections between counties producing testimonies and areas for which Edwards had abundant material are more difficult to find. Essex ministers supported their London colleagues with enthusiasm, but there was no Suffolk testimony despite the well-supported joint petition from the two counties in favour of Presbyterian government in May 1646 and the December 1646 petition in support of a London petition. The divided county of Kent produced no Presbyterian manifesto in these months; more surprisingly there was none from Hertfordshire or Lincolnshire, although much material on Samuel Oates had come to Edwards from Lincolnshire and a Presbyterian petition from Hertfordshire in July 1646 had attracted sixty-three signatures.¹⁵⁰

Part One gave equally detailed advice to the country's civil rulers and again several of Edwards's ideas found practical expression. Some of his predictions were easy enough to make—the suggestion that magistrates 'should call upon the people for a solemn renewing of the late Covenant' was written while such a renewal was already being arranged in London. Others were never carried out to Edwards's full satisfaction as his urging 'the wicked books, printed of late years, (some whereof licensed, dispersed, cryed up) should be openly burnt by the hand of the hangman' as *Comfort for Beleevers* had been. He provided a convenient list of the

¹⁴⁹ *The Testimony of our Reverend Brethren, . . . attested by other Ministers in the County of Northampton.*

¹⁵⁰ For the Essex and Suffolk petitions see n. 129, above; for Hertfordshire: Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p. lxxii; for King and Lincolnshire, n. 132, above; for Rutland, Ch. 3 n. 247 above. *A Declaration set Forth By the Presbyterians within the County of Kent* (London, 1647), printed date 12 Jan., BL E370 (25), seems to me to be eccentric and perhaps satirical.

books that had provided the most erroneous material for his lists of error.¹⁵¹

Edwards also proposed: 'The Magistrates from the consideration of all these errors, heresies, blasphemies, should appoint and command a solemn general Fast, to be kept throughout the Kingdom, for this very end, that the Land might be humbled and mourn for these heresies, blasphemies etc . . . and for the fearful breach of our solemn Covenant.'¹⁵² A fast was finally arranged for March 1647 in the midst of a deluge of preaching against heresy. The regular public fast day, 27 January 1647, was also taken up with stern sermons on the sectarian threat. William Jenkyn of Christ Church preached to the Lords, while in the Commons Obadiah Sedgwick presented the growth of heresy as a 'Serpents' flood', and urged parliament to establish a solemn fast day to seek God's help against it, as they had done for floods of rain. An ordinance of 4 February called for just such a day of public humiliation on 10 March to seek God's assistance for the suppression of the 'Errors, Heresies and Blasphemies' that spread in the kingdom. This day seems to have been widely observed. Richard Vines, who regularly covered the danger of heresy in his sermons in 1646/7, preached before the Commons along with a more piquant choice in Thomas Hodges, minister of Kensington, who had himself been suspected of Antinomianism in the 1630s.¹⁵³ The fast was kept in distant Kendal, as the minister Henry Massy reported to his patron Lord Wharton, hoping it was the beginning not the end of parliament's action against 'errors, sects and synns'. In Dorchester, a godly town whose godly minister, William Benn, was mentioned with approval as defeating an impudent wandering sectary in *Gangraena*, 'This day was collected at the special fast [to prevent heresies] this day at Peters £4-6s'. This was

¹⁵¹ *Gangraena*, i. 171.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁵³ William Jenkyn, *A Sleeping Sicknes the distemper of the Times. A sermon preached before the House of Peers* (London, 1647), BL E372 (10), Sedgwick, *The Nature and Danger of Heresies*, 4, 39, both printed before 25 Mar. as Thomason has substituted 1646 for 1647. On the same day John Arrowsmith, *A Great Wonder in heaven; or a lively Picture of the Militant Church* (London, 1647), BL E372 (12), and Lazarus Seaman, *The Head of the Church, The Judge of the World* (London, 1647), BL E372 (11), preached more general sermons. Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, i. 913 (4 Feb.), for the ordinance; BL E373 (12), for a printed version. Richard Vines, *The Authours, Nature and Danger of Haeresie* (London, 1647), BL E378 (29); Thomas Hodges, *The Growth and Spreading of Haeresie* (London, 1647), BL E379 (1). Bodl., Tanner MS 59, fo. 121, 4 May 1646. Sancroft reported on Vines's preaching against sectaries and for the settlement of church government in Cambridge. He had denounced the 'swarms of sects'; and argued that the church should not lose 'under Constantine which it had under Nero', for 'the Church had a power of jurisdiction in it before the supreme magistrate was a Christian'. Bodl., Rawlinson MS E70, sermon notes from Cambridge, 1647-9, fo. 8'.

almost £1 more than had been collected at the routine monthly fast in February.¹⁵⁴

Although these 1647 sermons acknowledged that there were distinctions between error and heresy, they were less careful and more hardline than the sermons preceding *Gangraena* discussed in Chapter 2, reflecting the degree to which divisions hardened over the course of 1646, a process to which Edwards made a large contribution. Vines, a man moderate in temperament if not in policy, stressed in his sermon that heresy had to be precisely defined rather than used in ‘the vulgar and indeed abusive acceptation of the word . . . which usually men flinge in the face of others at random, that are not of their opinion’. He quoted Francis Bacon on the differences between the ‘strivings . . . of one Israelite with another: and these Moses quiets and parts them fairely, and some (namely haeresies fighting against the very foundation) are like the Egyptian striving with the Israelite whom Moses smites down’. The more respectable Independents were, presumably, Israelites rather than Egyptians, but Vines in his conclusion challenged them with questions that showed the influence of Edwards’s arguments and language:

I would intreat, nay press it upon those that are called pure Independents, that they would zealously and sincerely declare against the doctrinall errors and haeresies of these dayes, that such pernicious opinions may not shelter themselves under their name or wing, nor ever any indulgence or toleration be either desired or granted upon such a reason, as all may come in at the same breach or port, for that would ben but a selling of the Church into a liberty of being in captivity to destructive confusions and errors.¹⁵⁵

The sermons by Jenkyn and Sedgwick also reveal parallels with Edwards—2 Timothy 2:17 was one of Sedgwick’s texts and he referred to ‘some who have printed large Catalogues of them’, offering his audience ‘a few of the more notorious’. Some items on Sedgwick’s brief lists of blasphemies and heretical opinions might have been culled from *Gangraena*: sectaries calling Christ a bastard, arguing for the mortality of the soul, or denouncing the ministry as anti-Christian. Both sermons called for action

¹⁵⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson Letters 52, no. 34, 15 Mar.; *Gangraena*, ii. 172; Underdown, *Fire from Heaven*, 213–14; Dorset RO, Dorchester Borough Minute Book, B2/16/4, notes at the end. An anonymous minister preached on the text, ‘I have somewhat against thee because thou hast lost thy first love’ (Revelation 2: 4) on this fast day: Bodl., Rawlinson MS E155, notes in preparation for sermons, fos. 220–7.

¹⁵⁵ Vines, *Authors, Nature and Danger of Haeresie*, 49, 63–6, 70; the first citation in this work is to James I, the last to Bacon. Sedgwick, *Nature and Danger of Heresies*, 8–12, also has an extended section defining heresy.

against toleration, heresy, and blasphemy, and for the support of the ministry and settled church government. Jenkyn denounced the heretics, sectaries, and libertines who laid waste church government, but like Edwards he was also very critical of those who had let it happen. The 'sleeping sickness' of his title was the inaction of the authorities in the face of an unprecedented calamity: 'Bee sensible that the Church is wounded by the soule-stroying opinions of Antinomians, Arminians, Anabaptists, Seekers, Anti-scripturists, Anti-trinitarians etc. All which with many more have been more propagated these foure yeares of Church Anarchie, then in fourscore of Church tyranny'—a passage that echoed a persistent refrain in *Gangraena*.¹⁵⁶ Vines preached that ministers should blow the trumpet in the war against 'Damnable heresy that fight against fayth', but stressed that ministers were helpless without backing from the magistrates.¹⁵⁷

As ministers urged action, parliament remained bitterly divided over a proposed ordinance against heresy, introduced in September 1646 by Nathaniel Bacon and Zouch Tate. Tate had overseen the military reorganization that created the New Model Army; his increasing identification with the Presbyterian political programme, driven in large part by his anxiety about religious radicalism, provides an example of how religious upheaval, publicized by men like Edwards, contributed to political realignment.¹⁵⁸ Some such ordinance had been proposed by Edwards in Part One of *Gangraena*, where he urged 'some exemplary punishment upon some of the most notorious sectaries and seducers' and their 'abetters' in the printing trade. Although he suggested existing statutes against rogues and vagabonds could be used against the 'emissaries' who plagued the provinces, he also commended the sixteenth-century senate of Zurich that had legislated against Anabaptism. In Part Three, Edwards praised 'Master Taet and Master Bacon', predicting that 'their names will be famous in all

¹⁵⁶ Sedgwick, *Nature and danger of Heresies*, 31–3, 37–40; Jenkyn, *A Sleeping Sicknes*, 28–9, epistle; Thomas Hodges's sermon, *Growth and Spreading of Haeresie*, was a largely historical account, based on Theodoret, Augustine, Eusebius, and Bullinger's attacks on Anabaptism; it made only the most general reference to the contemporary situation.

¹⁵⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MS E70, fo. 8^r, notes on a Vines sermon in Cambridge. Similar arguments are found in Vines's fast sermon on 10 Mar. 1647 where he stressed that the pulpit was powerless while the 'poison is carried up and downe in books and cryed at mens door every day': *The Authours, Nature and danger of Haeresie*, 67.

¹⁵⁸ The ordinance is printed in several versions: see BL 669, fo. 9 (69); E358 (2); BL E354 (16)—with critical observations, BL E373 (12). For Tate see Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 28; Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, 161. Tate was secluded at the Purge. Mr Bacon the 'Suffolk lawyer' was probably Nathaniel Bacon, recruiter MP for Cambridge, rather than his more recently elected brother Francis.

generations; when the names of Lilburne, Overton etc, yea and of all their great Patrons, whether in the Army, or out of the Army, will be a by-word and a curse.¹⁵⁹

Yet the ordinance was not finally passed until 2 May 1648, after Edwards's exile and death. Throughout September 1646 a whole day each week was spent in debate in the Commons. On 16 September, with 'Mr Whitaker in the chair til he profess he could endure no longer', the diarist John Harington spoke in the debate to support the magistrates' duty 'to render the greatest real thanks possible for our charg was by making lawes and causing them to be executed to procure all men to perform the duty of Christians'. He condemned the neglect of 'punishing great offences as haeresy, which is as a gangreen or cancer'. A week later Holles and Selden spoke at length in support of the ordinance, but Henry Marten and Sir Arthur Haselrig were prominent in obstructing its progress, proposing delay until the Assembly had perfected its Confession of Faith.¹⁶⁰ The ordinance had a necessary precision over error, heresy, and blasphemy. Heretical doctrines were those that contravened the Trinity, the resurrection, the divinity and manhood of Christ, and denied that the Scriptures were the word of God. Obstnacy in such views was to be punished by death. A first offence of blasphemy would lead to branding, a second to death. Many of the views condemned by Edwards were defined (only) as errors, punishable by imprisonment: universal redemption, free will, soul sleeping, that the moral law was no rule for a Christian life, or a justified believer need not pray for pardon of sins, that Presbyterian government was antichristian, or that infant baptism was wrong. The controversy over the heresy ordinance was reflected in the explosion of cheap print popularizing the misdeeds and errors of the sectaries discussed in Chapter 4, and in lively pamphlet debate over the ordinance itself, in which John Goodwin led the attack. Goodwin's *Hagiomastix* had been taken by some to imply that the Scriptures were not the word of God, but this did not deter him from raising doubts over the authenticity of the Scriptures in his criticism of the proposed ordinance. He also questioned whether opposition to baptism or holding the doctrine of free will were even errors.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ *Gangraena*, i. 72; iii. 151.

