

## Five

## Offspring Blackall and the Critique of England's New Prophets

The second of two case studies will focus on the tory preacher Offspring Blackall and some of his contemporaries. As in the previous chapter, the Anglican, nonconformist, and political meanings of spirit and authority will constitute a triple context for examining the subject matter. Owing to the interests and background specific to Blackall and his contemporaries, however, they will figure in the discussion in ways differing from those of William Penn. Principally prophecy forms the centrepiece of this analysis, but the overarching objective of this chapter is to understand its wider significations in light of the concerns of the individuals who chose to comment upon it.

Why, then, did a group of French exiles, self-styled prophets, generate such controversy and opposition in England in the summer of 1706? What follows is a three-part answer to this question. The focal point will not be the prophets themselves, but their critics. Immediately after arriving in England the prophets were perceived by their critics through a spectrum of specifically English reference points. The controversies that had punctuated political and religious life since the Restoration resurfaced and were restated and enlarged. Certainly, the French origins of the prophets added complicating factors. It signalled the persecution Protestants experienced following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, above all, but also certain religious tendencies peculiar to French traditions. But English critics did not hesitate to point to the potentially destructive effect the prophets might have on England's political and religious traditions. The French prophets were simply the new prophets, an alarming manifestation of an old impulse, and the English understood them in the same light that they understood their own indigenous enthusiasts. The French prophets were an English problem.

Appreciating the depth of the arguments that critics advanced against the prophets therefore requires taking account of the factors that they took most seriously. The first of these is millenarianism. Never assumed to be merely theological in import, the hope for the millennium was challenged by

critics who saw the practical implications of the end of the world and the political and moral problems that accompanied the idea in England. The second is the possibility or probability of prophecy itself appearing. Critics recognized that prophecy, especially when used as justification for levelling the church and state, would unsettle attitudes to religious faith characteristic of English Protestantism, and even if true, could have no positive effect on it. Third are the challenges introduced by the prophets to received notions concerning Anglican piety. The holy spirit and the means of engaging it was the crux of this problem, and it spurred critics to develop one of the most detailed expositions of Anglican personal piety of the period. Each of these three points will feature contributions from the major figures, defenders and proponents, that publicly distinguished themselves after 1706. One figure, however, namely the bishop of Exeter, Offspring Blackall, will appear repeatedly. Blackall not only contributed pertinent treatises specifically concerning the prophets, but in other works from the early eighteenth century he also points to the wider resonances and effects new prophets would have on English traditions. Blackall was well known in his time, but less so by modern historians. It is hoped that this will help correct this imbalance.

While it may seem self-evident that the critical response to the prophets would feature significantly in such an inquiry, this has not been true of the English-language literature on the subject. The most exhaustive account of the subject is Hillel Schwartz's *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England*.<sup>1</sup> This book built on an earlier and shorter work by encompassing the critics of the prophets as well as the religious habits that shaped their social lives.<sup>2</sup> In elaborating such phenomena, Schwartz fully turned to an anthropology-derived methodology drawn from Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.<sup>3</sup> His most immediate influence was the structuralism of Mary Douglas, from whom he adopted grid/group descriptive models for plotting the different social and religious tendencies of the prophets in varying contexts.<sup>4</sup> From

<sup>1</sup> Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The Study of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Hillel Schwartz, *Knives, Fools, Madmen, and the Subtile Effluvium: A Study of the Opposition to the French Prophets in England, 1706-1710* (Gainesville, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, appendices X and XI detail the 'Shared System of Classification', pp. 329-30.

here, Schwartz argued that, contrary to the common view, or what was the common view in the late 1970s, the 'millenarian way of life flourished' between 1660 and 1740: 'I hope to demonstrate in this book that the French Prophets appealed to an astonishing variety of people who drew upon types of millenarian ethos common to men and women of the early seventeenth-century.'<sup>5</sup>

It is a credit to Schwartz's efforts that this point was convincingly demonstrated. His success was such that later scholars have also adopted anthropology-derived methods for investigating particular aspects of the subject. Clarke Garrett, in *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion*, suggested that historians should see spirit as theatre, the prophets as actors, and London as the audience.<sup>6</sup> Schwartz himself likens the prophets to a theatrical company performing a repertoire of plays.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Georgia Cosmos has also pointed to anthropology as a means of allowing contemporaries to 'speak in their own terms'.<sup>8</sup> Her main focus was the *Théâtre Sacré de Cévennes*, a collection of testimonies concerning miraculous activity in France, published in 1707 and translated a month later into English as *A Cry From the Desert*. She endeavoured to understand its metaphors and contexts, and the conditions of its composition. Schwartz, Garrett, and Cosmos, in fact, all engaged with the symbolic languages that animated the prophets. The prophets themselves drew attention to symbols. The twin symbols of the sacred theatre and the desert, above all, have proven to be especially attractive to historians and anthropologists. The transnational and transcultural nature of the *inspirés* provides additional spectrums of meanings through which to interpret them.

This is fertile ground for scholarship. Although the evident unsuitability of early eighteenth-century England for enthusiastic expressions of religious ecstasy is a salient feature in all secondary literature on the prophets, it is never, with the exception of Schwartz's first book, the focal point. In Schwartz's language, the shift from the French to the English context entailed a shift from the 'Cataclysm' of the spiritual 'desert' of

<sup>5</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Clark Garrett, *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion: From the Camisards to the Shakers* (Baltimore, 1978), pp. 4, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 251.

<sup>8</sup> Georgia Cosmos, *Huguenot Prophecy and Clandestine Prophecy in the Eighteenth Century: The Sacred Theatre of the Cévennes* (Burlington, 2005), p. 8.

Languedoc, characterized by warfare and trial, to the 'New Jerusalem' of urban London, marked by renewal and evangelism. When the Camisard refugees Elias Marion, Durand Fage, and Jean Cavalier arrived in London in 1706 they drew attention immediately, first from the conformist Huguenot churches in London, and then, in two sedition trials, from the secular authorities. The long journey to New Jerusalem took place over the course of the eighteenth century, but in 1706 and 1707 it was evident as a dramatic clash of ethos rather than a gradual migration from one to the other.

The third chapter of *The French Prophets* is devoted to these two years and it is Schwartz's most compelling work. His accumulation of manuscript sources, not only in this chapter but throughout the book, impresses in its range and allows for finely-wrought reconstructions of the progress and interactions of his subjects. But the orientation toward local detail carries with it certain limitations, and here it is apparent in the wider questions that are unasked. Margaret Jacobs raised this point: 'Could the prophets have been as naive as Schwartz claims they were when they wore green ribbons in the streets of London, the traditional symbol of the Levellers? Certainly the London authorities, lay and clerical, assumed the worst'.<sup>9</sup> Schwartz earns praise from Jacob and other reviewers for his seventh chapter, 'Seekers, Citizens, Scientists', which follows the prophets as a phenomenon that, among the country's most distinguished *virtuosi*, occasioned either real curiosity, as in the case of Isaac Newton, or serious long-term attachment, as in the case of Nicolas Fatio de Duillier.<sup>10</sup> In the years since Schwartz wrote it has of course become uncontroversial to point out that many of the greatest minds of the early Enlightenment were stirred by religious concerns that seem thoroughly uncongenial to modern conceptions of science.

But he cannot possibly cover the whole ground. Here *Knaves, Fools, Madmen* and *The French Prophets* meet Michael Heyd's book on enthusiasm in one important respect.<sup>11</sup> Like Heyd's critique of enthusiasm

<sup>9</sup> Jacob also fairly points out that his writing is 'encumbered by technical language drawn heavily from anthropological and sociological literature'. Margaret Jacob, 'Review Article', *Isis*, 73 (1982), 473-74.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Capp, 'Review Article', *American Historical Review*, 86 (1981), p. 391. For a recent account of Fatio's career, including his relationship to religious enthusiasm, see Scott Mandelbrote, 'The Heterodox Career of Nicolas Fatio du Duillier', in John Brooke and Ian Maclean (eds.), *Heterodoxy in Early Modern Science and Religion* (Oxford, 2005), 263-97.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Heyd, *'Be Sober and Reasonable': The Critique of Enthusiasm in the*

during the same period, the 'morphology of opposition' to the prophets devised by Schwartz reveals the changing basis of the social order whereby ritual, ceremony, and spiritual habits are undercut by or assimilated into natural, mechanical, and rational formulas of explanation. Schwartz spoke of narrowing 'avenues of religious expression'.<sup>12</sup> Stephen Greenblatt described the same process in his discussion of religious 'charisma' in the early modern period. The charismatic religious experience involved the individual in the 'breaking through the routine into the realm of the "extraordinary" to make direct contact with the ultimate, vital sources of legitimacy, authority, and sacredness', and is, in this period, in direct conflict with Anglican sources of authority. Whereas charisma, one form of which was prophecy, gave voice to the misery and anxiety of the early modern period, the Church of England was concerned above all with permanently silencing it, and Anglicans are thus complicit in dismantling popular forms of charisma without replacing them.<sup>13</sup> But Anglicans did not perceive their own efforts in such terms. To borrow a phrase from Kenneth Minogue used in another context, they are terms that belong to academics who imagine that the Church advising its communicants in spiritual and political matters 'was the equivalent of advising them to sit around passively munching their feed like sheep'.<sup>14</sup> Nor is the greatest part of an Anglican critique neatly assimilable to the Enlightenment languages of reason, medicine, and metaphysical naturalism. Like all early modern Christians, and like the prophets themselves, critics were pressed to weigh conflicting obligations issuing simultaneously from authority and piety. This was not wholly, or even mostly, a negative programme.

Although Schwartz does not believe that the prophets made political demands,<sup>15</sup> the authorities clearly did, and the fact is an invitation to consider prophetic, millenarian, and enthusiastic ideas as textured features of religious and political life. The prophets spoke variously of the overthrow of kings, the destruction of London, and on one occasion,

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*Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Schwartz, *Knaves*, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare and the Exorcists', in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley, 1989), 96-102.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Minogue, 'Method in Intellectual History: Quentin Skinner's *Foundations*', in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton, 1989), p. 185.

<sup>15</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 27.

described how the 'Tower Guns will roar in a few days, before this day seven-night'.<sup>16</sup> With good reason might contemporaries read such statements as explicit challenges, as calls to action, to agitate the godly against the spiritually moribund authorities. It was none other than Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the third earl of Shaftesbury, an observer of the French prophets's procession into London, who sought to take account of the phenomenon in his *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708). The Presbyterian minister Edward Calamy and the tory preacher Offspring Blackall were among the less sympathetic observers of the prophets.<sup>17</sup> Schwartz's method naturally draws him to spectacle, performance, and theatricality. 'The Prophets acted according to several scripts', he wrote, 'moving from one ethos to another, and back, and back again'.<sup>18</sup> But even if his structuralist assumptions are taken for granted, we may wonder about the 'scripts' that animated their opponents.

An additional key to Schwartz's work is his own sympathy, and it must be said that the greater part of it resides with the prophets. In this sense, *The French Prophets* is a counterpoint to Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm*, which devotes a major section to the prophets in both their French and English contexts.<sup>19</sup> Knox was not evasive about his identification with Roman Catholicism, and the differing loyalties make for curious discrepancies in language. Of the sharp rise in violent conflict in southern France in the early 1700s between the Protestant Camisards and the Catholic authorities, Schwartz wrote,

[t]he burning of churches, the discriminating murder of only the more hostile priests, the castrations were all part of a cleansing of the world before the millennium ... [w]hile Camisards burned Catholic churches and laid waste to offensive, idolatrous images on florid altars, Elie Marion wept cleansing tears of blood.<sup>20</sup>

At least two of Schwartz's reviewers commented on his unconcealed sympathy for the prophets.<sup>21</sup> Garrett, who called Knox's attitude 'wrongheaded', likewise preferred drawing attention to Camisard violence

<sup>16</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 95.

<sup>17</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, pp. 105-06.

<sup>18</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 278.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford, 1950).

<sup>20</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Stuart E. Prall, 'Review Article', *Albion*, 11 (1979), pp. 178-79; Richard M. Golden, 'Review Article', *Journal of Church and State*, 23 (1981), pp. 351-52.

committed against Catholic symbols rather than Catholic human beings.<sup>22</sup>

Much less romantically, Knox remarked that 'to detail these atrocities [carried out by both sides in France] would be tedious as well as painful; let it serve for a sample that the year 1704 alone saw the murder of eighty priests and some 4,000 lay Catholics in cold blood'.<sup>23</sup> Of the 'famous twenty-year-old prophet, "Colonel" Jean Cavalier',<sup>24</sup> Knox stated frankly: 'The plain fact is that our exile had his wits about him and knew how to soft-pedal the note of fanaticism ... I do not find it easy to admire Colonel Cavalier.'<sup>25</sup> Historians of the Huguenots are likewise typically less sanguine about violence committed in the name of Camisard prophecy. Brian E. Strayer argued that the Camisards were not interested in liberty of conscience or toleration as principles and did not hesitate to spill Catholic blood.<sup>26</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie wrote that 'la différence essentielle entre les Camisards, et leur frères modernes du protestantisme anglo-saxon' was that the latter were 'pacifistes et non violents'. 'Mais', he continued, 'à l'inverse, les *trembleurs* et convulsionnaires des Cévennes n'apportent pas avec eux la paix, mais la guerre'.<sup>27</sup>

The point is that the site of the historian's sympathy has consequences and helps explain why the critics of the prophets have been approached from such narrow angles. The sedition trials in England were not simply the story of a secularizing establishment moving swiftly to extinguish a disordered, if vital, spiritual outburst. The establishment itself, after all, was not comprised simply or solely of shadowy persecutors, but of individuals forced to negotiate their own pious devotion to the holy spirit with their political obligations. A perceptive example of this tension among the English converts was identified by Schwartz himself, who observed that in John Lacy's prophecies there were examples of 'juristic metaphors' and 'balanced language and refined argument' that differed greatly from the original French prophecies.<sup>28</sup> Cosmos observed the same trend, noting that the manner in which the *Cry From the Desert* testimonials were compiled in

<sup>22</sup> Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Knox, *Enthusiasm*, p. 363.

<sup>24</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Knox, *Enthusiasm*, p. 367.

<sup>26</sup> Brian E. Strayer, *Huguenots and Camisards As Aliens in France, 1598-1798* (Lewiston, 2001), p. 296.

<sup>27</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris, 1966), p. 624.

<sup>28</sup> Schwartz, *Prophecies*, p. 88.

their published form resembles the procedures of the chancery court.<sup>29</sup>

Tensions such as these must have found expression among all observers and participants of the phenomenon, whether sympathetic or critical. Norman Cohn, like Knox before him, took close account of the grim impulses that often accompanied apocalyptic movements and demonstrated why they could be perceived as problems for the established authorities who were faced with them.<sup>30</sup> This approach has the utility of assuming that the individuals and institutions that comprise the establishment itself are fraught with their own misgivings and difficulties, and have their own intelligible reasons for pursuing their objectives. The varied groups and individuals who were animated by some enthusiastic or revolutionary impulse or other in the early modern period, the subjects who populate the work of Knox and Cohn, more often than not brought themselves into conflict with authority. This dynamic, which invokes enthusiasm, spirit, and authority as intersecting, invites additional questions not only about the basis of the social order as a 'morphology of opposition', but also as a loosely associated group of individuals, themselves participants in the social order, thinking about and acting upon urgent problems that vexed the body politic.

An examination of the published writings of Offspring Blackall, especially, will affirm these complexities. Blackall addressed the controversy directly in a series of sermons, including one before the Queen, delivered and published between 1700 and 1707.<sup>31</sup> In these works Blackall elaborated on the utility of standing revelation and the pointlessness of modifying or adding to it. Each of these tracts has drawn the attention of historians of the French prophets and their followers for the topical nature of their subject matter.<sup>32</sup> Blackall's address before the Queen, *The Way of Trying New Prophets* (1707), was lauded in its time for its pointed quality. In his *Review of the State of the British Nation* Daniel Defoe deferred to the 'many Men of Learning and Judgement [who] have spoke to their Opinions, and largely as well as learnedly enquir'd into' the prophets, such as the

<sup>29</sup> Cosmos, *Huguenot Prophecy*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>30</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1957).

<sup>31</sup> In order, these are *No Reason to Desire New Revelations* (London, 1700), *Sufficiency of Standing Revelation* (London, 1700), and *The Way of Trying New Prophets* (London, 1707).

<sup>32</sup> Schwartz, *Knives*, pp. 32, 82; Cosmos, *Huguenot Prophecy*, pp. 124, 164.



'Reverend Dr. *Blackall*'.<sup>33</sup> It is therefore entirely apt that Blackall should occupy some limited space in conventional histories of the French prophets or their critics in England. But such histories do not go where Blackall seemed to anchor his most trenchant and, we must assume, most deeply felt arguments. His views on political philosophy have earned him a minor place in the early history of toryism and were expounded in published sermons, signally *The Subject's Duty* (1704).<sup>34</sup> His pastoral sermons also occupied him throughout the early 1700s. In this case, it is likely true that conventional histories of the prophets do not engage Blackall on this territory because the colossal literary achievement that is the posthumous *Practical Discourses* (1717-18) does not, on first glance, appear to be a source of profitable returns. Published in eight volumes, the *Discourses* is a collection of eighty-seven sermons that subject Christ's Sermon on the Mount to painstakingly close readings, as well as an elaboration of the themes that featured in his earlier published writing. Of the *Discourses*, Andrew Starkie wrote that this, Blackall's 'greatest literary work', consisted of sermons which were 'both expository and pastoral, and while written in an uncomplicated style, are far from superficial and betray a considerable erudition'. He speculated that the magnitude of the work may have limited its reception, and 'despite its literary and theological merits it receded into relative obscurity'.<sup>35</sup> In his original preface for the *Discourses*, William Dawe, then Archbishop of York, described it as a complete 'system of Christian morality'.<sup>36</sup>

Its disappearance from the scope of historians, whether on account of its unwieldy length or its ostensible irrelevance, is regrettable. At its core it was a careful meditation on religion, ethics, and politics, and it defended every feature of a settled worldview that was assaulted by new prophets, French or otherwise. Although the French prophets were not explicitly identified, the theological and political implications of claims of the kind

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Review of the State of the British Nation*, vol. 5, num. 32 (London, 1706), p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Eccleshall, 'From the Restoration to the French Revolution', in Robert Eccleshall (ed.), *English Conservatism Since the Restoration: An Introduction and Anthology* (London, 1990), pp. 29-30, 57-60; H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 1977), pp. 127-32.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Starkie, 'Blackall, Offspring (bap. 1655, d. 1716)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

<sup>36</sup> William, Lord Archbishop of York, 'Preface', in Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes* (8 vols., London, 1717-18).

advanced by them were drawn out and examined. The enthusiasm of spirit, prophecy, and millenarianism were considered alongside familiar political problems, such as legitimacy, law, and persecution. At all points they were understood in light of English practices and contexts. All of the works examined here, whether in support of or contrary to the French prophets, were published, some with considerable fanfare. All are examined for the light they throw on the religious and political complexities faced by critical observers of England's new prophets.

This chapter, then, is an attempt to uncover insights into points of view of critics of the *inspirés* and the political and religious reasoning that informed their arguments. These perspectives and the ideas that comprised them have been overlooked for two reasons. The first is that scholars have opted to privilege the perspective of the prophets over that of their critics. This is an entirely tenable and legitimate approach that yields insights of its own kind, but its orientation necessarily invites work of a contrary orientation. The second is that scholars have been attracted to theoretical models that reduce the subject matter to power or performance. The model of power, as Charles Taylor has observed, omits too much from its frame of analysis and fails to take serious account of the convictions that critics derived from moral, spiritual, political, and traditional sources.<sup>37</sup> The model of performance seems undeniably apt in the case of the prophets, but the metaphors of performance do not capture the wide battery of strategies employed by critics. These range from not only the overt counter-theatricality of legal procedures or injunctions from the pulpit, but also scholarly or systematic attempts to clarify and emphasize the moral and spiritual wisdom embodied in English political and religious traditions, as they were perceived and practised by those who took the initiative to defend them. Finally, despite being at odds with a current fashion for histories written within various but broadly comprehensive continental contexts,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth', *Political Theory*, 12 (1984), p. 165.

<sup>38</sup> As John Reeve writes, '[a]lways seeking to improve our judgement as to where to cut history's seamless web, we are increasingly aware of the British context of early modern English history. We are less aware of the need to place early modern England in its European context so as to properly understand it'. See John Reeve, 'Britain or Europe? The Context of Early Modern English History: Political and Cultural, Economic and Social, Naval and Military', in Glenn Burgess (ed.), *The New British History: Founding a Modern State, 1603-1715* (London, 1999), p. 287. Jonathan Scott cites Reeve approvingly in his *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 5. However, both J. G. A. Pocock, who is a major proponent of a 'British history', and Noel Malcolm express

part of this endeavour entails understanding England as something self-sufficient and distinct from additional European contexts, particularly, in this case, those of France.

## I

One of the central controversies introduced by the French prophets after their arrival in 1706 was millenarianism. English critics recognized its recent history as a product of the extreme distress experienced by Huguenots in Languedoc, but were without exception unwilling to welcome the fantasies of destruction that accompanied it in an English Protestant context. Consequently the distinctiveness of the English constitution and the political traditions associated with it became key instruments in refuting the prophets and their followers. Blackall and others also offered practical reasons for why the millennium was not to be expected and moral reasons for why desiring its arrival, in England or elsewhere, was poor form for Christians.

Millenarian prophecies featured significantly in the legal proceedings carried out against Elias Marion, John Daude, and Nicolas Fatio in 1707. The specific offences named in the account of the trial are 'Publishing False and Scandalous Books' and holding 'Tumultuous and Unlawful Assemblies'. The offending passages cited by the counsel for the Queen, written by Marion, captured the combined imagery of righteous violence and Armageddon that were typical of their prophetic warnings: *'My Child, I will send terrible Judgments upon this Land, I assure thee ... I am thy God, and thy Master, who send thee into this Land to declare to them the approaching Judgment: to wit, That I am going to destroy the World.'*<sup>39</sup> Their sentence of humiliation on the scaffold in November occasioned their initial public

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suspicion that the historiographical drift towards continental contexts, among political elites and professional historians alike, is not necessarily the fruit of innocent historical inquisitiveness into new frames of reference, but is a product, in Malcolm's words, of a 'synthetic project of "Europe"' which is almost always accompanied 'by a doctrine of historical inevitability', involving ideas about progress, dissolution of the nation-state, or even 'a kind of cartographic mysticism' about geopolitical units. See Noel Malcolm, 'The Case Against "Europe"', *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (1995), pp. 51-53. See also J. G. A. Pocock, 'Deconstructing Europe', in *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge, 2005), 269-89; For Pocock's formulation of a British history (North American, Atlantic, and Antipodean histories inclusive), in contrast to a European, see J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea For a New Subject', in *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge, 2005), 24-47.