¹⁶⁰ *Diary of John Harington*, 34, 36, 38, 43, 46; BL Add MS 31116, journal of Laurence Whitaker (the exhausted chairman of the Grand Committee on Religion), fos. 283^v, 284; *Perfect Occurrences*, week ending 18 Sept. 1646, BL E354 (14). The final ordinance is in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, i. 1133–6.

¹⁶¹ For *Hagiomastix* see Ch. 4, above, and the (obscure) reference in Vines, *Authors, Nature*

For Goodwin, the heresy ordinance was a return to a popish persecution. At the other extreme, to Robert Baillie the ‘Blasphemy Ordinance’, as he termed it, was an essential measure against the ‘blasphemies, heresies and errors, which abound everywhere, [and] cries to Heaven for a vengeance against the land’. Its passing would crush the ‘other partie’. Edwards clearly looked forward to the capital punishment of Paul Best with equanimity and was not concerned to define the border between error and heresy. The more conciliatory Vines would have reserved the death penalty for blasphemous and seditious heretics (amongst whom Best might well have counted), advocating ‘light’ rather than ‘fire’ as the weapon against ‘simple heretics’ whose opinions were not linked to schism, blasphemy, or sedition.¹⁶² How to define and punish heresy were questions that perplexed and divided the more orthodox godly from the mid-1640s to the 1656 debates on the Quaker Naylor and beyond. The terms of definition and debate in 1646/7 were part of the common currency of orthodoxy rooted in 2 Timothy and other ‘Pauline’ texts; but the aggression and urgency with which legislation was pursued in 1646/7 can again plausibly be attributed to the rousing Presbyterian campaign spearheaded by Edwards. Certainly Presbyterian MPs were in contact with clerical zealots. In August or September 1646 Robert Baillie sent a long memorandum to Zouch Tate, hoping ‘That yow may not forget whereof yesternight we spoke’, and claiming, ‘Your more than ordinare favour to me, makes me bold to be your remembrancer’. This urged Tate’s diligence on a long list of issues from support for Lancashire’s presbyterian petition, to the nationwide establishment of Presbyterian government, including the ordinance against heresy.¹⁶³ Edwards’s acquaintance with Baillie and Jenkyn in London, his contacts with provincial Presbyterian activists in Essex, Lancashire, and Norwich, and the responses to the anti-sectarian measures he

and Danger of Haeresie, 67; also *Walwyn’s Just Defence* (London, 1649), in Haller and Davies (eds.), *Leveller Tracts*, 354. Goodwin, *Some Modest and Humble Queries* (London, 1646), BL E355 (1), 27 Sept. 1646. *A demurre to the Bill for Preventing the Growth and Spreading of Heresie* (London, 1646) similarly doubted whether many of the doctrines denounced were really errors and argued that no one actually held the most drastic ones.

¹⁶² *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 396, writing very optimistically to the Earl of Lauderdale. Vines, *Authors, nature and Danger of Haeresie*, 62–5. For Edwards on Best see Ch. 3, above. Matthew Newcomen in *Duty of such as would walke worthy of the Gospel*, 16–18, offered precise definitions of punishable offences: blaspheming the name of God, doctrines destructive to the soul, and those that led to schism.

¹⁶³ *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 393. Baillie’s memorandum also covered the need for Assembly approval for itinerant preachers and reform of Oxford University. He urged Tate to come to the Assembly, if only for ‘one half hour in the week’, to exhort it to greater diligence.

urged in *Gangraena* reinforce a sense of his importance to the radicalisation of the Presbyterian programme in 1646–7.

‘ALL THE . . . GRAND INCENDIARIES . . . IN A MOMENT
SLUNKE AWAY’: GANGRAENA, EDWARDS, AND THE CRISIS
OF CITY PRESBYTERIANISM¹⁶⁴

Gangraena, Part Three, as we have seen, presented a desperately polarized politics where subversive soldiers, London sectaries, and activists supporting Lilburne and Overton, with backing from Independents in parliament, threatened the godly Presbyterians in the city, Assembly, Scotland, and the English parliament. As we have also emphasized at many points, Edwards’s high-profile, much-debated descriptions helped to construct the very cleavage he was describing as he publicized the sectarian threat and proposed a programme to combat it. *Gangraena* was central to the creation of Presbyterian activism in London, and beyond. Part Three furthermore reinforced the mutual paranoia between Presbyterians and the New Model Army, and a ‘community’ of Edwards’s victims also coalesced in 1646–7, as Edwards’s elision of Independents and sectaries was for a while a self-fulfilling prophecy in city and army.¹⁶⁵

Edwards thus contributed to a fatal spiral where each ‘side’ perceived itself as under threat and was driven to drastic actions which could be defined as self-defence, but were seen by opponents as further appalling aggression. The climax came in July and August 1647 when the city authorities and parliament did indeed try to establish a Presbyterian-controlled London militia, as an alternative force to the New Model, then quartered in alarming proximity to the city. The city’s nerve broke and in the end the New Model Army marched into the city in strength and unopposed on 6 August, ‘in a way of triumph as to conquered peopell’ as Juxon complained indignantly, forgetting briefly his inveterate opposition to city Presbyterians and their clerical engages. Juxon nonetheless praised the army’s discipline in a much-quoted passage. They came ‘in soe great order and civillity that twas not heard of soe much as an apple tooke by aney of them’. In another encomium to the New Model, Thomas Edwards took the

¹⁶⁴ The quotation is a paraphrase of Juxon’s comment in August 1647: DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 118^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 168).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 200, ‘The process of the Army’s politicization, therefore, was a responsive one; a series of reactions to both real and imagined threats’.

place of the apples, Hugh Peter declaring: 'I doe professe I conceive even Gangraena himselfe might have marcht through the Army unmolested, though we are not ignorant: hine nostri fundi calamitas. The Lord pitty and pardon, the Army doth'.¹⁶⁶

By the time this pamphlet came out in October, Edwards—not trusting the army to pity and pardon—had been for several weeks in exile in Amsterdam, whence he had fled on the collapse of the city's resistance in August. This flight and the presence at his deathbed a few months later of the Presbyterian leaders Sir William Waller and Major General Edward Massey suggest he was close to the centre of events. Leading Presbyterian Aldermen, peers, and MPs who did not escape in August suffered many months imprisonment and the prospect of trial for the capital offence of treason, so we should perhaps hesitate before accusing the notorious Edwards of paranoia. Edwards featured largely as we shall see as motif in polemic and debate between the army and its opponents throughout 1647 but his practical activities at the height of the crisis remain obscure. We should also always be aware of Edwards's tendency to overestimate his own importance.

The publication of *Gangraena*, Part Three at the end of December 1646 coincided with, and contributed to, the raising of the stakes in London. He chided Presbyterians with their supine response to Independent plots: 'what a shame 'tis that a handfull of men in comparison should by their activity, diligence, minding their work, bring things to that passe they are . . . if so few have done so much, and that in a bad cause, what might not we doe in a good cause, if courageous, zealous and intent upon it? certainly we might in a short time break the hearts and the neck of that faction'.

A zealous city might still turn the tide:

if the City of London and the Government of it would appeare as they might, and when they have begun, follow and prosecute it in beginning to put the Lawes in execution against those who come not to Church, in punishing those Sectaries who live under their jurisdiction and government for abusing them in print, in taking care that no Sectarie have any office or place of government in the City, in petitioning the Parliament againe and againe, they might by the blessing of God quickly remedy all.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 119' (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 168). Peter, *A Word for the Armie*, 7–8. (The Latin could be translated as 'who is at the root of our calamities'). Peter went on to deny that 'a generall toleration' was 'the Armies Gangraena', as they only wanted 'what the Puritans beg'd under the Prelates', some liberty of conscience under a state religion.

¹⁶⁷ *Gangraena*, iii. 281.

Renewed petitioning campaigns in London in December 1646 shared the priorities of *Gangraena*, Part Three. They stressed the disorders in the commonwealth as well as in the church as power-hungry Independents amassed power in army and parliament, and the aims of the Solemn League and Covenant were ignored. 'There is a new petition, almost in readiness, to come from the City for these things we desyre', Baillie enthused; while Juxon denounced the same as a petition calling for many unreasonable and dangerous things. When three 'well-affected' citizens, including Nicholas Widmerpole of Christ Church, were arrested and questioned by a Commons Committee about this petition, there were rowdy disturbances on the streets of London and at the meetings when it was urged on the Common Council. On 10 December 'diverse well-affected freemen and Covenant engaged Cittizens' asked the Common Council to approve two petitions to the Lords and Commons, from 'a great number of considerable citizens of known worth and of approved integrity to the Parliament'. On the 18th, after heated debate, over 'evry particuler Paragraffe, article or clause', the petitions were approved and presented to the two Houses on the following day, where they were received with approval, albeit more qualified in the Commons than the Lords.¹⁶⁸

The version to the Lords conveyed 'the loud and unanimous cry of many thousands of our fellow Cittizens', impelled by the 'growing miseries and encreasing distractions of these times'. Although it acknowledged the 'signall Victories' achieved by the New Model Army, the petition urged its speedy disbanding, complaining in the language of *Gangraena*, 'That there are some Officers, and many common Soldiers of that Army, who either have never taken the Covenant, or are disaffected to the Church Government held forth by the Parliament; That the Pulpits of divers godly Ministers are often usurped by Preaching Souldiers, and others, who infect their Flock, and all places where they come with strange and dangerous Errours'. They were a bad example to others who had spurned the Covenant, and there could be no peace settlement, 'while they are Masters of such a power'. The petition further demanded city control of its own militia, the issue at the heart of the crisis in 1647.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *Letters of Baillie*, ii. 411, to George Young; the same letter commended the heresy ordinance and a 'fine book' by the London ministers arguing for Presbyterian government by divine right. DWL, MS 24.50 fos. 94^v–96^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 141–2) on the disorders surrounding the petitioning. CLRO, CCJ 40, fos. 199^v–204 for the proceedings and the texts.

¹⁶⁹ *To the Right Honourable the Lords Assembled in High Court of Parliament, The Humble Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London, in Common*

A 'humble representation of the pressing grievances and important desires of the well-affected freemen and Covenant-engaged Citizens' accompanied the petitions, renouncing passivity (or lukewarmness), and revealing, like Edwards, the priority of religious grievances, but also their inescapable involvement with the troubles of the Commonwealth: 'For who can see Religion, Lawes, Liberties, (things of so great and precious concernment,) not onely assaulted, but even overwhelmed, and the Unity, Peace and Prosperity of the Kingdomes violated, and almost destroyed, and by a treacherous and cowardly silence continue to hold his peace?' The first clause bemoaned the 'bold contempt' shown to the 'most sacred Oath', the Solemn League and Covenant. Enemies to the Covenant were to be regarded as 'malignant Enemies to the Parliament, or the Peace and Union of the Kingdomes, and the Reformation of Religion', deserving 'condigne punishment'. Covenant refusers should 'not bee countenanced, imploied in, or advanced to places of publike Trust, as being a discredit to your Government, dangerous to the Kingdomes; and a hindrance to the Reformation of Religion'. For these 'Covenant-engaged' citizens, religion was 'more precious than their lives', and they had hoped that it was secured by the Covenant: 'But with bleeding hearts we speake it, how is it, that for all this, such an inundation of errors, Schisms, Heresies, is broken in upon us, which if not speedily prevented by your Wisdomes, and opposed by your impartial Justice wee feare will have its dreadfull effect to the totall subversion of the power of godliness?'