<sup>39</sup> Anon., *Account of the Tryal, Examination & Conviction of the Pretended French Prophets* (London, 1707), p. 1.

exposure. Although Garrett opined that Marion, described in the pamphlet as '*the head French Prophet*',<sup>40</sup> endured the hostile crowds bravely, contemporaries took a much less charitable view of him and his comportment.<sup>41</sup> To the '*Tune of Rotten Eggs, Turnop-Tops, Pieces of Dirt, & Brick-Batts*', Marion, in a fictional satirical speech, berated the spectators for their indifference to his religious mission:

[H]ad I the Jawbone of an Ass in mine Hand, I would fell you heaps upon heaps, & instead of a Thousand I would lay Ten Thousands of you sprawling like Toads in a Common-shore, or Crab-Lice on a Goats Back. Oh! you *British Infidels* ... Why will you not believe my Prophecies & Lies, which cost you nothing, rather than Buy a *Coblers Almanack Year after Year*.<sup>42</sup>

The trial included character witnesses who testified in support of the accused, including some who believed themselves to be inspired: 'They also examined others, as the nature of their inspirations, who said something seeming to testify the reality thereof, which was looked upon as almost ridiculous by the Court.'<sup>43</sup> At the trial's conclusion, Marion was attended by 'the Mob, shouting to a Tavern in *King-street*'.<sup>44</sup>

Apocalyptic fantasies were present at the origin of Cévenol prophecy in southern France in 1685. The main provocateur was the Huguenot exile, Pierre Jurieu, who observed the violence carried out against French Protestants after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes with horror from the Netherlands.<sup>45</sup> 'Cet exilé prolix', wrote Le Roy Ladurie, 'batailleur comme un Lénine, est le continuateur de grands millénaristes du Moyen âge et du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Eudes de l'Étoile, Joachim de Fiore, Thomas Muntzer, et le Révolutionnaire du Haut-Rhin'.<sup>46</sup> The apocalypse according to Jurieu consisted 'd'abord de sang et le persécution des justes, et puis, l'épreuve passée, viendra la régénération par Dieu du genre humain, la chute finale de Babylone, et de Rome'. The revocation was the first sign of the apocalypse and the rest was shortly to follow.<sup>47</sup> The 'pantalonnade' of Jurieu, who endeavoured to make his own predictions come true and revised them when

<sup>40</sup> Anon., *Pillory Disappointed, or The False Prophets Advancement* (London, 1707), p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> Anon., *Pillory Disappointed*, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Cosmos, *Huguenot Prophecy*, p. 129; Anon., *Pillory Disappointed*, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Anon., *Pillory Disappointed*, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Almeras, *La Révolte des Camisards* (France, 1960), p. 48.

<sup>46</sup> Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysans de Languedoc*, p. 615.

<sup>47</sup> Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysans de Languedoc*, p. 615.

they did not, did little to discourage the 'fanatiques de l'*Apocalypse*' in Languedoc.<sup>48</sup> The *inspirés* of Vivarais were, according to Jurieu in 1689, the most miraculous event since the time of the Apostles.<sup>49</sup> The revolt of the Camisards in the early 1700s, in which Jean Cavalier and Elie Marion were prophetic participants and which was later chronicled in the *Théâtre Sacré*, was at all points deeply imbued with a millenarian mentality and an expectation of God's miraculous intervention.<sup>50</sup>

Jurieu intensified the incendiary quality of his pronouncements with an unequivocal defence of the right of the persecuted to carry out violent resistance against their persecutors. While some of the French prophets would exhibit carelessness in their use of this sentiment, Jurieu was not an enemy of the Church of England and identified a specific French context for his comments. While the king of France attempted to reduce the Huguenots in his realm by means of violence and slaughter, the primitive doctrine of the Albigenses was preserved in Languedoc, hidden like a spark under cinders.<sup>51</sup> There was consequently a difference, according to Jurieu, between establishing and defending the Gospel. The Camisard prophets meant to protect it from the depredations of Roman Catholics, and the primitive Christians erred in rejecting the use of the sword on all occasions.<sup>52</sup>

By the time the *inspirés* Cavalier, Marion, and Fage arrived in London in 1706, English Protestants were well aware of the desperate situation bearing down on Huguenots. As early as 1675 John Locke had described the discrimination faced by Huguenots in France, and following the revocation exiles enjoyed charitable grants in England.<sup>53</sup> Between 1670 and 1700 as many as fifty thousand Huguenots fled France for England.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup> D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London, 1964), p. 254; Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysans de Languedoc*, pp. 616-17.

<sup>49</sup> John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration, and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments For Religious Toleration in Early Modern and 'Early Enlightenment' Europe* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 428.

<sup>50</sup> Marshall, *John Locke*, p. 428; Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysans de Languedoc*, p. 618. H. M. Bracken describes how Jurieu used the apocalyptic texts of the New Testament as a political program for Huguenots in 'Pierre Jurieu: The Politics of Prophecy', in Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern Culture: Volume 1* (2 vols., Dordrecht, 2001), 85-95.

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Jurieu, *Policy of the Clergy of France* (London, 1681), pp. 8, 156; Pierre Jurieu, *Monsieur Jurieu's Pastoral Letters* (London, 1688), pp. 13, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Jurieu, *Defending Our Religion By Arms* (London, 1689), pp. 5, 12-13.

<sup>53</sup> Horton Davies and Marie-Helene Davies, *French Huguenots in English-Speaking Lands* (New York, 2000), pp. 19-21, 51.

<sup>54</sup> Robin D. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenot in*

The developing Anglican-Huguenot dynamic was, however, fraught with certain tensions. Officially, the Church of England welcomed Huguenots provided their ministers were re-ordained and conformed to the Anglican liturgy.<sup>55</sup> Flexibility and as well as funding were accorded to conforming churches.<sup>56</sup> In London, internal Huguenot divisions over conformity arose between those of the Savoy church, who opted to conform, and those of the Threadneedle Street church, who did not.<sup>57</sup> The newly arrived prophets drew opposition from the Savoy congregation and from English quarters.

But within two years of arriving they had also acquired two hundred followers.<sup>58</sup> The most industrious of these was John Lacy, the original translator of the *Théâtre Sacré*. By the end of 1707 Lacy had published three large instalments of his own prophetic warnings, and in the judgment of Francis Hutchinson 'out did' the French prophets 'in their own way'.<sup>59</sup> Lacy, an erstwhile Presbyterian, fully imbibed the apocalyptic imagery of the French exiles, and his prophecies, communicated in the first-person voice of God, are steeped in it. He opened his first volume insisting that he harbours no ill will to any person, people, order, or clergy.<sup>60</sup> But this cover is abandoned quickly when he began issuing his actual prophecies. Lacy's Lord came to destroy, and very soon his 'voice will be heard throughout all nations'.<sup>61</sup> Hinting at some levelling principles, he declared that the unlearned, who have no need of the wisdom of men for godliness, will deal with the great and the learned: 'There is no superiority among my children.'<sup>62</sup> Lacy closed the first volume with some rather more explicit calls for violence and destruction in Latin and French,<sup>63</sup> but in the second volume identified London, in plain English, specifically for devastation: 'I pour upon thee, O *London*, a horrible Tempest. Smoke shall darken thee. Aetherial Fire falling down. Ordinary flames mounting up ... This is not all

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*Britain* (London, 1985), p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Davies and Davies, *French Huguenots*, p. 76.

<sup>56</sup> Davies and Davies, *French Huguenots*, p. 77; Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, p. 109.

<sup>57</sup> Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, pp. 98-103.

<sup>58</sup> Schwartz, *Knaves*, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Francis Hutchinson, *A Short View of the Pretended Spirit of Prophecy* (London, 1709), p. 20.

<sup>60</sup> John Lacy, *The Prophetic Warnings of John Lacy, Esq., Pronounced Under the Operation of the Spirit; and Faithfully Taken in Writing When They Were Spoken* (London, 1707), p. ix (hereafter *PWI*).

<sup>61</sup> *PWI*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> *PWI*, pp. 9-12, 83.

<sup>63</sup> *PWI*, pp. 63-75.

the ways I will scourge her with. O Death, Death, Death, reign thou also.<sup>64</sup>  
 The language of the third instalment was even more severe, advocating 'Zeal  
 exprest by Acts of Terror' and deriding those who suggested that the 'Terror  
 of the Message, and the Manner of Declaring it, did not agree with the  
 Calmness of a Christian Temper'. On the contrary, according to Lacy,

if they lookt into the Scriptures, they'd find the glorious Rest, the  
*Canaan State*, the great Jubilee, the Liberty of the Children of God,  
 the pouring out of the Spirit ... was all along describ'd, by the  
 Apostles, to be ushered in, with the Sword of my Power in  
 Judgment.<sup>65</sup>

In a later book written to justify his prophecies, Lacy reiterates without  
 apology the holy spirit's capacity for violent intervention on behalf of the  
 godly.<sup>66</sup>

English critics were sympathetic to Huguenots experiencing the  
 brutalities of Catholic persecution in France but found that the coarsened  
 language native to that conflict had no place in England. No English critic  
 disparaged Jurieu outright. Edmund Calamy concluded that Jurieu, out of  
 desperation, was 'suck'd in' to believe 'whatever has come from the Poor  
 Creatures in *Dauphiny* and the *Cévennes*, with out any Examination'.<sup>67</sup> The  
 anonymous author of the *Dissuasive Against Enthusiasm* (1707) expressed  
 regret that Jurieu, a man of 'great Note', had so widely 'sailed beyond the  
 Compass'.<sup>68</sup> Opinions on the credibility of the miraculous activity reported  
 in southern France were mixed. The same anonymous author suggested that  
 though the struggles in the *Cévennes* have been elevated to a miraculous  
 level, the accomplishments claimed there were modest.<sup>69</sup> Of the many  
 'strange Things Reported to be done in the *Cévennes*', John Humfrey  
 admitted he was 'apt to believe the most of them'.<sup>70</sup> In any case, critics  
 insisted on the differences between French and English contexts. Humfrey  
 observed that Protestants in France suffer persecution, but in England,

<sup>64</sup> John Lacy, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit, by the Mouth of His Servant John, sirnam'd Lacy: The Second Part* (London, 1707), pp. 68-69 (hereafter *PW II*).

<sup>65</sup> John Lacy, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit, by the Mouth of His Servant John, sirnam'd Lacy: The Third and Last Part* (1707), pp. 20, 28 (hereafter *PW III*).

<sup>66</sup> John Lacy, *The General Delusion of Christians* (London, 1713), pp. 67, 428.

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Calamy, *A Caveat Against New Prophets in Two Sermons* (London, 1708), p. 46.

<sup>68</sup> Anon., *A Dissuasive Against Enthusiasm* (London, 1707), p. 71.

<sup>69</sup> Anon., *Dissuasive*, p. 66.

<sup>70</sup> John Humfrey, *An Account of the French Prophets and Their Pretended Inspirations* (London, 1707), p. 15.

'where the Higher Powers are Protestants, and we have all Toleration', such prophetic edification is unnecessary.<sup>71</sup>

Disconnected from the 'desert' of southern France, then, the *inspirés* and their followers in England became a specifically English problem, and were countered by specifically English strategies of argumentation. Edmund Chishull sounded a note of disgust that the prophets failed to observe that they were no longer in a war zone, or, in the case of their English converts, never were to begin with: '[N]othing, besides their own Shame and Punishment, can ever atone for those Impostures, which, since the arrival of *Elias Marion*, they have been venting in the happy Calm, and Serenity of this Kingdom.' He concluded that the reason England had been singled out as the 'Theatre of their Delusions' seemed to be the 'Liberty and Humanity' of its constitution.<sup>72</sup> Several critics linked the prophets back to the familiar gallery of recent English enthusiasts, including Lodowicke Muggleton whom, like Lacy, loved 'an obedient spirit that does not dispute', exposing men to all manner of folly.<sup>73</sup> George Hickes preferred the term pseudo-prophet, a category that included the likes of Muggleton, Thomas Venner, and James Nayler.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, like Venner and the Fifth Monarchists, the French prophets threatened to put all 'to the sword'.<sup>75</sup> Another technique, common for Anglican churchmen seeking to classify enthusiasts since the Restoration, was to highlight the similarities between the French prophets and Mahomet. The anonymous author of the *Devil of Delphos* (1708) wrote that very much like Marion and Lacy, Mahomet, 'as ridiculous an Imposter as ever was', used pretended inspirations in an effort to revive primitive religion. His Alcoran amounted to no more than a routine fraudulent collection of prophetic warnings.<sup>76</sup> Nathaniel Spinckes also drew the

<sup>71</sup> Humfrey, *Account*, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> Edmund Chishull, *The Great Danger and Mistake of All New Unnspir'd Prophecies Relating the End of the World* (London, 1707), pp. 39-40.

<sup>73</sup> Anon., *Dissuasive*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>74</sup> George Hickes, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcis'd* (London, 1709), p. 63.

<sup>75</sup> Anon., *Observations Upon Elias Marion and His Book of Warnings* (London, 1707), p. 10. The best resources on Venner and Fifth Monarchy Men are Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, 1972), pp. 72-72, 96-97, 171-73, 241-46; Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London, 1985), pp. 51-66; Bernard Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London, 2008). Muggleton and the Muggltonians were also civil war-era radicals. See Hill, *World Turned*, pp. 173-74, 314-16.

<sup>76</sup> Anon., *The Devil of Delphos, or, The Prophets of Baal* (London, 1708), pp. 12-14. The model for some of these arguments in this period was likely Humphrey Prideaux's *The True Nature of Imposture* (London, 1697), which pilloried Mohamed and Islam for



comparison, arguing that Lacy's supposed miracles, like those of Mahomet, were 'Trifling and Useless'. Rather than heal the sick, Mahomet preferred to make 'Trees remove and meet him' and 'Stones salute him'.<sup>77</sup> Lacy's miracles, Spinckes wrote, were of a similarly frivolous nature, as when he appeared to slide across the floor of a room and hop without bending his knees.<sup>78</sup>

The anonymous author of the *Clavis Prophetica* (1707) performed an impressive feat of scholarship on the prophetic warnings of Marion and other Camisards and made a convincing case for reading their ominous declarations as a series of explicit criticisms of English institutions. By a series of subtle devices the warnings characteristic of all Protestant prophets shifted away from generic pronouncements against Babylon and Antichrist and toward declaring against the tyranny of monarchs, churches, and priesthods.<sup>79</sup> Where Babylon and the Antichrist in one context symbolized Rome and the pope, what meanings might they assume in Protestant England? New meanings were supplied, according to the *Clavis*, by an artful cunning. The two symbols were brought together by the prophets, first, to excite the zeal of Protestants who have a 'Knack for cursing lustily' on them.<sup>80</sup> Secondly, they were enjoined with the warning, repeated mantra-like, that they were located not in France or in Rome, but rather 'near' and 'everywhere'.<sup>81</sup> 'If one should have a mind to complain of this', he wrote, 'the Spirit will say, I spoke of *Rome*, I spoke of her Pope. A lucky Thought this, to bring themselves off, if they should be accused!'<sup>82</sup> He continued:

*The author having laid down, that there is an Universal Corruption in Doctrine, as well as in manners, draws from thence a Conclusion, which serves for the Right Understanding of several Warnings, wherein he speaks of the Ruin of Babylon, or of Antichrist. It is*

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corruption and violence. Prideaux meant, in part, to counter deists by associating Islam with the impiety of anti-trinitarianism. The history of these encounters and their implications for the Enlightenment are examined in James R. Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2002); Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 102-32.

<sup>77</sup> Nathaniel Spinckes, *The New Pretenders to Prophecy Examin'd*, in Hickes, *Enthusiasm*, pp. 400-02.

<sup>78</sup> Spinckes, *Pretenders*, p. 402.

<sup>79</sup> Anon., *Clavis Prophetica, or, A Key to the Prophecies of Mons. Marion and Other Camisars* (London, 1707), preface.

<sup>80</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, pp. 16, 26.

<sup>82</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 16.

*because Babylon is everywhere, and that Antichrist is everywhere.*<sup>83</sup>

When Marion declared '[t]hey destroy one another by Spiritual Murders, and not Corporeal Ones. I command, I tell thee, the latter; but I forbid the former', the author of the *Clavis* writes:

*This Passage makes one tremble, especially if we take it together with what Monsieur Fage has said, who declar'd, That in Fact he had kill'd several Men, meerly through the impulse of the Spirit, and that he would have made no Scruple to have killed his own Father, if he had receiev'd Orders to do it.*<sup>84</sup>

Marion's prophetic spirit goes on to announce that it would throw 'Mortal Crowns' into hell, plunder palaces, and 'overthrow the Estates and the Conditions of Men'.<sup>85</sup> According to the interpretation outlined in the *Clavis*, it was fair to read the imagery of apocalyptic violence so typical of the *inspirés* as specific and direct threats to England in general, and London in particular. The prophets convey the sense that their mission involves correcting what was amiss in the English church and state.<sup>86</sup>

Blackall's sermons addressing the prophetic claims tended to focus directly on the nature of religious belief and the improbability of new revelations, and these will be addressed below. But his ideas on the nature of government provide insight into why millenarianism and its two attendant concepts, overturning and utopia, would have been perceived as inappropriate in England. The first of three points Blackall established as a way of putting enthusiasts off their apocalyptic visions concerned the legitimacy of authority and the means by which its legitimacy was expressed. Secondly, he considered the morality of the broadly-drawn national judgments characteristic of millenarianism; and thirdly, he provided a very earthly gloss on the wish for God's kingdom to come.

Blackall frequently referred to the 'misguided zeal' that inspired individuals to turn religion into rebellion, and it becomes clear that for him the means of correcting or curbing such behaviour was not counter zeal or violent reprisal, as in France, but the ordinary functions of the law of the land. *The Subject's Duty* (1705) was originally designed as an intervention

<sup>83</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 26.

<sup>84</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 42.

<sup>85</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 43.

<sup>86</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, preface.

in the political debates that had occupied Tories since 1688. Blackall sought to affix authority to the constitution of the monarchy, Lords, and Commons, rather than to the monarchy alone. He thereby helped devise a form of political obligation that required obedience from subjects not according to the patriarchal requirements of absolutism or the absolute lineal succession of kings, but because the three estates, as the settled constitution of the realm, governed in a way that limited arbitrary power.<sup>87</sup> Thus Tories who were eager to accept the Revolution and still espouse non-resistance could do so without having to claim allegiance to an absolute monarch.<sup>88</sup>

His political philosophy was versatile enough to also answer enthusiasts whose inspired projects entailed overhauling the polity. Those given to change will stir 'discontent [in] Mens Minds, to render them uneasy in Station, and to dispose them to attempt a Revolution'. They will 'love to hear the Government blacken'd and defam'd', and will make much of 'Zeal for Liberty and Religion'.<sup>89</sup> Although they will make much of their grievances, they could not necessarily assume that their suffering is blessed.<sup>90</sup> He considered the phenomenon of 'meer Private Subjects' circumventing the legislature with their own aims for change, gathering together in tumult to rebel against the sovereign as a 'considerable Advance towards a change'. And

in probability (how Oppressive soever the present Government is) towards a change much for the worse: The Miseries of Anarchy, Confusion, and Civil War, being commonly much greater, and more universally felt, than the Miseries occasion'd by the Tyranny and Oppression of any Government.<sup>91</sup>

But the post-Revolution English constitution, for Blackall, was not an oppressive arrangement, whatever was claimed by its radical critics. The institutional procedures that guarantee the redress of grievance in the English system were contrary to the simple vengeful destructive zeal of enthusiasts. The office of the magistrate took no account of the emotions,

<sup>87</sup> Eccleshall, 'Restoration', pp. 28-30.

<sup>88</sup> Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>89</sup> Offspring Blackall, *The Subject's Duty* (London, 1705), pp. 27, 29; Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 1* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), p. 373 (hereafter *PD I*); Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 2* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), p. 82 (hereafter *PD II*).

<sup>90</sup> *PD II*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>91</sup> Blackall, *Subject's Duty*, p. 29.

impulses, or personal beliefs of the subjects when assuming the duties of justice.<sup>92</sup> But if the enthusiast or papist, on the basis of their religion, could not expect to enjoy legal favour, nor, in principle, does any other subject. 'The *Utopians*', wrote Blackall, 'would be hard put to it so much as to imagine a better'. The English may be ruined only by representatives of their own choosing, and it was to be hoped that they will not consent to their own destruction.<sup>93</sup>

Nor could the prophets charge that England's political and religious traditions are ungodly. Blackall was fond of asserting that the power of the magistrate was received from God. Superiors had a 'ray of God's power' within them.<sup>94</sup> Much more ambiguously, and controversially, he emphasized the point by insisting that the sovereign's power was 'Absolute, Unlimited, and Uncontroulable'.<sup>95</sup> To a whig like Benjamin Hoadly this sounded suspiciously like an outmoded form of divine right absolutism and a licence for tyranny.<sup>96</sup> Blackall's response to Hoadly indicated that he never did state that a magistrate's power issued 'immediately' from God, as Hoadly alleged.<sup>97</sup> Instead he cited the apostles who maintained that only legitimate power wielded by magistrates was from God and, and as far as the English constitution was concerned, such power could not in any case be considered legitimate if it subverted the channels of the legislature.<sup>98</sup> Consequently this was a licence for neither tyranny nor enthusiasm, since such a ruler, despite the ray of God's power that inhered in his office, could not expect to have access to the voice or the will of God.<sup>99</sup>

Echoing his Restoration Anglican predecessors, Blackall stated, less controversially, that it was agreeable to God that there be variety in men's conditions.<sup>100</sup> He cited Richard Hooker's commentary on the folly of those who go 'about to persuade a Multitude that they are not so well govern'd as

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<sup>92</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 4* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), pp. 92-124 (hereafter *PD IV*); Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 7* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), p. 170 (hereafter *PD VII*).

<sup>93</sup> Blackall, *Subject's Duty*, p. 31.

<sup>94</sup> *PD I*, p. 175.

<sup>95</sup> Blackall, *Subject's Duty*, p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> Eccleshall, 'Restoration', p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> Offspring Blackall, *The Lord Bishop of Exeter's Answer to Mr. Hoadly's Letter* (London, 1709), p. 21.

<sup>98</sup> Blackall, *Answer*, pp. 29, 43.

<sup>99</sup> Blackall, *Answer*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>100</sup> Offspring Blackall, *The Rules and Measures of Alms-Giving* (London, 1708), p. 11.

they ought to be'.<sup>101</sup> Individuals are ultimately blessed because they were at ease, were quiet in mind, free from ambition, envy, anger, and revenge.<sup>102</sup> Enthusiasts, prophets, and other agents of divine missions for reforming church and state had limited means of maneuvering within such a constitution. If there were significant flaws in it, it was not to be corrected by rebellious zeal, utopian or otherwise. It was more likely to be irreparably destroyed by such an undertaking.