They were astonished

that after such a Covenant, there should such blasphemies bee uttered to Gods highest dishonour; that such Hereticall opinions should bee broached, to the never so much vilifying of the truth; that such Schismes should bee acted and fomented, to the renting and dividing of the Church; that the Government established should bee so much defamed, and opposed to the contempt of Parliament, in words, in bookes, in practise, by the Sectaries of these times . . . What are our estates, our liberties, our lives unto us, if the Arke of God be taken?

The remedies as well as the diagnosis had close parallels with Edwards's *Gangraena*. The petition asked for the suppression of unordained preach-

Council Assembled Together with An humble Representation of the pressing grievances, and important desires of the well-affected Freemen, and Covenant-engaged Citizens of the City of London (London, 1646), BL E366 (14), Thomason date 21 Dec.; E366 (15) is the petition to the Commons, with the same printer, Richard Cotes. The text has been checked with the Common Council version; the printed version has 'this Army'. The petition hoped that the king would be brought 'home', but they left the precise arrangements to God's providence and the parliament.

ers, an end to 'separate Congregations, the very nurseries of all damnable Heresies'; for the punishment of heretics and schismatics, and the encouragement of 'all Godly and Orthodox Ministers who labour in Gods husbandry'. Only then did they move on to 'political' demands, for free elections to vacant seats in the Commons; for curbs on the powers of committees; for the relief of Ireland and an end to any breach between England and Scotland. Central to the Representation, as it was to *Gangraena* Part Three, was an attack on the army: 'the enemies now being subdued, the Armies may be disbanded, that the so much complained of oppressions by their meanes may be redressed, and taxes for their support may be released and the Militia of the Kingdome settled'.

This would convince 'slanderous tongues that this warre hath not bene intended as a trade, but as a meanes of regaining our lost peace' and securing religion, laws, and liberties.¹⁷⁰

Both Houses promised speedy consideration of the petitioners' demands, but the only practical manifestation was the renewal of the April 1645 order against unordained preachers. More important was the worsening of the already poor relationships between the New Model Army and city Presbyterians. The army's predictable reaction is revealed concisely in Cromwell's brief letter to Fairfax, 'Wee have had a very longe petition from the Citty, how it strikes att the Armie you will see'. Further evidence of the palpable tensions of late 1646 came when the familiar figure of Edwards's friend Josiah Ricraft was amongst Presbyterian citizens examined by parliament in December 1646 for spreading rumours that the Independent MP Sir John Evelyn had called for the army to be brought up to overawe the city. These events may well be connected to the murky rumours about the army's intentions repeated in *Gangraena*, Part Three. Some of these have already been quoted, but perhaps the most eerily prophetic was the double-edged account given to Edwards by 'A Citizen of London of good ranck'. This alleged that 'a Commander a great Sectary' told all and sundry at Boston Fair that the city was prepared to raise their own army if the New Model 'came neere London to lye neere them and to awe them'.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ *The Humble Petition . . . With an humble Representation . . . to the Lords and Commons assembled in high Court of Parliament Together with the Severall Answers of both Houses of Parliament to the said Petitions and Representations* (London, 1646), BL E366 (16); this also printed the response of the two Houses to the petitions of 19 Dec. The Lords thanked the city for their 'constant and reall expressions of fidelity and good affections', and gave 'hearty thanks'; the Commons commended the city's 'constant good affections': 2–4. The representation also asked that debts due to the city from sequestered royalists and from MPs be secured, and that the warrants against Widmerpole and others be withdrawn.

¹⁷¹ LJ viii. 617; BL E370 (4), is a printed version of the order of 31 Dec. 1646; *Writings and*

Let us then explore Edwards's associations with the events and debates of 1647. At the end of January the king was finally surrendered to the English parliament by the Scots whose army went home a few weeks later. In March the Presbyterians in parliament sought to implement their programme of disbanding the New Model, and sending some troops to suppress the continuing revolt in Ireland. No proper measures were taken to deal with the army's grievances over pay and the lack of legal protection for actions committed during the war, and when the parliament contemptuously rejected an army petition, denouncing its promoters as 'enemies to the state', smouldering resentment erupted into army revolt.¹⁷² The army regiments elected representatives, known not entirely appropriately as agitators, and drew up manifestos of their grievances. The soldiers denied being 'a mere mercenary army, hired to serve any arbitrary power of a state', and claimed the right to defend 'our own and the people's just rights and liberties'.¹⁷³ From early June, the army's capacity to influence the future settlement of the kingdoms was strengthened by the seizure of the king from parliament's custody. Prominent amongst army grievances was resentment at the name calling that had brought them into disrepute with the people they had served, and in at least two regiments this stigmatizing was overtly linked to the obvious target of Edwards:

that whereas divers persons have both privately and publickly laboured by aspersions and false calumnies to make us odious to the kingdome, thereby seeking to alienate their affections from us, in order to which they have published many scandalous Bookes, such as Mr Edwards Gangraena and divers others of that nature . . . the severall particulars whereof we protest against as most false and are confident that it proceeded not from any probable ground, . . . but simply from the malice of our Enemies.

Indeed the historian and army secretary John Rushworth, in a later account claimed that when the individual regimental grievances were contracted 'into a method', to be presented to parliament by Major General Skippon, 'they medle with nothing but what pertains to them as soldiers and earnestly desire Justice and Reparation in what they have presented as

Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, ed. W. C. Abbott, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1937–47), i. 420–1 [from Sloane MS 1519]; Mahony, 'London Presbyterianism', 108; *Gangraena*, iii. 24.

¹⁷² For the general events of 1647 I have relied particularly on Ashton, *Counter Revolution*; Gentles, 'Struggle for London'; Valerie Pearl, 'London's Counter-Revolution', in G. E. Aylmer (ed.), *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1972); Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, ch. 8.

¹⁷³ The Army's 'Declaration or representation', 14 June 1647, here quoted from J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 296.

their Grievances, particularizing no Man, unless Mr Edwards for his Gangrena, which he is charged to put forth to make the Army odious to the kingdom.¹⁷⁴

Much army and city radical material from 1647 stressed how the most well-affected parliamentarians had been denounced as heretics, sectaries, and schismatics, often associating Edwards in particular with the process. *A Just Apologie for an Abused Armie*, probably by the officer William Goffe, was a rapid response to *Gangraena*, Part Three, as well as to the calls from city and parliament for the disbanding of the army. The author offered 'a reasonable caution to my godly friends, that are in danger to be led away through mistake, into wayes of bitter persecution against the Saints, who are for that purpose by a hellish Strategem, masqued under the ugly vizards of Sectaries, and Heretiques; that so not onely Dogs and Beares may worry them, but some wel-meaning, honest men, may be also made to joyn issue with that design [of disbanding the army]'. Edwards had denounced the army as worse than Cavaliers, but 'such slanderous Books and discourses . . . are the manifest works of the flesh, and serve only to darken the truth, by bringing up an ill report upon the Professors of it, and to furnish the profane men of the world with multitudes of scoffes and jeeres against Jesus Christ, his wayes and his Saints'. Any prelate might have claimed that Presbyterians as well as Independents and Anabaptists were sectaries and heretics, and thus denounced Calamy, Ashe, and Case as heretics as easily as Burroughs or Goodwin.¹⁷⁵

Goffe allowed the army was not free from error but it was nonetheless God's army, in contrast to the profane multitude who cared nothing for the king of the Saints. Those denounced as Independents and sectaries

¹⁷⁴ *Divers Papers from the Army*, 6; Farr, *John Lambert*, 50; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, 21–3, Edwards was mentioned in the grievances of Lambert's and Hardress Waller's regiments. The particular insult mentioned was that the army supported the restoration of the king 'to his Crowne, throne and Dignity'—which is not, in fact, in *Gangraena*.

¹⁷⁵ John Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, vi (London, 1722), 485–6. 'WG, an impartiall observer of the Army, and reall Well wisher to the whole Kingdome', *A Just Apologie for an Abused Armie* (London, 1647), BL, E372 (22), Thomason date 29 Jan. 1646[7]. Gentles, *New Model Army*, 102, for the attribution to Goffe. The epistle, sig A3–4, is quoted in this paragraph. Wootton's remark, 'Levellers Democracy', 419, that *Gangraena*, Part Three 'was met almost with silence', could be qualified. There are fewer challenges to the details of his stories (although John Goodwin, *Hagiomastix* mounts several) but many objections to the validity of the whole enterprise. Published a few weeks earlier was *The Antichristian Presbyter or Anti-Christ Transformed* by Richard Lawrence, Marshall-general of the army (London, 1647), BL E370 (22), Thomason date 9 Jan. 1646/7. This did not mention Edwards by name but its 'brieve Discovery of old Antichrist in the new shape of Presbytery' was clearly directed against him amongst others. Compare also the summing up of John Hall quoted at the start of this chapter.

should rather rejoice that God 'hath made you to differ from the world'. It was Edwards who was the lawless 'Antinomian', 'for surely none but one who hath cast off all the fear and respect of the Law of God, would dare to print such palpable lies and slanders against an Army, in which the safety of a whole Kingdome doth consist'. These slanders had provoked many a 'blind parson' and his 'wicked parishioners' to abuse anyone in the army who presumed to 'goe never so little beyond the ordinary straine in Divine knowledge, and strict conversation'.¹⁷⁶ Edwards had become a symbol of intemperate attacks on the army so that a sermon at parliament's monthly fast on 30 June by the returned New England minister Nathaniel Ward could be described as 'worse then Edwards his Gangraena'. Ward attacked the army for attempting the exclusion of opposing MPs 'by a Caesarian section', and for corrupting 'so many ignorant Country men and Townes, with impious and blasphemous opinions, and rude manners'.¹⁷⁷ Peter's remark about Edwards being safe from the army occurred in a pamphlet reply to Ward's sermon and to his *A Religious Retreat Sounded to a Religious Army*, which urged that the army be disbanded.¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the Presbyterian campaigns represented by the city's Remonstrance of May 1646 and the polemical assault led by Edwards prompted a variety of radical groups and individuals—Hugh Peter, members of Goodwin's and Lambe's churches, Walwyn, Lilburne, and Overton—to campaign for liberty of conscience and support for the army. These alliances were by no means as clear-cut as Edwards insisted; there were many differences of emphasis amongst the city 'Independents' and 'sectaries', and between the city radicals and the army. William Walwyn,

¹⁷⁶ *A Just Apologie*, 20–1, 14, 17, 15. For specific page references to *Gangraena*, iii. see *Apologie*, 9, 14.