As a theorist of a specifically English politics, Blackall took interest in the moral and ethical basis for claims of national guilt or sin. Apart from the irritation that critics felt in the French prophets' use of English liberties to wish calamities upon England, Blackall was alone in formulating specific arguments on the matter. On several occasions he affirmed that a nation could indeed, in some measure, bear the iniquities of its generational forebears. Blackall's main point was that despite God's role in overseeing such punitive measures, the assignment of it cannot be assumed to be straightforward. Above all, observers must resist uncharitable judgments about God's presumed punishments. On the individual level, Blackall used the example of a blind man who would be judged to have been punished by God with a disability for having committed some wrongdoing either in his own time, if his blindness was acquired, or in a previous incarnation of his soul, if he was born with it.<sup>103</sup> This, for Blackall, was a rash conclusion. Rather, as Christ had indicated, on the basis of his blindness we could not assume either this man nor his parents sinned. All we could know for certain is that, in accordance with the care of God, 'there is always some other good and wise End of Providence designed to be served by it'.<sup>104</sup> There was no causal relationship between sinfulness and blindness.<sup>105</sup> He may be a good man indeed, and his affliction will allow for 'abundant Consolations' and, when in need, he will be 'refreshed and supported by the Spirit of God'.<sup>106</sup> In all such cases, where nothing could be known of providence, compassion obliged one to believe what reflected most charitably on the afflicted individual.

<sup>101</sup> Blackall, *Subject's Duty*, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> Offspring Blackall, *The Blessedness of the Poor in Spirit* (London, 1707), p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> Offspring Blackall, *A Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons* (London, 1699), pp. 2-3.

<sup>104</sup> Blackall, *Sermon*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>105</sup> Blackall, *Sermon*, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> *PD I*, p. 99.

On a national scale, even in relatively clear instances of collective guilt such as that issuing from the execution of Charles I, it was difficult to discern causal connections that would warrant perceiving direct providential punishment from God.<sup>107</sup> Blackall's argument here has the effect of frustrating the ambition of those who would target specific individuals, or specific groups of individuals, for divine vengeance. He begins by seeming to suggest the contrary:

For the Temporal Judgments of God are most commonly designed for National Punishments; and when a whole Nation deserves to be rooted out for their Scandalous Wickedness, it is indeed great Mercy and Goodness in God that he is pleased to make some few of them only Examples for a Terror to the Rest.<sup>108</sup>

Although this reads like a collective indictment on par with those of the prophets, the practical implications of this variety of punishment are a great deal less dramatic. The combination of mercy and punishment is strategic, but the formula was known only to God.<sup>109</sup> Here the principle that applied to the blind man, whose guilt or innocence could not be determined on the basis of his blindness, applied to the recipients of God's punishment: Good men will not necessarily prosper, and bad men may not necessarily suffer.<sup>110</sup> The anarchy, tyranny, and misery collectively experienced following the regicide was evidence enough of divine displeasure, and the entire country, excepting none, had assumed that burden.<sup>111</sup> The people of England had in this limited sense assumed the iniquities of their forefathers, and they were not as contented as they should have been. But despite this, England had been 'more happy than most of our Neighbour-Nations' and had 'in the main, enjoy'd a much greater Measure of Liberty and Peace, of Plenty and Prosperity than most of them have done'.<sup>112</sup> By no means did the situation and its history justify apocalyptic punishment. Consequently, to target an entire people for divine vengeance was, at the very least, to misunderstand the nature of providence. At worst it was uncharitable and immoral.

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<sup>107</sup> *PDI*, p. 388.

<sup>108</sup> Offspring Blackall, *A Sermon Preach'd Before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor* (London, 1704), p. 17.

<sup>109</sup> Blackall, *Lord Mayor*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>110</sup> Blackall, *Lord Mayor*, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Of Children's Bearing the Iniquities of Their Fathers* (London, 1709), p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Blackall, *Iniquities*, p. 16.

It follows, then, that in England there was no sin-steeped Babylon that would herald the end of the world. But how was the second coming to be understood in this context? Schwartz argued that the prophets transgressed the rational, moderate eschatology of Anglican churchmen, which was characterized by clear discourse and which did not claim inspiration on its behalf.<sup>113</sup> In an essay on John Mason, an Anglican preacher who suddenly declared that end of the world would arrive in 1694, Christopher Hill observed that by end of the seventeenth century a distinctly differently attitude to the millennium had developed, particularly with respect to its urgency.<sup>114</sup> The Age of Reason had arrived: 'It had come to this', Hill wrote.<sup>115</sup> Certainly, one of the most potent traditional features of millenarianism identified by Cohn was unquestionably absent in Blackall's eschatology, namely the assumption that an elect group will be entrusted by God to actively carry out the millennium.<sup>116</sup>

Schwartz and Hill were correct, but there is an opportunity missed by collapsing the eschatology espoused by Blackall, himself undeniably Anglican and moderate, into an inert, normative doctrine. In the *Practical Discourses* he shed light on a well known passage from the Gospel of Matthew, heavy with millenarian implications: 'Thy Kingdom Come; thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven'. According to Blackall, this should be understood as an expression of gratitude rather than a petition or a call to action. In one sense, the kingdom of God was 'already here' and 'not lately begun, but was from all eternity, and it will continue forever'.<sup>117</sup> This kingdom, the internal kingdom of the heart, was one of the two meanings which ought to be drawn from the concept. Blackall related this kingdom back to the Church, where the profession of true religion was propagated and which was governed and preserved by the holy spirit.<sup>118</sup> The temporal enlargement of the godly church was an extension of the kingdom of grace, though on the condition that '*Christ* does not only rule in the World, by

<sup>113</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, pp. 40, 53.

<sup>114</sup> Christopher Hill, 'John Mason and the End of the World', in *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century* (London, 1958), p. 316.

<sup>115</sup> Hill, 'John Mason', p. 322.

<sup>116</sup> Cohn, *Pursuit*, p. 263.

<sup>117</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 5* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), pp. 285-87 (hereafter *PD V*).

<sup>118</sup> *PD V*, pp. 289-90.

Mens outwardly professing his Religion', but also 'in their Hearts'.<sup>119</sup>

The second meaning to be drawn from it is its more generally understood external sense, the kingdom of glory that will arrive at the end of the world. This state of things cannot, or should not, be the subject of a petition or request:

[T]o pray absolutely that God would put an end to this State of things, that he would cut the Years of this World short, is in Effect to pray for the destruction of Sinners; and such a Petition as this cannot be put up to God without Breach of Charity towards Men.<sup>120</sup>

Blackall here referred once more to the objectionable morality of apocalyptic fantasies. We ought to desire the salvation of sinners, in Blackall's view, rather than their destruction, and to abide by God's 'Long-suffering towards them, which we hope will bring them to repentance'.<sup>121</sup> Blackall preferred to link the two kingdoms, internal and external, in a way that is eschatologically revealing:

[W]e are first to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom of Grace, and then for the coming of his Kingdom of Glory; we are first to pray that the Gospel may be preached to, and heartily receiv'd by all; and then, when the Number of the Elect is filled up, we may pray that his Kingdom of Glory may also come.<sup>122</sup>

The practical upshot of such a scenario was that it rendered the end of the world nearly hypothetical, or at most a form of didacticism. It required that individuals improve the state of their own inward grace and encourage the improvement of it in others. But short of the extraordinary arrival of the 'blessed time' when grace, by means of sanctification, is perfected in this way, neither the hope nor the agitation for the end of the world should be expressed by pious Christians. The time had not arrived.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>119</sup> *PD V*, p. 295.

<sup>120</sup> *PD V*, p. 299.

<sup>121</sup> *PD V*, p. 299.

<sup>122</sup> *PD V*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>123</sup> There is an additional distinction that ought to be made with respect to how the end of the world was understood in the seventeenth century, between a 'spiritual' and an 'historical' Final Judgment. The former emphasized the internal significations of the second coming, whereby Christ would appear spiritually in one's heart. The latter insisted that Christ will return in the flesh externally at an undetermined point in time in the future. Both of these currents could be found within the Church of England. Blackall, at least in principle, indicated that the Judgment would in fact occur on earth, placing him among those who believed, more conventionally, in the historical Final Judgment. For a more detailed discussion of these points, see David Wootton, 'John Donne's Religion of Love', in John Brooke and Ian Maclean (eds.), *Heterodoxy in Early*



On all counts, this could not be more remote from the millenarian mentality of Lacy or Marion. Instead, the critics thought in terms of specific and concrete political and religious circumstances that shaped their own country's history. Foremost among these factors were those concerning recent political debates on legitimacy, resistance, and change. Equally important were long-standing features of the country's Protestant heritage and the ethical expectations that issued from it. For Blackall and his fellow critics, there were very clear political, religious, and moral reasons for rejecting the millenarian mentality. Thus there can be no denying Schwartz and Hill that a profound change in tone was current in England in the eighteenth century. But there is a wider setting for the arguments asserted by critics than the coming, or indeed the arrival, of the secularizing age of reason.

## II

The debate about whether prophecy and miraculous activity were any longer possible was in a sense over by the early-eighteenth century for Anglicans. With good reason John Lacy complained that it was by then universally believed that revelations had ceased.<sup>124</sup> Garrett insisted that the matter should not occupy historians who should instead mind the symbolic and performative qualities of the prophets and their critics. For Garrett, the question of whether the prophets were 'frauds' should, in fact, be irrelevant.<sup>125</sup> But that question was given space in the critiques advanced by observers of the prophets, and it is rather lofty for an academic to summarily dismiss it for failing to meet the needs of a twentieth-century frame of analysis. To Schwartz's credit, both of his books cover this ground, but it is limited to the terms that satisfied his aims. There the arguments developed by critics are categorized according to four groupings: prophecy as a product of delusion, disease, enthusiasm, or demonic possession.<sup>126</sup>

This is not, however, the whole story. English critics engaged with claims of prophecy on terms preferred by the French prophets and their followers, and for the most part their fraudulence, as products indeed of the categories described by Schwartz, was assumed. But this is the beginning

*Modern Science and Religion* (Oxford, 2005), 31-59.

<sup>124</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 477.

<sup>125</sup> Garrett, *Spirit Possession*, p. 21.

<sup>126</sup> Schwartz, *Knaves*, pp. 82-83.

rather than the end of the issue. Many critics, particularly Blackall, took the opportunity to elaborate on how this variety of prophecy - not so much as to its truth or falsity, but as a social reality - related to religious belief and practice generally. One means of characterizing it for many critics was as an art or a trade. Prophecy of the French variety was to be understood as a studied craft, with masters and apprentices. Even if it had little or no theological content, the prophetic art could have deleterious effects on the religious belief of those who were involved in it. Again Blackall is most explicit in attempting to explain its currency in English terms by relating it to the Protestant imperative of belief as an expression of individual choice rather than the result of external coercion. Finally, Blackall asserted that for all the prophets introduced in England from France or drawn from England's own enthusiastic tradition, their prophecies ought to be ignored on the basis of a kind of cost-benefit analysis: the certain ruin that a false prophet will initiate in church and state would be worse than ignoring whatever unforeseen benefits a true prophet would bring.

All critics were very willing to debate the claims of prophecy that were foundational to how the prophets themselves understood their own mission. The great device in this case was a specific prophecy of Joel (2:28-30), verses which were of the highest importance during the initial prophetic activity of the Camisards in southern France:

Je répandrai mon Esprit sur toute chair,  
 Vos fils et vos filles prophétiseront,  
 Vos anciens auront des songes,  
 Vos jeunes gens des visions.  
 Même sur mes serviteurs, hommes et femmes  
 En ces jours-là, je répandrai mon Esprit.  
 Je ferai voir des prodiges...  
 Tous ceux qui invoqueront le nom de Yavé seront sauvés.<sup>127</sup>

In France the prophesying of sons and daughters was understood literally and witnessed first-hand by the contributors to the *Théâtre Sacré*. Mathieu Boissier spoke specifically of young girls and boys prophesying in the Cevennes.<sup>128</sup> According to Isabeau Charras, '[I]e nommé Jean Héraut, de

<sup>127</sup> Almeras, *Révolte*, p. 47.

<sup>128</sup> Maximilien Misson (ed.), *Le Théâtre Sacré des Cevennes; Ou, Récit de Diverses Merveilles Nouvellement Opérées Dans cette Partie de la Province de Languedoc: Première Partie* (London, 1707), pp. 9-14.

nostre voisinage, & quatre ou cinq de ses Enfans avec lui avoient des Inspirations. Les deux plus jeunes, estoient âgez l'un de sept ans, & l'autre de cinq & demi, quand ils receurent le Don: je les ai vûs bien des fois dans leurs Ecstases'.<sup>129</sup> Jean Vernett indicated how extraordinarily young the prophets could be, testifying of '[l]'enfant âgé 13 à 14 mois, étoit emmailloté dans le Berceau, & il n'avoit encore jamais parlé de lui même, ni marché'. He continued:

Quand j'entrai avec mes Amis, l'Enfant parloit distinctement en Francois, d'une voix affez haute, veû son age; en sorte qu'il étoit aisé de l'entendre par toute la Chambre. Il exhortoit (comme les autres que j'avois vus dans l'Inspiration) à faire des oeuvres de Repentance.<sup>130</sup>

In the preface of his English translation of the *Théâtre Sacré*, Lacy declared that the Christian spirit survived in the Cévennes and the prophecy of Joel was there unfolding.<sup>131</sup> In an apology published in 1708 he further defended the literal reading of Joel, pointing out that he had witnessed children, in London, compelled by spiritual ecstasy, 'to Prayer, Praising of God, and Exhortations to Repentance, far above their capacities'.<sup>132</sup>

Huguenot contemporaries would not only have been impressed by the spectacle of God pouring out his spirit over all flesh, young and old alike, but they would also have not failed to notice that the holy spirit there opted to speak in French. By the seventeenth century the cultural importance accorded to popular biblical and liturgical texts of Calvinism in southern France had the concomitant effect of establishing an almost holy significance on the French *langue d'oïl*.<sup>133</sup> As Le Roy Ladurie remarked, 'les inspirés cévenols, quand ils parlent *en langues*, en langues étrangères, sous l'action du Saint-Esprit, s'expriment couramment *en francais*, a l'émerveillement des populations patoisantes'.<sup>134</sup>

The spiritual signification the French language as a feature of the prophecies were lost in England. Lacy reproduced the French formula he

<sup>129</sup> Misson, *Théâtre Sacré*, p. 96.

<sup>130</sup> Misson, *Théâtre Sacré*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>131</sup> John Lacy (ed.), *A Cry From the Desert: Or, Testimonials of the Miraculous Things Lately Come to Pass in the Cevennes* (London, 1707), p. vi.

<sup>132</sup> John Lacy, *A Relation of the Dealings of God to His Unworthy Servant John Lacy* (London, 1708), p. 31.

<sup>133</sup> Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysans de Languedoc*, p. 613.

<sup>134</sup> Le Roy Ladurie, *Paysane de Languedoc*, pp. 613-14.

encountered in the *Théâtre Sacré* for the prophecies he reported and witnessed by opening the rare French warning with 'mes enfants', but generally opted for the English 'my child'.<sup>135</sup> He added the kind of linguistic diversity that would impress the English, reporting encountering exotic combinations of English and Hebrew, for example.<sup>136</sup> But if any of this was intended to replicate the mystical effect that French had on the peasants of the Cévennes, it failed, at least for critics, to gain traction. For them it resembled the familiar enthusiastic habit of speaking in tongues. The author of the *Clavis Prophetica* expressed extreme mocking scepticism about such reports, suggesting that the learned Fatio saved the honour of 'Brother Fage' by affirming for his audience that he spoke Hebrew when, in 'one of his Prophetick Fits, [he] talk'd in a manner so confus'd that no one understood a word he said'.<sup>137</sup> Calamy stated flatly that he did not take the speaking of languages 'not distinctly known before' to be sufficient evidence for true prophecy.<sup>138</sup>

But if the use of language failed to impress the English, there were features of Joel's prophecy that did have deeper resonances. The verse yields an especially durable figurative message that seemed to call upon a reinvigoration of the priesthood of all believers: the 'pouring out' (*répandre*) of the holy spirit. The inspired Abraham Whitro combined it spectacularly with levelling ideas and a belief in the coming of the millennium. Quoting Joel that in the last days God will pour out his spirit, he asked, '[i]s not these the latter days?' The learned, according to Whitro, who occupy themselves with man-made arts and sciences, as well as those churches, deficient in spirit, that deny Joel, will learn that God is no respecter of persons.<sup>139</sup> For Lacy and Richard Bulkeley, another early supporter of the prophets, this was an opportunity to contrast the Church of England's limiting of inspiration, a novel doctrine according to Lacy, to the unpredictable holy spirit of the prophets.<sup>140</sup> Lacy directed his probing questions to an unspecified 'you', but the Church's complicity in prescribing the holy spirit is obvious enough: 'You insist that the Holy Ghost should only vouchsafe his graces, and

<sup>135</sup> *PW II*, p. 110.

<sup>136</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 109.

<sup>137</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 50.

<sup>139</sup> Abraham Whitro, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit, Spoken by the Mouth of the Servant of God, Abraham Whitro* (London, 1709), pp. 173, 286, 309-14.

<sup>140</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 380.

occultly too ... You would have him do no more, than silently draw Souls to Heaven, and leave you Earth to make the most of it for your selves'. How, he asked, 'wou'd you have him govern, among Christians? What? Not openly? No: You'd have him follow your Prayers, your Sermons, and be restrain'd to your Persons'.<sup>141</sup> Lacy doubted that the men of the Church could teach better than the holy spirit 'can do, and has done, in the *Cévennes*, and here'.<sup>142</sup>

The contrasts Bulkeley drew with the methods and assumptions of the Church were more explicit and withering. According to Bulkeley the clergy was guilty of preventing the teaching of the holy spirit. Even worse, if disingenuously, Bulkeley accused them of teaching that the holy spirit was no longer a necessary feature of Christian worship.<sup>143</sup> Referring precisely to the sober Anglican testimony of spirit developed by Restoration thinkers, Bulkeley examined the 'most seemingly strong Argument' of those who would divest prophesying of supernatural qualities by understanding it only as 'ordinary Praising, Praying, or Preaching'.<sup>144</sup> But to define prophecy in a such a way was to confound the scriptural meaning of the words signifying 'teacher' and 'prophet', which were in multiple places 'put in contradistinction to each other'.<sup>145</sup> For the Church to claim the one for itself and to deny the other of existing at all was to commit a terrible kind of pride.<sup>146</sup> If these were the spiritual gifts offered by the Church, 'it is in a dark Lanthorn, neither warming nor inlightning, nor seen'.<sup>147</sup> Bulkeley could not imagine how Christ's church on earth was to triumph if not by the 'pouring out of the Spirit of God on all flesh'.<sup>148</sup>

The most innovative, and seemingly unanswered, argument on behalf of the holy spirit's appearance in all flesh was mounted by Lacy in his formal treatise on prophecy, *The General Delusion of Christians* (1713). There Lacy drew attention to the original Greek usages of the word 'spirit' in an effort to demonstrate that the extraordinary spiritual gifts bestowed upon

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<sup>141</sup> *PW III*, p. 20.

<sup>142</sup> *PW III*, p. 155.

<sup>143</sup> Richard Bulkeley, *An Impartial Account of the Prophets: In a Letter to a Friend* (London, 1707), pp. 3-4.

<sup>144</sup> Richard Bulkeley, *An Answer to Several Treatises Lately Publish'd on the Subject of the Prophets: The First Part* (London, 1708), p. 16.

<sup>145</sup> Bulkeley, *Answer*, p. 18.

<sup>146</sup> Bulkeley, *Impartial Account*, p. 4.

<sup>147</sup> Bulkeley, *Answer*, p. 22.

<sup>148</sup> Bulkeley, *Impartial Account*, p. 5.

the early church have not ceased. The contemporary term 'enthusiasm' literally means possession by God. But Lacy argued that the meaning signified by its Greek synonym 'pneumaticos', that is, one who infused with the divine spirit or breath, had a wider and more instructive set of associations. As in, for example, the Gospel of John, Christ '*breathed (or blowed) upon his Disciples, and said, receive ye a holy Spirit*'.<sup>149</sup> The pneuma, a breath of wind or air, may be understood to infuse the pneumatical flesh with an extraordinary spirit. Consequently, pneumaticos was used in the New Testament to mean a person 'possessed by a spirit'. In the early church the pneumatics, those who were thought to have received extraordinary gifts of the spirit, were allowed a liberty to prophesy.<sup>150</sup> They emerged from all ranks and some cases the pneumatics were even 'the most abject and contemptible among the People, [including] Women and Children [who] did prophesie without Restraint'.<sup>151</sup> Lacy also appears to have been attracted to the metaphor of respiration as a process that was continual as long as the organism subsists: a certain and consistent current of the holy pneuma as a necessary feature of holy living. He found his way back to the metaphor at various points: '[A]s the human Breath passing thro' a Trumpet speaks, so the Spirit celebrates God in Psalms, and Hymns, and Prayers, passing thro' Persons (*Pneumatophorous*) carried of the Spirit'.<sup>152</sup> And again, this time using nautical imagery:

As the Sea needs the perpetual Influx of the Rivers, else it would dry up, so would the Wickedness of the World consume it, were it not for (written) Law of God, and the *Prophets*, from which (as from Fountains of living Water) do flow, and *perpetually* issue forth Consolation, Mercy and Righteousness.<sup>153</sup>

Though not within the scope of the present essay, this belongs firmly to the period's history of the rehabilitation of enthusiasm, along with Shaftesbury's *Letter*, whereby the concept was re-associated with creative qualities, spiritual as well as artistic. Schwartz indicated that Lacy's *General Delusion* was a favourite of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, and

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<sup>149</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 198.

<sup>150</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 223.

<sup>151</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 135.

<sup>152</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 203.

<sup>153</sup> Lacy, *General Delusion*, p. 202.

perhaps it warrants more attention from historians.<sup>154</sup> Certainly, Lacy attached some very clear images, suggesting abundance, ubiquity, and necessity, to Joel's prophecy of the holy spirit pouring forth.