¹⁷⁷ *The Clarke Papers*, vol. i. ed. C. H. Firth (Camden Society, NS, 49, 1891), 150; Nathaniel Ward, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, At their late Monthly Fast, . . . 30 June 1647* (London, 1647), 22–3; cf. *Certaine Scruples from the Army Presented in a Dialogue* (London, 1647), BL E390 (21), Thomason date 3 June, which complained about the sermons and books against the army especially by Edwards, Bastwick, and Prynne.

¹⁷⁸ Ward, *A Sermon Preached*, 22–3; *A Religious Retreat sounded to a Religious Army*, 'By one that desires to be faithfull to his Country, though unworthy to bee named' (London, 1647); BL E404 (34), Thomason date 27 Aug. Ward's *Religious Retreat* which alluded to *Gangraena* was sent by an increasingly disillusioned George Thomason to his old friend Henry Parker, the early propagandist for parliament, but by then in Hamburg: Spencer, 'Politics of George Thomason', 12. Ward's subsequent response to Hugh Peter suggests he was the author of the *Retreat*: Ward, *A Word to Mr Peters and Two Words for the Parliament and Kingdom, or An Answer to a scandalous Pamphlet* (London, 1647), BL E413 (7), Thomason date 9 Nov. This (11) criticized a sermon by Peter which urged a marriage between the city and the parliament—as Edwards had done (*Gangraena*, iii. 123). Attacks on *Gangraena* are mentioned, 26.

writing in the context of the bitter cleavage with Price and Goodwin in 1649, distinguished (as Edwards usually did not) between the 'Independents' and the more radical group with which he was identified.¹⁷⁹ The caution of Goodwin's circle delayed the presentation of radical petitions in late 1646, but by the spring of 1647 greater unity in the face of the Presbyterian assault enabled a succession of petitions to parliament—receiving responses from the lukewarm to the hostile. By late May a range of city figures including Hugh Peter and both Price and Walwyn were meeting in Oliver Cromwell's house in Drury Lane to discuss tactics. But while Peter was at Cromwell's side during much of the crisis, it is notable that Lilburne and Overton remained in prison long after the New Model occupied London in August.

The 'large' petition of March 1647 for which Thomas Lambe and several associates were examined by Leigh's committee put forward a comprehensive 'Leveller' programme.¹⁸⁰ It demanded recompense for all the 'blood and treasure' sacrificed in the war; and praised the House of Commons as the supreme authority of the nation, based as it was on the free choice of the people. Here too there is much evidence of the bitterness against clerics who had denounced their enemies as 'Hereticks, sectaries, Schismatiques' just as the Court of High Commission had attacked Puritans (Presbyterians included) in the 1630s. Again Edwards was not named but is an obvious target. It was essential that parliament prevented 'impious persons . . . reviling, and reproaching the well-affected'. The petition thus demanded the repeal of all statutes molesting 'religious, peaceable, well affected persons' for religious differences; no man was to be persecuted as heretical for preaching or publishing religious opinions in 'a peaceable way'; no 'necessary truths and sincere professors' were to be suppressed as 'errors, sects or schismes'; and certainly religious differences should not be used to justify exclusion from office.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Walwyn's *Just Defence*, as reprinted in Haller and Davies, *Leveller Tracts*, 352–4; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 505–12; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 144–55; John Morrill, 'The Army Revolt of 1647', in his *Nature of the English Revolution* for these splits.

¹⁸⁰ Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 151–2; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 190, 329 n. 39; the 'large petition' with an account of the proceedings connected with it is printed in Walwyn's *Gold tried in the fire*, of June 1647, included in Andrew Sharp (ed.), *The English Levellers* (Cambridge: Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, 1998), 73–91.

¹⁸¹ Haller (ed.), *Tracts on Liberty*, 111, 399–405; see also the early March petition of 'divers yongmen and Apprentices', as quoted in a pamphlet of July printed for the radical William Larnier, *The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Yong Men and Apprentices of the City of London* (London, 1647), E398 (9), 6–8, which condemns the odium placed on good men, and their exclusion from places of public trust.

In response to radical organization in army and city, the London Presbyterians reiterated the demands of December 1646. Petitions of March 1647 sought to vindicate the city's loyalty to parliament from 'the malicious tongues of sectaries' and looked forward to a well-grounded peace sealed by the king's taking the Covenant. 'Here the Petitioners should willingly have concluded, but that the Army, (which they hoped should ere this have bin disbanded) is now drawn so suddainly and quartered so near the Parliament and this City; besides that in the same juncture of time, a most dangerous and seditious petition is set on foot.' They asked that parliament prevent the social dislocation that supplying the army would cause, and allow the city to nominate their own committee to control the city militia (which had been a radical preserve since 1643).¹⁸²

Towards the end of June, Edwards's last major work, *The Casting Down of the last and strongest hold of Satan or A Treatise Against Toleration*, was published.¹⁸³ This sought to demonstrate the 'unlawfulnesses and mischief' of any toleration, limited or unlimited, within any Christian Commonwealth or kingdom. This was a typically repetitive tract but more systematic than usual. Each proposition—that there was only one God and therefore one faith and truth, or that magistrates had the power to punish heresy and blasphemy—was supported through arguments drawn in turn from Scripture, 'sound reason' and the 'light of nature', the teachings of the church fathers, and finally specific historical examples. It was occasionally cited in other works against liberty of conscience, but did not have the impact of *Gangraena* or *Antapologia*. Edwards characteristically presented *The Casting Down* as a work in progress, the first part of a longer publishing programme. The hasty errata were excused by his 'not having time to read and weigh every page, much less sentence or line' while the epistle to the Christian Reader explained the absence of a planned epistle to parliament, a preface, and an introduction in which he had hoped to

¹⁸² Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 189; *To the Right Honorable The Lords and Commons, Assembled in High Court of Parliament. The Humble Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London* (London, 1647), BL E381 (2), Thomason date 17 Mar.; CCJ 40, fo. 207^v; DWL, MS 24.50 fos. 102^v–103^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 150–1).

¹⁸³ *The Casting Down of the last and strongest hold of Satan or A Treatise Against Toleration* (London, 1647), BL E394 (6), Thomason date 28 June. This was printed for George Calvert rather than Ralph Smith, perhaps because Smith, who was very involved in publishing the most zealously Presbyterian declarations of these months, no longer bothered to seek licenses. The authority of registration and licensing was important to Edwards as we have seen. No work printed for Smith is registered with the Stationers' Company between Oct. 1646 and Dec. 1647.

challenge those (such as Goodwin) who argued that the New Testament offered support for liberty of conscience:

But these Preparatives and Additionals amounting to some Ten Sheets, (the reviewing, perfecting and printing whereof would take up at least twenty dayes) and not knowing what a Day might bring forth, the Storme comming on so fast, I thought it best, for fear this Book might be suppressed at the Presse and never see the Sun, to send it forth as it was, that the Church of God at home and abroad might have the benefit of it, and to reserve the rest for a second Part (if God spare life and liberty).¹⁸⁴

For once, Edwards's palpable evocation of crisis, both personal and general, was entirely justified for he was indeed writing as a storm burst over London. On 4 May, the House of Commons finally joined the Lords in granting the Presbyterian-dominated city authorities control over their militia. Friends and allies of Edwards—Colonels John Jones and John Bellamy—regained prominent positions in city military affairs while Josiah Ricraft was nominated as scoutmaster. The new authorities proceeded to purge city forces by imposing the Covenant.¹⁸⁵ 'Reformadoes'—soldiers disbanded from provincial forces (including Massey's), old followers of pre-New Model Generals such as Essex or Waller, New Model Officers removed for Presbyterian sympathies—gathered in London in ever-increasing numbers to engage in bitter lobbying of the parliament that seemed, in its preoccupation with the New Model, to take little account of their own arrears and other grievances.

These two developments threatened the New Model with an autonomous and hostile military force, controlled by some of the very individuals prominent in smearing them as subversive sectaries. A chilling game of cat and mouse ensued where the New Model Army marched ever closer to London, from Reading to St Albans or Uxbridge, to pressurize parliament, then retreated on receipt of sympathetic overtures. To their practical demands for pay and indemnity, and their broadest concern for the settlement of the nation, the army had added a demand for the impeachment of eleven members of the House of Commons whom they regarded as their chief Presbyterian opponents, amongst them Massey, Waller, Holles, Stapleton, and the city's Recorder Glyn. When, in

¹⁸⁴ Edwards, *The Casting Down*, sig. A2, 1–2, 218.

¹⁸⁵ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 479, 503–4; Mahony, 'Presbyterianism', 108; DWL, MS 24.50 fos. 104^v–105^r, 107^v–108^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 152–3, 156–7). Juxon describes how Stephen Estwicke tried to resist the imposition of the Covenant, as he had in February 1646.

concessions to the army in June and July, the eleven members were forced from the parliament, many remained to stir up trouble in the city. A vivid royalist description of Massey in early June, 'as he passed through the Streets in his Coach exhorting the Cittizens to defend themselves against the Madd men in the Army, who if they should prevaile would demand the heads of best cittizens and of the chief men of the parliament as well as his head, saying that Cromwell had betrayed them all and was fled from London', is echoed by Juxon's more sober comment for the following month that the impeached members 'hould private meetings with all sorts of per-sones for to countermine the army'. Petitions from the eleven members were issued by *Gangraena's* publisher, Ralph Smith.¹⁸⁶

In June it seemed that the army, poised at St Albans, might indeed occupy the city, as the London militia committee in cooperation with a parliamentary Committee of Safety established on 11 June proposed to augment its forces by recruiting reformadoes. At this point one experienced Presbyterian activist had had enough: as Juxon reported, 'Collonel Bellamii the Bookseller Made a Motione that all waies might bee taken to avoide the sheeding of more bloud', and the Common Council itself urged conciliation in the face of the militia committee's drive for confrontation.¹⁸⁷ This month's emergencies passed with hasty concessions to the army, but hectic petitioning (often in the name of city apprentices) and pamphleteering provided all too obvious evidence of the profound divisions that now existed over a peace settlement, religious liberty, and, most urgently, military authority in the city.¹⁸⁸ Radical petitions complained about the removal of men of 'known fidelity' from the city militia and continued to denounce 'all manner of invectives of the clergie or others'.¹⁸⁹ Presbyterians called for a peace settlement restoring the king and preserving parliament's privileges according to the Covenant, for the disbanding of the army and the dismantling of civil war administration (as Edwards had argued in *Gangraena*, Part Three) in addition to their concern with church government and religious radicals. One July pamphlet adopted an Edwards-style promiscuous attack combining hostility to the army, and its

¹⁸⁶ Bodl., Clarendon MS 29, fo. 236, royalist newsletter, 7/17 June; DWL, MS 24.50 fo. 112^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 161). A petition from the eleven Presbyterian MPs presented to parliament on 29 June was printed for Smith: *The Petition of the Members of the House of Commons* (London, 1647).

¹⁸⁷ Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 238–48; Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 179; DWL, MS 24.50 fos. 110^v–111^r (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 159–60).

¹⁸⁸ See e.g. Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 258–9.

¹⁸⁹ *The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Yong Men and Apprentices*, 4–5.