Calamy, Blackall, and several of the anonymous critics attempted to show that the prophecy of Joel had either already happened or would not happen in the way Lacy and Bulkeley expected. Calamy agreed that the prophecy implied that God will give 'a Plentiful Measure of his Spirit', in a 'larger Measure, and a greater Abundance than ever'.<sup>155</sup> But he sought to place the prophecy in a specific historical context by turning to St. Peter's use of the prophecy in Acts 2. If Joel's original prophecy seemed ambiguous in its temporal reference, indicating only that 'it shall come to pass afterwards' (*après cela*), Peter's use of it in the New Testament fixed in it time. According to Calamy, we should understand Peter's citing of Joel in the context of the Pentecost and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The first two dozen verses of Acts 2 concern the evident presence of the spirit in Christ's disciples, to the amusement and wonder of the spectators, and Peter's defence of their inspired conduct as the pouring out of the holy spirit described by Joel.<sup>156</sup> Admitting that Peter's only modification of the original passage, his replacement of Joel's term 'afterwards' with his own phrase 'in the last days', has been a source of confusion, Calamy believed it should be understood in two ways:

Tho' it cannot be deny'd that we are sometimes thereby to understand, the times that should immediately precede the Consummation of all things, and the general Judgment, yet in many places we are to understand it of the Last days of *Jerusalem*, and the Jewish State. For the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the rejection of the *Jews*, is reckon'd the End of the Old World.<sup>157</sup>

Peter, himself inspired, knew that this particular combination of events would unfold in secular time in this way, beginning with the prophecy of Joel, through the Day of the Pentecost, and to the end of the old covenant. He knew that Joel 'foretold just such an Effusion of the Spirit as this; and that at this time'.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, the 'Modern Pretenders' also appealed to

<sup>154</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 207.

<sup>155</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 13.

<sup>156</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 14.

<sup>157</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 14.

<sup>158</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 15.

'Joel, as St. Peter did, but with this difference, that they had no warrant for such an Appeal, and at the same time they contradicted the Scriptures by pretending to make one'.<sup>159</sup>

The anonymous authors of the *Dissuasive Against Enthusiasm* and the *Devil of Delphos* were for the most part content to point to Calamy's rejection of Joel as a satisfactory rejoinder to the prophets. The author of *Devil* defended it as strong and thorough.<sup>160</sup> The *Dissuasive* insisted that the effusion of the holy spirit was indeed fulfilled in St. Peter's time, and in any case the effusion itself must be understood in a 'restrained' sense, whereby 'all flesh' means 'all men' and 'all men' means certain 'ranks' of men.<sup>161</sup> This author's emphasis on ranks seems to depart from Calamy's preferred scriptural emphasis, perhaps an extension of the one's Anglicanism and the other's Presbyterianism.<sup>162</sup> Blackall's commentary on the second chapter of the book of Joel did not light upon its predictions at all, but emphasized instead the general inward spiritual transformations that are required by the prophet. Blackall impressed the penitential functions of prayer and fasting on the reader and concluded by noting that Joel required inward rather than outward expressions of contrition.<sup>163</sup>

The proclivity for citing Joel was inherited from the prophets of southern France and English critics were willing to confront them on those terms. But English critics also had their own non-scriptural devices and analogies for understanding the prophetic phenomena. Foremost among these was the contention that, for all their clamour about true religion, the prophets practiced nothing more than a studied trade of prophecy. For Greenblatt, this would be an example of authority seizing 'control of the commentary'<sup>164</sup> on charismatic prophecy, by associating it with self-conscious theatricality, in this case that issuing from engagement in economic commerce, rather than the spontaneous authenticity of spiritual

<sup>159</sup> Calamy, *Caveat*, p. 15.

<sup>160</sup> Anon., *Devil of Delphos*, p. 107.

<sup>161</sup> Anon., *Dissuasive*, pp. 24-28.

<sup>162</sup> Calamy's language is occasionally suggestive of his dissent from the Church. Whereas Anglican critics typically berate the prophets for substituting the apostolic institutions and its traditions for fanaticism, Calamy laments instead that Lacy, a former Presbyterian, had exchanged 'scriptural for fanatical' religion. See Calamy, *Caveat*, preface.

<sup>163</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 6* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), p. 90 (hereafter *PD VI*); *PD I*, p. 134.

<sup>164</sup> Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare and the Exorcists', p. 109.



commerce, which will be examined in the final section below. But critics were not simply blotting out the legitimacy of marginalized charismatic individuals. Rather they were providing an intellectual resource, a language, for rendering such behaviour intelligible to concerned observers. Of false prophets generally, Blackall referred to the 'Arts and Methods which they used to ingratiate themselves with the People', to seduce them into receiving 'as Truth whatever comes from their Mouth, without thinking it needful to trouble themselves to examine the Grounds and Reasons it is built on'.<sup>165</sup> Such methods entailed, for example, preaching on the intersections of streets, where the prophets would encounter a steady stream of curious onlookers. Another is affecting a 'flaming Zeal' for religion, despite Blackall's judgment that 'the worse the Cause is which Men are engag'd in, so much the more zealous they commonly are for it'.<sup>166</sup>

It is possible that the condemnation of the prophets issued by the Savoy congregation helped give this trope currency. Referring to its interactions with Fage, the Savoy congregation declared that

[a]nother Blunder F--- made, was, that being press'd to keep to his Profession of a Weaver, he said, *That he had a much better Trade, which he would not forsake.* By this the Consistory perceived that these Gentlemen made a Trade of Prophecyng.<sup>167</sup>

The consistory additionally provided a letter from Geneva stating to the effect that Cavalier, described as an 'unfortunate wretch', played '*the same Game now, which he did whichever he has pass'd*'. The letter claimed that Cavalier 'plaid some of his Pranks, even among the Papists, [and] he was a Rogue every where'.<sup>168</sup> One strain of this idea that prophecy did not require biblical or medical diagnoses but could be understood largely on these occupational terms had its origin in France but found significant currency in England. As early as 1685, Nicolas de Lamoignon Basville, the superintendent of Languedoc, believed he had identified 'l'école de prophètes', operated by glassworkers from Geneva who taught children the

<sup>165</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 8* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), pp. 170-71 (hereafter *PD VIII*).

<sup>166</sup> *PD VIII*, p. 172.

<sup>167</sup> Proceedings of the Consistory of the Savoy, *An Account of the Lives and Behaviour of the Three French Prophets* (London, 1708), p. 14.

<sup>168</sup> Savoy, *Lives and Behaviour*, p. 25.

affectations of prophecy.<sup>169</sup> Although Knox's use of this report is agnostic as to its truth, Schwartz put it down as a hoax.<sup>170</sup>

Whatever the case, it transitioned smoothly into the English critiques. Taking his cue from the Savoy consistory, Francis Hutchinson hoped the prophets would take the congregation's gentle recommendation to procure a more honest form of work.<sup>171</sup> He reiterated the view that the French exiles had been at this trade for years, adding the unsubstantiated rumour that Marion, in France, did double duty as a Catholic spy. This would make him a bad prophet, certainly, but also a dishonest trader: 'Mr. *M--n's* Conduct in this matter doth by no means look like the Uprightness and Sincerity of a Prophet, but very much like the Actions of one that takes Money on both sides.'<sup>172</sup> The *Clavis*, which cited Thomas Hobbes's definition of a prophet as a distracted person who speaks unintelligibly, was candid about the studied quality of prophecy, opining that the French exiles had learned the trade in their homeland and made an adequate livelihood by means of it. In London, meanwhile, 'there are several who can exactly imitate'em, and who could, if they had a mind to it, set up for another Company of Prophets'.<sup>173</sup> Although Jonathan Swift's 'Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit' was published three years before the prophets created a stir in London, it reflected the language of trade that was already conspicuous in England. Swift outlined the historiography of enthusiasm, variously understood as divine inspiration, a medical problem, or satanic possession, and decided that writers of erudition had already discoursed sufficiently on these three causes.<sup>174</sup> A fourth kind of enthusiasm, defined as 'purely an effect of artifice', had received scant attention from scholars. Its obscurity, according to Swift, was a result of its history as an esoteric trade which, like any trade, had become only recently viable by the ambitious efforts of the men who improved it:

[T]hough it is an art of great antiquity, yet, having been confined to few persons, it long wanted those advancements and refinements which it afterwards met with, since it has grown so epidemic, and

<sup>169</sup> Almeras, *Révolte*, p. 47.

<sup>170</sup> Knox, *Enthusiasm*, p. 358; Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 8.

<sup>171</sup> Hutchinson, *Short View*, p. 21.

<sup>172</sup> Hutchinson, *Short View*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>173</sup> Anon., *Clavis*, p. 3.

<sup>174</sup> Jonathan Swift, 'A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit', in *A Tale of a Tub* (London, 1704), pp. 290-91.

fallen into so many cultivating hands.<sup>175</sup>

A nation of merchants, refiners, and cultivators would practice such a trade in a way that was commensurate with its aptitudes. More precisely, in this case, it will do so effectively, as it is was so 'performed by our British workmen'.<sup>176</sup>

Despite the evidently lucrative nature of prophecy, Blackall made it clear that their prophecies could have no meaningful currency in a Protestant country that had choice, not coercion, as a fundamental religious and political principle. This concept had been an important factor in fortifying the Church of England's *via media* after the Restoration and, as shown in chapter one, it had been formulated most famously by the Anglican thinker, William Chillingworth. In this view, the ecstasies of the enthusiasts who settled on doctrine according to their own inner fancies and the fideism of the Roman Catholics who submitted to the authoritarian demands of their superiors, are both alien to the Anglican who would choose by exercising reason.

Blackall used this formula as a basis for questioning the utility of prophecy, whether true or false. He placed the prophets and their followers into the category of Christians who were unwilling to take the trouble to reflect critically on their own beliefs. With such people, 'nothing but seeing is believing'. They need to witness the holy spirit, indeed spirits generally, and its literal manifestations. For them, 'the World must be filled with *Ghosts*'.<sup>177</sup> They did not wish to hear of Moses and the old Prophets and 'of things that were done a great while ago', but instead must 'have fresh Revelations, and new Miracles, or Messengers from the Dead, or else [they] will not believe'.<sup>178</sup> Blackall, however, made it clear that the problem with this mentality was that it cheapened religion by turning its acceptance into a form of coercion. The new miracles that are claimed by enthusiasts were offered as evidence, indeed proof, of divine affirmation.<sup>179</sup> But what did this accomplish except marginalize the acts of human reason, doubt, understanding, and faith that informed Protestant belief? Faith in God,

<sup>175</sup> Swift, 'Discourse', p. 291.

<sup>176</sup> Swift, 'Discourse', p. 291.

<sup>177</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, pp. 21-24.

<sup>178</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, p. 25.

<sup>179</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, p. 20.

wrote Blackall, 'is a firm Belief of the Truth of his Promises and Threatenings, tho' we do not see a present Performance of them'.<sup>180</sup> It could not be conceived that an individual endowed with 'Understanding and a Power of chusing and refusing, should knowingly chuse all Misery rather than all Happiness'.<sup>181</sup> This is the language of choice and coercion employed by enthusiasts and their defenders turned on its head: the prophet, with miracles ready-to-hand, offered witnesses no choice at all to refuse their disclosure of immanent divine presence.