'seducing Chaplains' such as Peter, Dell and Saltmarsh, with opposition to a petition from Lambe's congregation attacking the Lords.¹⁹⁰

As the army again approached the city and the parliament again promised concessions, the city's Presbyterian activists—citizens, officers and men of the trained bands, and apprentices—raised the stakes with a 'Solemn Engagement'. Evoking, again, the Solemn League and Covenant, and fearing that 'Religion, his Majesties honour and safety, the Priviledges of Parliament, and liberties of the subject are at present greatly endangered and like to be destroyed', they made a solemn vow to bring the king to London for a personal treaty with the parliament and the Scots, based on his recent responses to peace propositions. A brief hostile account described this as a covenant 'to oppose the Army. To repress all Independents'. Following the agreement of the Common Council this was presented to the House of Commons on 22 July. The next day, however, the parliament passed a new ordinance for the London militia returning it into the Independent-leaning hands of the pre-4 May committee. On 24 July the Solemn Engagement was declared treasonous.¹⁹¹ Two days later parliament rejected the petition of the city governors for the restoration of the militia ordinance of 4 May. The two Houses were promptly invaded by a London crowd of apprentices and reformadoes who coerced the members into repealing their votes on the city militia and the Solemn Engagement, and into voting to restore the eleven members and to invite Charles I to London. According to Juxon, Presbyterians amongst the city governors, notably Alderman James Bunce, along with many of the eleven members, were deeply implicated in the mob violence. 'Upon which [the rejection of the petition] severall of them tould th'apprentizes and others whoe were there in great numbers that they had don what they could: and that now it rested in them to Play their Partes'. The Lords were threatened until they submitted, the Commons' door was forced open, and the crowd

¹⁹⁰ *To the Right Honourable The Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament The Humble petition of those well-affected to Government, both young men and Apprentices of the City of London* (London, 1647) E398 (23), printed date 16 July. An earlier version (dated 8 July) is BL 669, fo. 11 (41); it was presented on 14 July and claimed 10,000 hands. *Works of Darkness Brought to Light* (London, 1647), BL E399 (26), Thomason date 23 July. The designation of a petition that some historians would label 'Leveller', as from Lambe's General Baptist congregation is worth noting.

¹⁹¹ BL 669, fo. 11 (47), Thomason date 21 July and his manuscript heading, 'presented to ye Cittie Comanders at Skinners Hall', has the petition to city governors containing the Solemn Engagement. *A Petition from the City of London* (London, 1647), BL E399 (35), Thomason date 24 July, 2. BL 669, fo. 11 (49) is a copy of parliament's order against it; Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 137, 183.

refused to stir until the militia vote was passed, 'themselves standeing at ye Barr: and proposed what they would have voated and tho desired would not withdraw to permitt them liberty of voatinge'. Juxon claimed the apprentices voted along with the members and were only content when the votes were entered in the Commons' Journal. At the very least, the city authorities did nothing to deter the crowds and made no effective response when parliament sent for help.¹⁹²

As Independent and uncommitted members of both Houses (including both Speakers) slipped quietly away to the army complaining of mob coercion, the city authorities and the remaining members sought to mobilize forces for the defence of the city. Massey was made commander-in-chief of the city forces, and both he and Waller were added to a revived Committee of Safety. A declaration of the city justifying their proceedings looked back to the May 1646 Remonstrance and the December petition which had called for the disbanding of the army. London had been ignored while the army had seized the king and impeached the eleven members and the city militia had been altered at the 'pleasure of the army'.¹⁹³ On 28 July, the regular fast day, Presbyterian preachers sought to bolster citizens' resolve. The Earl of Leicester noted in his Journal:

'On Wednesday, 28, being the fast day, Mr Edwards and divers other ministers in London stirred up the people in theyr sermons to rase armes to suppress the army, abusing the day which was sett apart for the calamities of bleeding Irland, and exciting the people to put this kingdom again into blood and so to make it bleeding England also'.¹⁹⁴ Newsbooks note Ashe and Calamy preaching before the Common Council, and Jaggard and Whitlock at Westminster, but do not mention Edwards. There must be suspicions that Leicester was assuming that Edwards was the kind of man to preach in this situation, rather than demonstrating actual knowledge of events on that day.¹⁹⁵

The notion that Edwards's participation was more symbolic than real is perhaps given added weight by his greater prominence in hostile pamphleteering than in the Presbyterians' own works. An intemperate attack

¹⁹² DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 113^{r-v} (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 162); Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 350–3. BL 669, fo. 11 (50) for a copy of the order repealing the 23 and 24 July votes on the militia and the Solemn Engagement.

¹⁹³ *A Declaration of the Lord Mayor* (London, 1647), BL E400 (29); the printed order, 1 Aug., for the city to stand to its defences is BL 669, fo. 11 (54); Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 184–5.

¹⁹⁴ HMC, *Viscount de L'Isle*, vol. vi. Sidney Papers, 569.

¹⁹⁵ *A Continuation of Certaine Speciall and Remarkable Passages*, 23–30 July 1647, BL E400 (25); *The Perfect Weekly Account*, 21–9 July, BL E400 (16).

on a sectarian army dated 30 July by Thomason attacked Nye and Marshall as 'too good friends to Cromwell and that party' and urged the city to resist the New Model. If they failed, city government would be turned over to 'all the Armies Saints and gifted Brethren'; under Mayor Lilburne, Aldermen like Overton the Seeker and Writer the 'Anti-Scripturist' would destroy order and true religion. The city would have to 'bid adieu to the Gospel, and thy faithfull Ministers'. Here the author named Calamy, Roberts, Cawton, and Case—but not Edwards.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, Edwards featured prominently in a royalist satire attacking Presbyterians and Independents alike in a dialogue between London and 'thy elder in evill', Amsterdam:

Six years ago we had of Sects fourscore,
Which are increast now to one hundred more,
A book that's called the Gangrene, printed late
Their Authors and Opinions doth repeat,
Nine score opinions that book sheweth clear,
Lord, what a harvest hath the Devill made here!¹⁹⁷

The genre of radical pamphlets lampooning 'Sir John Presbyter' and 'Sir Simon Synod' inaugurated by Richard Overton's *The Arraignement of Mr Persecution* had a new lease of life in these weeks and Edwards appeared in several of the summer's tracts. In *The Last Will and Testament of Sir John Presbyter Who Dyed of a new Disease Called the Particuler Charge of the Army*, Edwards, like Case, Burgess, and Calamy, featured among the mourners and was bequeathed '500 acres of Bishops Lands, with all the timber growing thereon, to be by him converted to Gibbotts to hang up the Independents'. In *The Ghost of Sir John Presbyter*, Edwards was 'another of my newer able brats', doing much better service for evil in England than he would do in hell. Finally *The Infamous History of Sir Simon Synod and his sonne Sir John Presbyter* featured Edwards as 'that Presbyterian Hercules hewing downe all the godly, whom his venerable Ignorantship in his hodg-podg'd Gangrena terms hereticks, Sectaries and Schismatics'. Here again Sir John and Sir Simon sickened and died (despite the attentions of Dr John Bastwick) when faced with a messenger, 'bringing letters of the frontispiece whereof were written the DESIRES OF

¹⁹⁶ *Some Queries propounded to the Common Councill and Citizens of London* (London, 1647), 3, 9.

¹⁹⁷ *Londons Metamorphosis: Or a Dialogue Between London and Amsterdam. Discoursing Compendiously of the change of Government, Alteration of Manners, and the Escapes of Sectaries* (London, 1647), BL E399 (21), Thomason date 22 July, 4.

THE ARMY'.¹⁹⁸ A rare Presbyterian riposte, *The Last Will and Testament of Sir James Independent*, had many of the same targets as Edwards: Sir James's body was to be wrapped in sheets of evil books such as *The Arraignment of Mr Persecution*, Archer's *Comfort for Beleivers*, and Williams' *Bloudy Tenet*. The chief mourners were Burton, Knollys, Simpson, Saltmarsh, and John Goodwin, who as the author of the blasphemous *Hagiomastix* was the obvious choice to preach the funeral sermon. But neither Edwards or *Gangraena* was mentioned.¹⁹⁹

Edwards's energy may well have been failing, his health no longer robust enough for aggressive preaching. Henry Pinnell's and John Saltmarsh's remarks about Edwards's sickly 'complexion' and Edwards's own caution about further instalments of his work on toleration—'if God spare life and liberty'—may have been more than rhetoric, for he was to be dead within the year.²⁰⁰ He is certainly absent from the sources for the denouement of the crisis, surfacing only on his deathbed in Amsterdam. As reformadoes were enlisted in ever greater numbers, plans were made to bring Charles to London without conditions, and the New Model came ominously closer, even some of the zealots got cold feet. Stephen Marshall, as the hostile account already quoted suggests, had long been searching for a compromise, but on 2 August the broad majority of the Westminster Assembly made overtures for peace, when they established a committee to mediate between the city, the parliament, and the army. Stanley Gower and Jeremiah Whitaker, whose zeal for the Presbyterian way could not be doubted, were among those involved; while in a parallel initiative by the city clergy, twenty ministers signed a declaration for peace, taken by Ashe, Calamy, and Case to the militia committee.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ *The Last Will and Testament of Sir John Presbyter Who Dyed of a new Disease Called the Particular Charge of the Army* (London, 1647), BL E399 (22), Thomason date 22 July; *The Ghost of Sir John Presbyter* (London, 1647), 'Printed in the yeare, of the Presbyterian feare', BL E401 (22), Thomason date 1 Aug.; *The Infamous History of Sir Simon Synod and his sonne Sir John Presbyter* (London, 1647), BL E401 (31), 12 Aug., 3–4; Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 299–301; Smith, 'Richard Overton's Marpriest Tracts', 42–3; for the genre. Other examples published in these weeks did not mention Edwards: *The Lamentation of the Ruling Lay-Elders Sadly bemoaning the death of their late foster-father Sir John Presbyter, deceased* (London, 1647), BL E402 (1), mentions only Cornelius Burgess by name.

¹⁹⁹ *The Last Will and Testament of Sir James Independent* (London, 1647), BL E400 (30), 31 July 1647.

²⁰⁰ 'An Answer in few words to Master Edwards his second Part of the Gangrena, no pagination, annexed to Saltmarsh, *Reasons for Unitie, Peace and Love; Gangraenachrestum*, 8.

²⁰¹ As early as 22 June, Sir Robert Harley (whose son Edward was one of the eleven members) had written to Marshall in search of a compromise: Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War*

On the same day, a number of citizens 'of worth and qualitie' petitioned the Common Council to avoid a renewal of war. They were viciously attacked, according to Juxon, by swaggering reformadoes under the command of Massey and another Presbyterian commander, Sydenham Poyntz, although a later account claimed Poyntz was defending himself from a 'most rude rabble of Anabaptists and such like seditious sectaries and schismaticks'.²⁰² Nonetheless, Waller was appointed as commander of the city's horse on 3 August, although by then the game was up. The army, mustered on Hounslow Heath, had resolved to march on the city to restore the MPs and Peers who had fled, and the Southwark trained bands had refused all cooperation with the city forces. On 6 August the parliament revoked all its votes since 26 July. Waller amongst other Presbyterian members, aided by sympathetic naval commanders, had fled the country before the army marched through the city streets on 7 August 1647. It would be good to know if Edwards went with them but the sources are silent.²⁰³ John Glyn, city Recorder and MP, stayed behind and was soon imprisoned along with the 'malignant' Lord Mayor John Gayre, and the Presbyterian Aldermen Bunce, Langham, and Adams. In late September the Mayor and Aldermen were voted guilty of high treason, while Edwards's ally, Colonel John Jones, was found guilty of high misdemeanors.²⁰⁴

In the immediate aftermath of 7 August, the Presbyterian clergy kept their heads down; Juxon claimed that 'not an ingenious man that was ingaiged in it that was willinge to owne it'. The high-profile sermons reflecting on the crisis were given, predictably, by the pivotal figures of Marshall and Nye. On Sunday 8 August Marshall preached on Jeremiah 45, which, according to John Harrington, he used to argue that God's people might 'suffer outward afflictions but then they get increase of grace . . . of inward peace; of glories'. Thursday 12 August was a day of thanksgiving voted when

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 188; Mitchell and Struthers, *Minutes*, 407–8; *LJ* ix. 367 for the Assembly's mediation. It was the conciliatory Marshall who liased with Fairfax and the New Model; Burgess, *Sion College*, 22–3.

²⁰² *A peaceable petition* (London, 1647), BL 669, fo. 11 (58), presented 2 Aug., Thomason's date for the broadside is 4 Aug. DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 117^{r-v} (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 166–7); Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 313 (quoting a pamphlet of Dec.).

²⁰³ Waller fled on 5 August (see e.g. Bodl., Clarendon MS 30 fo. 30); the Presbyterian naval commander William Batten and his chaplain Samuel Kem helped in the escape: Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 15–17; J. R. Powell and E. K. Timings (eds.), *Documents Relating to the Civil Wars, 1647–1648* (London, 1963); DWL, MS 24.50, fos. 114^v–115^r, 119^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 166, 169); Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 184–5.

²⁰⁴ Gentles, 'The Struggle for London', 284.

the army approached the city; Marshall preached this time on a most appropriate text, Joshua 22: 33: 'And the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battel, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt'. As Harrington who had remained in the city noted, the doctrine was 'A great mercy for which the greatest thankfulnes du when God restrains his people when ready to shed one the others blood'. Nye's text was Psalm 107: 21, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness'.²⁰⁵ Edwards, we can be sure, did not agree.

GANGRAENA AND PRESBYTERIANISM

We will conclude this chapter with a summing-up of Edwards's impact on developments in 1646–7, and a discussion of the slightly different issue of what an examination of events taking Edwards's *Gangraena* as its focus can add to our understanding of parliamentary divisions in general and Presbyterianism in particular. We must remember always that *Gangraena* did not stand alone, but was the most startling and notorious example of a broader Presbyterian polemical campaign. Edwards's crucial, and from some perspectives disastrously successful, argument was to insist on an unbreakable connection between heresy and schism. Only a comprehensive and compulsory national church with no allowance for tender consciences could, in Edwards's view, combat error, heresy, and blasphemy. It is a particularly poignant linkage given Edwards's own lack of positive enthusiasm for Presbyterianism as such; his conviction that error was indivisible drove him to an abhorrence of any degree of toleration, and so to a national church. This linking of opposition to heresy with commitment to a specific form of church government was by no means obvious or necessary. It is possible to conceive of the sort of practical cooperation at parish level between men broadly agreed on doctrine illustrated at the start of this chapter, permitting both some liberty of conscience and a determined joint assault on more radical errors, overcoming divisions on church government.

As Michael Winship has eloquently demonstrated for 1630s New England, disagreement over how to combat error could be as debilitating

²⁰⁵ DWL, MS 24.50, fo. 118^v (*Journal*, ed. Lindley and Scott, 168); *Diary of John Harrington*, 56–7; Marshall preached again on Jeremiah on Sunday 15th. His 12 Aug. sermon was published as *A Sermon Preached to the Two Houses of Parliament* (London, 1647).

as the original cleavages.²⁰⁶ *Gangraena* did much to create an atmosphere of panic which prompted rigorous measures, and regarded more confident or relaxed attitudes with horror. Edwards reported with paroxysms of rage that Hugh Peter had claimed ‘the Sects and Schismes did us no harme’ (an opinion that could also be derived from his printed works): how could Peter call ‘Scismaticks and Opinionists’ ‘harmesse Anabaptists’; had he not heard of the ‘Tumults, Wars, Tragedies, Out-rages, Rapes, raised and committed’ by them; ‘Are they harmesse who in contempt of Baptisme have pissed in the Font’, assault ministers, kill ‘tender young persons and ancient with dipping . . . in the depth of Winter’, and so on.²⁰⁷

We have quoted already much contemporary evidence for Edwards’s influence on readers and activists. The impact of an approach that implied anyone who did not share the panic was condoning evil is also seen in a letter from the Suffolk Puritan Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston to John Winthrop in March 1647. He bemoaned the pride and contention amongst the godly, which had begun in New England and had now spread to an old England devastated by civil war: ‘Sir, I acknowledg myselfe a presbiterian (yet such a one as can and doe hartely love an humble and pious independant such I meane as are with you for ours differ much generally from them’. Presbyterianism was best suited to ‘our government’, yet Barnardiston would support Independency in New England, ‘for truly I cannot yet see any certayne and generall forme of dysipline set downe in the word of God’. His judgement on English independency, however, could have come directly from *Gangraena*: ‘But Sir, with Horror and greefe I speake it, noe opiniones and blasfemy is so bad but that our Independantes heer generally will shelter and countenance, for all Heresyes and sectes wilbe Independants under the notion that none should be trobled for ther contience though hurtfull to others.’²⁰⁸ We know another MP, Sir Simonds D’Ewes, bought copies of Parts One and Three of *Gangraena* and they seem to have influenced him; in his parliamentary journal, especially in passages worked over after the event, he used Independent as ‘a multi-purpose’ term of abuse for ‘sectaries of every kind, political extremists and habitual critics of peace propositions’, just as Edwards did. As we saw in Chapter 4, even a hostile reader like Cheney Culpeper might be reluctantly and partially convinced.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Winship, ‘“The most glorious church in the world”’.

²⁰⁷ *Gangraena*, iii. 125, 138–9.

²⁰⁸ *Winthrop Papers*, 145. Barnardiston also reported that the New England radical Samuel Gorton, noticed in *Gangraena*, was under examination by parliament for blasphemy.

²⁰⁹ Cliffe, *Puritans in Conflict*, 102.

Edwards's *Gangraena* helped construct polemic communities, in which divisions on some issues—liberty of conscience, in particular—were maximized, while connections founded on other issues were exaggerated. On the one hand unity in opposing error was taken to imply membership of the 'Presbyterian' camp (including Prynne as well as Bastwick and Edwards) while any opposition to Presbyterian church government implicated respectable Independents in the most terrible blasphemy and heresy. The debate for and against *Gangraena* helped to bring about some of the alliances Edwards described. Vicars, Ricraft, Jones, Prynne, and Bastwick demonstrated the support for Edwards's account, while we have described in Chapter 4 an opposing community of those prepared to challenge him in print, ranging from the respectable Jeremiah Burroughs and Samuel Eaton, through more controversial figures like Peter, Saltmarsh, and John Goodwin, to the radicals such as Walwyn and Webbe. When John Goodwin in *Cretensis* defended in print the opinions of Burroughs, Eaton, and Robert Cosens, he proved, according to Edwards, his argument of 'the Independents holding with all other sects, not dividing from them'. The licenser Bachelor's help for Webbe showed 'the Independents will not lose any of the most blasphemous, Atheisticall hereticall men, but further them, and joyn with them against the Presbyterians, licensing their Writings, helping them to conceale, and deliver more cautelously their dangerous opinions'.²¹⁰ Edwards's attacks provoked real, but contingent alliances, of men who united, despite their differences, to defend themselves. William Walwyn, on his own account, had been disappointed by the caution of the *Apologetical Narration*, yet he became a prominent element in the broad Independent alliance of Edwards's victims.²¹¹ In the city of London in 1646–7 these polemically constructed communities can be seen mobilizing in practice to fight for the parliamentary cause—each side convinced its very survival was at stake. Leaders on both sides featured in the enterprise of *Gangraena* as subjects, opponents, allies, or collaborators and there were many echoes of Edwards's programme and of his language.

Some historians have suggested that by early 1647 'the major issues concerning Parliament and the city were decidedly political in character'. As *Gangraena*, Part Three gave more prominence to political errors so a political programme had overtaken the settlement of church government as the priority of city Presbyterians.²¹² Edwards's work, however, does not

²¹⁰ *Gangraena*, ii. 37, 138–9.

²¹¹ *Walwyn's Just Defence*, in Haller and Davies (eds.), *Leveller Tracts*.

²¹² Mahoney, 'Presbyterian Party', 197; Brenner's view is similar.

support a sharp distinction between religious and political aims. The political Presbyterians of 1646/7—led in parliament by Holles, Stapleton, and Essex—were a complex coalition united in opposition to radical sectarianism as well as in the more positive desire to dismantle the wartime administration and settle with the king. In *Gangraena*, Edwards consistently associated himself with an English Presbyterian party aligned with the Scots, and in Part Three he specifically endorsed the broader Presbyterian programme as well as describing or constructing a wide-ranging and interconnected radical opposition in city and New Model Army. He might even be read as inciting resistance to an Independent parliament. Edwards's relative reticence on the details of church government was reflected in the range of preferences for a national church within the 'Presbyterian' camp. Despite his opposition to a clericalist Presbyterianism, William Prynne is usually, and legitimately, labelled a Presbyterian by historians—for he and Edwards clearly recognized each other as on the same side and engaged in the same enterprise. Their agreement was based on what they opposed—not on their positive visions of church government.²¹³

Edwards had in Part Three a clearer sense of a radical political challenge, connected to, yet distinguishable from, the heterodox religious opinions and activities that were his initial concern. Mid-seventeenth-century commentators were perfectly capable of distinguishing between political and religious issues, and they did so distinguish. But in any specific petition or campaign a variety of issues were combined into a more or less coherent programme. There would seem little reason to accept the view that in 1647 the political demands of London Presbyterians came to take priority over religious aims, given their own repeated evocations of the Covenant and their insistence that their estates, their liberties, and their lives meant nothing 'if the Arke of God be taken'. Political questions—in particular the control of the city militia—had an obvious urgency in the summer of 1647, but immediacy is not the same as significance. The city's military autonomy, like its privileges in general, were crucial to the godly householders of London Presbyterianism, but they were particularly pressing issues when threatened by a sectarian army that, according to Edwards and others, was intimately connected to well-known, long-established city troublemakers—John Lilburne, and the members of John Goodwin's and

²¹³ William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne, 1600–1669* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), might dissent from a simple Presbyterian label, but most historians do use it: Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 163, is an example.

Thomas Lambe's congregations. Equally, the issue of liberty of conscience, broadened out into other aspects of personal autonomy and freedom from coercion, remained central to radical campaigns and alliances from 1646.

Connected to the relative weight of political and religious aims is the issue of how far there was a growing rapprochement between Presbyterians and royalists in these months. The most startling vote by parliament between 26 July and 4 August was the decision to invite Charles to London, to settle a 'well-grounded' peace. Whatever the formal conditions Presbyterians sought to impose—and in 1647 Presbyterian demands on religion, the control of appointments and of the armed forces, were more stringent than the terms offered the king in army-independent negotiations—the return of Charles to London when parliamentarians were so divided would have immensely increased the potential for a restoration of royal power. Valerie Pearl and Robert Ashton have described the events of late July as an attempt at counter-revolution, at a settlement that would have negated many of parliament's war aims.²¹⁴ At issue is the degree to which city Presbyterians, through war-weariness and fear of radicalism, had abandoned support for parliament and were willing to cooperate with thoroughgoing royalists. Exploring these issues from the perspective of a study of Thomas Edwards's *Gangraena* is illuminating, if not without problems. Edwards was a singular, perhaps 'extreme' figure although I have presented much evidence from city petitions and Presbyterian pamphlets, on the one hand, and radical arguments, on the other, which reveals that Edwards's priorities and obsessions were widely shared. As the army itself recognized he had done as much as anyone to define it as a hotbed of sectarian disorder and unorthodox speculation, bent on political domination. A report from the English army occupying Edinburgh in October 1648 complained, 'Master Edwards his Gangrene I perceive was good Gospell here, what seed it hath sowne, you may imagine'. Many of the Scots were surprised that the 'sectarian' army were 'not as bad and dangerous as we were suspected to be by false informations of us'. From London, John Price in 1648 accused the Presbyterian clergy more generally of provoking the people to resist the army: 'Did not those men . . . stirre up the people,

²¹⁴ On 1647 see John Adamson, 'The English Nobility and the Projected Settlement of 1647', *Historical Journal*, 30 (1987); Pearl, 'London's Counter-Revolution'; Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 182–3, 349–52; Kishlansky, *Rise of the New Model Army*, 285, 341 n. 80, is more sceptical, partly because he regards the attempts to raise military forces as rather half-hearted (at least before late July), but also because he sees the crisis as being over different interpretations of the parliamentary cause. A version of this latter argument has been adopted here.

to withstand the Army, and to this day declaim against the Citie for not standing up at that time'. In response Cornelius Burgess quite correctly pointed out how the London ministers meeting in Sion College had taken the initiative on 2 August 1647 in seeking to avoid bloodshed.²¹⁵

Burgess, Calamy, Ashe, and Gower, just as much as Marshall, had drawn back from this brink. Edwards chose (if that is the word) flight rather than compromise. The balance of probability is that he had supported the coercion of parliament and the attempt to challenge the military supremacy of the New Model Army. There is no evidence, however, that he had become a 'royalist' in the sense of working for peace on easy terms with the king, despite sharing royal contempt for sectaries and schismatics. Edwards's condemnation of the prelacy of the 1630s is reiterated throughout his writing, and everything we know of Edwards suggests he was and would have remained amongst those Presbyterians who would accept the king only if he signed the Covenant. There is a clear contrast in the summer of 1647 between most city manifestos which called for the return of the king on the basis of the Solemn League and Covenant, linking royal power to the privileges of parliament, the laws of the land, and the reformation of the church, and royalist declarations such as the one couched in the form of an apprentices' petition, which urged that the king be restored to his full rights and prerogatives and not compelled to anything against his conscience.²¹⁶ One way of looking at this is to suggest that for Presbyterians the religious aim of godly reformation through a coercive national church took priority over the political desire for pacification. There is some validity in this, but some distortion also. As I have sought to demonstrate, militant Presbyterians should not be seen as lukewarm parliamentarians, but as parliamentarians consistently enthusiastic for the aims of 1642. Brenner's argument that the army's march on London represented a completion of the revolution begun in the city with radical pressure for an effective war effort in 1642/3 suggests that there is only one version of what parliamentarianism was or should be.²¹⁷ Even when denouncing the

²¹⁵ *The Moderate Intelligencer*, 191 (9–16 Nov. 1648); I am very grateful to Ian Gentles for this reference. Price, *The Pulpit Incendiary*, 19; Burgess, *Sion College, What it is and What it does*, printed Sion College's proposals of 2 Aug. (22–3).

²¹⁶ *A Remonstrance and Declaration of the Yong Men and Apprentices of the City of London* (London, 1647), BL E400 (31), Thomason date 31 July; compare *A Petition from the City of London* and *A declaration of the Lord Mayor* (nn. 191 and 193, above).

²¹⁷ Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 512–13. There is a parallel illogicality to Mahoney's argument ('Presbyterian Party', 202–3) that the London Aldermen John Langham and Thomas Adams, whom he judged to have been more moderate Presbyterians than James Bunce, must have been motivated by political considerations into supporting the Scots. It was clearly possible to be both moderate and genuinely religiously motivated.

regicide in early 1649 the London Presbyterian clergy based their case on a competing vision of the true parliamentary cause, which they argued the army and its supporters had betrayed; they supported a limited monarchy, not a thoroughgoing royalism.²¹⁸ We cannot know what Edwards's precise political views were by the summer of 1647, but certainly, despite his fears in Part Three that a facile democratic politics was threatening to destroy monarchy, aristocracy, and good order, Edwards continued to insist on his commitment to limited parliamentary monarchy:

Parliaments are the strong Boundaries of the exorbitancies of Princes and their Ministers; they have by the constitution of the Kingdome and the Lawes, power more then sufficient to restraine the Tyranny of Princes, and to correct their greatest Favourits and Officers of State, let the people once lose Parliaments and be out of love with them, and then farewell all Liberty, Property, and slavery will come in like an armed man.²¹⁹

Two broad issues thus complicated and in the end sabotaged effective Presbyterian cooperation with 'Cavalier' royalists from 1647 to 1660 and beyond: the Presbyterian commitment to the regulated monarchy envisaged in 1642, as well as their support for religious reformation according to the Solemn League and Covenant. The hostility to religious radicalism which activated many parliamentarians besides Edwards had a contradictory impact on their attitude to royalism. The desire to eliminate the army's influence and the long-standing opposition in royalist declarations to sectaries encouraged common ground with the king's supporters; on the other hand, the conviction that only a compulsory disciplinary church government on the Presbyterian model could eliminate error and heresy drove a wedge between them. Indeed, at almost regular intervals from 1644, and most particularly in the summer of 1647, when the Heads of Proposals were offered to Charles by the New Model Army and its associates in parliament, Presbyterians had justified fears of a royalist-Independent alliance against their hoped-for reformation of the church, based on the restoration of an episcopal church with liberty of conscience beyond it. Lewis Dyve, a royalist who shared imprisonment in the Tower in 1647 with

²¹⁸ See e.g. *A Serious and faithfull representation of the Judgment of Ministers of the Gospel Within the Province of London* (London, 18 Jan. 1649). Ralph Smith was one of the booksellers who produced this, and it was licensed by Cranford, who also signed it along with Walker, Roborough, Gower, Samuel Clarke, Roberts, Jenkyn, and Love (amongst Edwards's connections); and *A Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel in and about London* (London, 1649); a full demonstration of this case is provided in Vernon, 'The Quarrel of the Covenant'.

²¹⁹ *Gangraena*, iii. Preface, sig.) (2^v).

John Lilburne, was convinced that the king's best hopes lay with the Independents. Dyve welcomed Presbyterian attempts to raise forces in the city in July, not because they would aid the royalists, but as a means of bringing the New Model to realize its dependence on Charles.²²⁰ Charles's fatal propensity for negotiating too obviously with all sides at once, and his unrealistic hopes that concessions would only be temporary, more than Independent reluctance, ensured these plans came to nothing.

It has been suggested that the Presbyterian bookseller George Thomason was more and more sympathetic to royalism from 1647, but there was no general, neat convergence between Presbyterians and royalists. Colonel Edward King's diatribe against the sectaries at the Lincolnshire sessions also contained demands for harsher measures against delinquents.²²¹ Charles's 'Engagement' with the Hamiltonian Scots in December 1647 included a commitment to suppress 'the opinions and practices of Antitrinitarians, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Arminians, Familists, Brownists, Separatists, Independents, Libertines, and Seekers, and generally for suppressing all blasphemy, heresy, schism'. Nonetheless the testimonies against error from Cheshire and Staffordshire insisted their concern was to deflect the Scots from their threat to invade in 1648, not to ratify or endorse their views; and within England, Presbyterians did not rally to the king in 1648. Despite several scares, including a celebration of Charles I's coronation day and public expressions of support for 'our brethren of Scotland', London itself remained sullenly under parliament's control.²²² English Presbyterian allegiances were also confused by the divisions amongst the Scots themselves, with a powerful Presbyterian grouping around Argyll opposed to the faction under the Duke of Hamilton, who had pushed through the Engagement with the king.

Almost exactly four years after Edwards fled London, his younger colleague Christopher Love, the minister who had joined the attack on Dell in 1646, was executed for treason after involvement in murky, but at least partly genuine, royalist plotting. The 'Love' plot reunites us with many associates of Edwards. The minister at Christ Church, William Jenkyn, was sent to the Tower for his involvement, while Thomas Cawton fled to the

²²⁰ *The Tower of London Letter-Book of Sir Lewis Dyve, 1646–7*, ed. H. G. Tibbutt (Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 38, 1958 for 1957), 49–96; Adamson, 'Projected Settlement'.

²²¹ Spencer, 'Politics of George Thomason'; Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 221.

²²² Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, 191–3, 291–2; Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 348, for the Engagement. For London see Gentles, 'Struggle for London'. The role of Skippon as the city's military commander was crucial.

Amsterdam congregation that had sheltered Edwards. Edward Massey was implicated as well as an ancient John Vicars, James Cranford, and the obscure Christ Church parishioner Henry Potter, who five years earlier had gone with Nicholas Widmerpole and other friends to hear William Dell preach.²²³ This last stand of the Presbyterian *engagés*, inveterate opponents of liberty of conscience and a regime backed by the New Model Army, was firmly in the tradition of the ‘Covenant engaged citizens’ of 1646. Fuelled by the fevered imagination of another prominent 1640s figure, Alderman James Bunce, himself by now in Dutch exile, the plotters were part of the moves to bring about a royalist restoration through alliance with hard-line Scottish Covenanters and to sideline the ‘Cavalier’ interest. The Love plot is thus another example of the complications of both Presbyterianism and royalism, and the unresolvable tensions between them. Prominent ministers like Ashe and Calamy supported Love on the scaffold and saw to the posthumous publication of his sermons, but lacked the temperamental edge, the extremism that drove a Love, a Jenkyn, or earlier an Edwards to provocative action. In the Presbyterian networks of London throughout the 1640s differences of temperament as much as policy influenced how men reacted at crucial turning points such as August 1647.

In the context of the 1640s Presbyterianism was a radical movement that sought to achieve a dramatic social, moral, and religious transformation of the English people through a revived national church with a robust, participatory discipline, backed by a dynamic godly magistracy. For these ends the most militant Presbyterians, especially in London, were prepared to mobilize a broad range of the population. A variety of media, arenas, and actions were deployed. Petitions, sermons, tracts, and declarations were distributed and discussed in pulpits, bookshops, London streets and public places such as the Guildhall, the Exchange, the Windmill Tavern, and Westminster Hall. Argument, petitioning, lobbying, and in summer 1647 direct action were initiated by Presbyterians rather than the sectaries and Levellers usually credited with political innovation. Through clerical associations and networks in particular, Presbyterian mobilization occurred throughout England. *Gangraena* was perhaps the richest of the many texts—from broadsides and brief petitions to complex theological tracts—that played a crucial role in Presbyterian activism.

Another way of putting this would be that Edwards’s *Gangraena* both illustrates and was made possible by the existence of a ‘public sphere’ in 1640s London. Historians’ use of the notion of a ‘public sphere’ is derived

²²³ The best account of the ‘Love plot’ is now Vernon, ‘Sion College Conclave’, 342–52.

from a belated adoption of the work of Jurgen Habermas, who argued for significant change in the eighteenth century. He described the coming together of 'private' individuals—in a variety of locations and associations (coffee houses, assembly rooms, societies, and pressure groups) to scrutinize or criticize the state in the press and other public fora: 'The bourgeois public sphere may be concerned above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves . . . The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason.' The public sphere is bourgeois, modern, secular, and rational, 'Private people come together as a public'.²²⁴

Applying Habermasian concepts to the seventeenth century of course involves a challenge to his view that subsequent developments were 'without historical precedent', and advances in our understanding of a public sphere in early modern England have generally occurred through a critical engagement with Habermas rather than a wholesale adoption of his work. In an important contribution Peter Lake and Michael Questier have seen the later sixteenth century as crucial and have stressed the importance of religious issues in public debate. According to Lake and Questier, at least three versions of 'public' emerged in post-reformation religious debates. There was, first, the drive to convince a general audience, or public, through a variety of means, oral, written, visual, dramatic. There were (rival) claims to represent the public interest, as a means of legitimating sectional arguments, and finally, as a consequence of the first two, there were more or less overt appeals to an audience or public to judge the truth or validity of a position. In a clear departure from the Habermas model, Lake and Questier have pointed to the involvement of the state or monarchy itself in appeals for support and thus to the formation of a public sphere. Their stress on religion, also, sits uneasily with a Habermasian concept of modern rationality, but is clearly relevant for Edwards's career.²²⁵

While there are clear precedents for the political and religious mobilizations of the 1640s—in the 1590s, and the 1620s most obviously—I have argued in this chapter that institutional and political developments in the 1640s, in London especially, made for a change in kind as well as degree. David Zaret too has argued for a wide-ranging and dramatic transformation in the form and content of public mobilization in the 1640s through a study of the impact of rival printed petitions. Zaret argues that the innov-

²²⁴ Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, esp. 26–31.

²²⁵ Lake and Questier, 'Papists, Puritans and the Public Sphere'.

ative use of petition in the early 1640s, and particularly the printing of opposing petitions, ‘facilitated the “invention” of public opinion’. This was a practical, not a theoretical innovation, fuelled by the need to raise support for competing political positions rather than by an abstract commitment to an open political process. Through discussion of rival petitions people came to ‘public use of their reason’. Other aspects of the process fit less well with Habermas’s account. The men agitating over the meaning of the parliamentary cause were far from acting as private men, for parliamentarianism defined itself overwhelmingly as about the public interest and public service. Many indeed held public office under the parliament. They were by no means unequivocally bourgeois. Democracy’s origins, on Zaret’s account, lie here, long before the enlightenment, and unconnected to any inherent qualities in Protestantism or to any specifically bourgeois or capitalist economic development, for the pragmatic commitment to mobilizing public opinion behind rival programmes embodied in petitions was found across the political spectrum in the 1640s from royalists to Levellers.²²⁶

Zaret’s description of how ‘Debates over the relative merits of rival petitions led contemporaries to attach importance to informed consent, and open exchange of ideas, and appeals to reason in the petitioning process’, could be paralleled from our discussion of Edwards’s debates with his critics in Chapter 4. But clearly a focus on petitions is too narrow—debates and appeals to judgement appear in many different forms in the mid-seventeenth century. Historians of science too have outlined how the establishing of the scientific truth depended on a public arena in which a reputable audience could scrutinize experimental or observational material in print.²²⁷ Edwards’s polemical career is a prime example of the importance of religious divisions in driving public debate. Religious polemic had a central role in the conjuring up of an informed, polarized, mobilized public opinion. How ‘open’, ‘informed’, and rational such opinion was is hard to assess. For most early modern religious

²²⁶ Zaret, ‘Petitions and the “Invention” of Public Opinion in the English Revolution’, esp., 1498–1500, 1540–2; see also Zaret, ‘Religion and the Rise of Liberal Democratic Ideology in Seventeenth Century England’, *American Sociological Review*, 54 (1989), and his chapter in Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Zaret’s book, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), appeared too late to be fully integrated in my discussion. Scribner, ‘Heterodoxy, Literacy and Print’, 262–3, described six forms of ‘public opinion’ in the German reformation, defining them essentially by location—guild, parish, street, or corporation.

²²⁷ Zaret, ‘Petitions and the “Invention” of Public Opinion’, 1536; Shapin, *The Social History of Truth*; Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 468–9.

campaigners, and certainly for Edwards, truth was believed to be generally knowable, despite being obviously contested. Edwards's writings depended on the conviction that a properly informed public would share his horror at the spread of heresy, and shun the sects. The importance of London networks and arenas to Edwards's career, and to the political and religious divisions of the 1640s more generally, suggests further modifications of Zaret's account. Although all factions in the 1640s had to appeal to 'public opinion', there were particular material or social contexts which particularly facilitated extensive and enthusiastic mobilization. The label 'bourgeois' is perhaps too simple but the urban, collective structures of London created a public sphere broader, more complex, self-conscious, and sophisticated than the royalist version.

Edwards's activities certainly show there was no inevitable connection between political radicalism, conventionally defined, and the appeal to the 'public'. He indeed provides the most compelling evidence for the contribution of Presbyterians—conventionally if inappropriately seen as 'conservative' parliamentarians—to the public sphere of the 1640s. Within a liberal tradition, we credit Edwards's victims and opponents, like Walwyn, with his stress on plain men searching for the truth without the oppressive supervision of self-interested clerics, and Milton in *Areopagitica*, with the founding of a public arena for free debate. In *Areopagitica*, an attack on the restrictions of the licensing ordinance of July 1643, Milton quoted Euripides: 'This is true liberty, when free-born men, | Having to advise the public, may speak free'. We are now more sceptical about the plausibility of a liberal, anti-authoritarian Milton.²²⁸ But equally, we may have underestimated the paradoxical impact of the campaigning by overtly authoritarian, pro-censorship Presbyterians like Edwards. As we have seen, Edwards urged magistrates to burn 'wicked books', and suppress unlicensed printing, and denounced the licensing activities of John Bachelor. On the other hand he had to buy unlicensed books to read and refute them; his sighting of the 'old wolf' Clement Writer came in Peter Cole's bookshop, 'I going to him to help me to an unlicensed Book'. In his fury at the lack of response to *Antapologia* and in his provocative treatment of the books of his opponents, Edwards was setting challenges that were clearly expected to produce yet more wicked books. *Gangraena* was intended as 'a manuall that might be for everyone's

²²⁸ *Areopagitica*, in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ii. 1643–1648, 485. See e.g. the essays in Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson (eds.), *Re-Membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions* (New York and London: Methuen, 1988).

reading', and its author rejoiced at his success in a competitive market with the 'quick sale' of his books.²²⁹

The contrast between restrictive Presbyterians and liberal sectaries fails on both sides. Apparently open-minded men like Walwyn themselves called for limits on the circulation of books like *Gangraena*:

I cannot see how authority can passe over this unparaleld use of the presse which you have taken, to name in publike so many of their faithfull adherents in so reproachful a manner, to tax their proceedings in the proceedings of their Committees, to affirme and declare to all the world, that the victorious successes of the Parliaments forces, is but the increase of errors and heresies.²³⁰

In a later work, Walwyn imagined a repentant Edwards saying:

I have done it out of the pride and vanity of my owne mind, out of disdain, that plaine unlearned men should seeke for knowledge any other way then as they are directed by us that are learned; out of base feare, if they should fall to teach one another, that . . . we should lose our domination in being sole judges of doctrine and discipline, . . . [and] our profits and plentious maintenance by Tithes . . . And all this I saw coming in with that liberty, which plaine men tooke, to try and examine all things.

Edwards, claimed Walwyn, 'loved none, but superstitious or ignorant people' and feared 'an understanding enquiring man, studious in the Scriptures' who would reject his views.²³¹ Although Walwyn did allow that Edwards wanted men to search for knowledge, albeit under the guidance of the clergy, this accusation is misleading for it misses the fact that Edwards did assume that 'understanding, enquiring' readers would share his views. *Gangraena*, as Chapter 4 demonstrated, was a text that both built on and encouraged reader participation. It relied on readers for material, sought to provoke them to militant action, and in general envisaged an active, rational readership, judging good and wicked books for themselves: 'every indifferent Reader' was to weigh Edwards's evidence, using it to 'ballance, yea to weigh down *Cretensis*'. Exactly so did the printers of Zaret's cross-petitions—citing and reproducing conflicting texts—offer

²²⁹ *Gangraena*, i. 171, 8.

²³⁰ Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare of Mr Thomas Edwards* (London, 1646), Thomason date 13 Mar. 1645/6, here from the facsimile in Haller (ed.), *Tracts on Liberty*, iii. 332. The army in 1647 was also presumably calling for the suppression of Edwards's 'scandalous' books.

²³¹ Walwyn, *A Prediction of Mr Edwards His Conversion and Recantation* (London, 1646), Thomason date 11 Aug. 1646, here from Haller (ed.), *Tracts on Liberty*, iii. 343, 341.

readers a contested narrative on which a judgement was required, imposing a 'dialogic order on conflict'.²³²

John Price, Goodwin's 'prophet', claimed the London Presbyterian clergy meeting at Sion College aimed 'to engage and tamper privatly with chiefe Citizens in publick places, as Common Councell men etc, and publickly in Pulpit, and Presse, stirring up the people, by all possible meanes, under the pretence of the glory of God, a blessed reformation, the keeping of the Covenant'. In response Cornelius Burgess denied some of Price's specific accusations but he made no apology for the general efforts of the clergy in the 'public cause' against errors, heresies, and blasphemies.²³³ In the early 1640s another close associate of Edwards's, John Vicars, praised a free press as a means of defending God's truth:

To see God's Sabbaths more sincerely kept
Of Carryers, Fruiterers, Taverns-soyle well swept,
And Presses open wide to vindicate
The Sabbath's precious honour.²³⁴

It has been amply shown that Edwards and other Presbyterian zealots sought through writing, talking, petitioning, printing, and preaching to communicate a programme and mobilize support for it. Paradoxically according to our assumptions, Presbyterians like Edwards, Vicars, and Burgess saw no conflict between open debate and a predictable conclusion.

Opportunities for mobilization were tragically complicated by the increasingly divergent interpretations of what the parliamentary commitment to reformation implied. From the mid-1640s, orthodox London clerics, politicized members of the army, London sectaries, all claimed to be the true bearers of the principles of the parliamentary cause, and worked to make their claims reality. It was not in some general coming together of concerned citizens, to criticize the state that a 'public sphere' emerged in the 1640s. Neither was it through some tolerant, open-end commitment to a search for truth. The work of Edwards and his opponents reveals the degree to which the expansion of public debate in print

²³² *Gangraena*, ii. 48. See Vernon, 'Sion College Conclave', 281–6, for the general Presbyterian conviction that they could defeat Independents in open debate; Zaret, 'Petitions and the "Invention" of Public Opinion', 1530–2.

²³³ Price, *Pulpit Incendiary*, 18; Burgess, *Sion College*, 7, 9–10.

²³⁴ Vicars, *England's Remembrancer* (1641), quoted in Gerald M. Maclean, *Time's Witness: Historical Representation in English Poetry, 1603–1660* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 102.

and otherwise was driven by rigid, partisan positions. An enlarged public sphere arose from rivals fighting their own corner, defending conflicting, deeply held versions of the truth and the parliamentary cause. Indeed in many ways it was the unattractive, often authoritarian Presbyterians who showed the most energetic commitment to the public arena, a commitment which culminated for Edwards in failure and flight in August 1647.