New prophecy was contrary, then, to the main currents of Anglicanism. But Blackall had another argument at his disposal to deflate the miraculous claims of the French prophets. As in the previous argument, Blackall assumed that Christianity, as established in England, was sufficiently complete in doctrine and practice and did not require additional revelation. But for argument's sake, he allowed for the possibility that true prophets might indeed appear in England with new divine information. Balancing the positives and negatives of receiving or rejecting prophets, he concluded that it would

probably be a Mistake of much worse Consequence, to receive as an inspired Prophet a man that is not Inspired, than it would be not to receive as such, a Man that is really Inspired: For if we receive as an Inspired Prophet a Man that is not Inspired, we run a hazard of being deceiv'd by him to our Eternal Ruin.<sup>182</sup>

Given the satisfactory nature of the Church and its settled doctrine, we will reject the truly inspired new prophet only at the risk of failing to learn 'some Truths which might be upon some Accounts useful to be know, but without the Knowledge of which we may do very well'.<sup>183</sup> No such knowledge could conceivably be necessary for a people already acquainted with Moses, Christ, the apostles, and the ordained teachers of the 'establish'd Church of which it was our Lot to be born members'.<sup>184</sup>

The critical reaction to the prophets in the England thus extended beyond Schwartz's basic morphology. Most striking is the England-oriented nature of the critiques. Modern historians have been dazzled by the symbols

<sup>180</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, p. 37.

<sup>181</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>182</sup> Blackall, *New Prophets*, p. 9.

<sup>183</sup> Blackall, *New Prophets*, p. 9.

<sup>184</sup> Blackall, *New Revelations*, p. 64; *PD VIII*, p. 180.

and spectacles of the *inspirés* in London. But commentators such as Calamy and Blackall took little interest in the French prophets as a French phenomenon, and believed that simply by pointing out their incongruence with English history, religion, and culture, they might counter their influence. Blackall, in particular, illustrated the wide consequences and references that prophecy, understood as a force for stirring enthusiasm or as a potent factor in unsettling received doctrine, might have for observers who were not as fixed as Schwartz to an interlocking delusion-disease-possession-enthusiasm explanatory grid.

### III

The final point that the prophets and their critics attended to was personal piety. For critics, especially Blackall, there was a significant distinction to be made between the private personal worship of Anglicanism, which he outlined extensively in the *Practical Discourses*, and the public, indeed performative, tendencies of the prophets. Historians have undoubtedly preferred to focus on French prophecy as a public spectacle. But contemporaries saw the two expressions as connected, each entailing their own respective habits and accomplishments. The real issue in contention was access to the holy spirit. The French prophets joined with the English radical and nonconformist tradition of rejecting the structures and customs of the Church as inadequate channels for the infinite freedom of the holy spirit. It followed from this that Anglican ritual, prayer, and practice were barriers to true piety. Although defenders of the Church of England very explicitly relied on the standards established by Restoration churchmen, it was Blackall who offers the most penetrating analysis of the terms and practices, public and private, relating to the holy spirit. Since he was hoping to build a system of moral principles in his *Practical Discourses*, where most of these ideas are developed, for the most part he avoided mentioning individuals and groups by name. But their relevance to the French prophets, and to the English radical Protestant tradition to which they were enjoined, is evident.

There was unquestionably a strong theatrical element to the public gatherings of the French prophets, in France as well as in England. In the

original *Théâtre Sacré*, Jean Cavalier reported of feeling mesmerized by the sights, sounds, and atmosphere he encountered the moment he walked into his first assembly:

Je ne fus pas si tost entré dan le grange où tout ce monde estoit, que j'aperçûs un petit garçon couché à la renverse, qui avoit des Agitations surprenantes, Cela m'épouvanta en quelque maniere.

The young 'Devin' declared that several present in the company were there to scoff and would be found out. Believing himself to have been the one identified for discovery, and in terrible fear for his safety, he desired to depart but was afraid of 'les Devins qui estoient a la porte'.<sup>185</sup> Cavalier was overcome by the emotional impact of attending this assembly and soon yielded to the prophetic and psychic powers he believed were there demonstrated.

The English assemblies exhibit similar theatrical characteristics. The most notorious of these was conducted by Lacy and was detailed in his *Warnings* as well as by his enemies who reported it as evidence of deceit. Present before an audience of disciples and strangers, Lacy struck one Elizabeth Grey blind, restored her sight, and then invited the audience to witness her asphyxiation, nearly to the point of death, before curing her of the mysterious bone-like object in her neck that appeared to obstruct her breathing.<sup>186</sup> Many more details of this event were disclosed by the critical anonymous author of the *Honest Quaker*. The ceremony opened on a curious note when Richard Bulkeley demanded to have the names of all attendees written down.<sup>187</sup> When the miracles were supposedly performed by Lacy and Grey, the latter an actress by trade,<sup>188</sup> one sceptical audience member openly speculated about the possibility of fraud. The *Honest Quaker* described Bulkeley, Lacy, and Grey badgering the dissenter with threats of divine punishment.<sup>189</sup> A hostile account of a different assembly, also led by Lacy, described a less divisive assortment of collective ecstatic

<sup>185</sup> Misson, *Théâtre Sacré*, p. 38-40.

<sup>186</sup> *PW II*, pp. 107-08, 195.

<sup>187</sup> Anon., *The Honest Quaker: Or, The Forgeries and Impostures of the Pretended French Prophets and Their Abettors* (London, 1707), pp. 2-3.

<sup>188</sup> Richard Kingston, *Enthusiastick Impostures, No Divinely Inspir'd Prophets: The Second Part* (London, 1709), 7-8.

<sup>189</sup> Anon., *Honest Quaker*, pp. 7-9.

declarations.<sup>190</sup>

Blackall expressed suspicion of precisely this sort of sensational assembly. According to Blackall, public worship should always assume a certain importance as a form of fellowship, but private worship was generally to be preferred when communing with God. It should, in fact, be as private and unadorned as possible.<sup>191</sup> This would protect the communicant from the hypocrisy of 'aiming and designing to get Praise and Applause, and Credit to themselves, by the outward Performance of the Duties and Exercises of religious Worship'.<sup>192</sup> When Christ commanded that when praying, one must '*enter into thy Closet*', he did not forbid public worship, but rather commanded its private counterpart. When carried out in the Church in an orderly manner, public worship would 'tend to the Advancement of God's Honour, and the Credit of Religion'.<sup>193</sup> But by recoiling from both the adorned style of worship and the mechanic preacher who prayed on the '*Corners of the Streets*', Blackall discretely linked the practices of both Roman Catholics and Protestant enthusiasts.<sup>194</sup> This was likewise true in his use of the obscure term 'battology', the unthinking repetition and multiplication of words, also to be avoided.<sup>195</sup> Whether following the formal rules of Catholic prayer or contributing to the ecstatic articulations heard at enthusiastic assemblies, the battologizer satisfied the conditions of something other than the demands of honest, personal contact with God.<sup>196</sup> Public worship, even at its best, could carry one only so far to God. Although it was 'more glorious to God' and a good example to others, private worship is more conducive to a plainer testimony of belief in God's omniscience.<sup>197</sup> One will be more inclined to confess 'secret sins' in one's closet with the door shut, allowing only for the holy spirit's access to one's mind.<sup>198</sup>

Henry Nicholson, a former devotee of the French prophets turned Anglican, offered insight into what animated the enthusiast in private and public settings. After becoming deeply impressed by the supernatural

<sup>190</sup> Anon., *The French Prophets Mad Sermon* (London, 1708), pp. 2-5.

<sup>191</sup> *PD V*, p. 84.

<sup>192</sup> *PD V*, p. 91.

<sup>193</sup> *PD V*, p. 101.

<sup>194</sup> *PD V*, p. 91.

<sup>195</sup> *PD V*, pp. 125-27.

<sup>196</sup> *PD V*, pp. 125-27.

<sup>197</sup> *PD V*, pp. 107-09.

<sup>198</sup> *PD V*, p. 109.

activity he encountered at a series of meetings with the prophets, for a period of six weeks he

could neither see any of the Motions of the Prophets, or even think on them, without some irregular Motions, caused by some such involuntary Instigations, as the Nerves are affected withal when we behold a Person yawning, to imitate the Motion we see in another.<sup>199</sup>

Nicholson wrote that during this period he was seized by violent agitations even when entering his closet for private devotions.<sup>200</sup> Others who claimed to be inspired reported to Nicholson that they had similar experiences during private moments. Nicholson explained the collective ecstasy of public assemblies by what he calls 'harmonizing', whereby the attendants affected 'one another by some certain *Tones* and *Accents* of their Voices, by which they raise each others *Spirits* and *Fancies* to an uncommon Height'.<sup>201</sup> Nicholson fully credited Anglican piety with curing the agitations he experienced in private. To the approval of Blackall, surely, Nicholson indicated that by the use of a 'well-composed Form of Prayer' in his private devotions and attendance at public prayers, his convulsions ceased, 'from which I thank God I am now perfectly free'.<sup>202</sup> But had Blackall read this diplomatic and congenial personal testimony, he might have noticed that even Nicholson's private agitations had theatrical elements. Sometimes fearing that he might be 'dashed against a Table' during his episodes, he 'repeated often the Words, *Lord Jesus*, so loud, that I was heard all over the house'.<sup>203</sup> Blackall would likely have averred that the public element of this spectacle would prevent it from meeting Christ's expectation of quiet, exclusive worship, in the closet with the door shut.<sup>204</sup>

Blackall, like Nicholson, did defend the Anglican testimony of spirit by drawing upon the conventions established by the likes of Edward

<sup>199</sup> Henry Nicholson, *The Falsehood of the New Prophets Manifested* (London, 1708), p. 14.

<sup>200</sup> Nicholson, *Falsehood*, p. 12.

<sup>201</sup> Nicholson, *Falsehood*, p. 14.

<sup>202</sup> Nicholson, *Falsehood*, p. 13.

<sup>203</sup> Nicholson, *Falsehood*, p. 12-13.

<sup>204</sup> This reflects an emphasis on a notion of privacy which, according to Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, 'became stronger as nuclear family cohesion developed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries'. In general it was a desire for detachment, and here is conveyed in a retreat to secluded closets and other closed spaces, often facilitated by the spatial design of living quarters, for reading and devotion. See Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 231, 243.



Stillingfleet and Henry Hammond, but also gave it its most thorough elaboration. In their response to the prophets, several Anglican critics insisted that the holy spirit was neither seen nor sensibly felt. Like Hammond a generation before him, George Hickes indicated that the ordinary gifts of God were the 'moral Virtues insensibly wrought in our Hearts by the assistance of the Holy Ghost'. These were 'gentle, secret Operations upon our Souls'.<sup>205</sup> George Keith, by now converted from Quaker to Anglican, thought the assumptions of Lacy and the prophets rendered the entire Protestant ministry, its traditions, and the scriptures useless.<sup>206</sup> These structures facilitated the Christian's capacity to thoughtfully, with proper guidance, consider the 'soul's inward reflections on itself'.<sup>207</sup> For Keith the inward tranquillity of mind, the true state of blessedness, might be achieved by the 'Spirit assisting our sincere endeavours, in the diligent study of God's holy Word, Meditation and Prayer'.<sup>208</sup>

Blackall assumed the task of clarifying the terms used in this controversy, as they applied to both private and public worship. The charge advanced by Lacy that the Church of England's holy spirit was both limited and, when supposedly active, insensible and invisible, was one familiar to all Anglican controversialists since the Restoration.<sup>209</sup> Blackall did not contest the idea that the holy spirit 'follows' the prayers of the faithful, but took issue with the assumptions that radical Protestants typically have about the supposedly unlimited nature of their holy spirit. It was often alleged, wrote Blackall, that the forms of prayers employed by Anglicans stint the holy spirit, and could be nothing more than a repetition of words. But Christ himself dictated certain patterns of prayer to his apostles, including the same prayer more than once, and it consequently could not possibly be unlawful to use set-forms.<sup>210</sup> The Church was furthermore flexible on the matter, allowing members to compose their own forms for devotion as well as their own blessings.<sup>211</sup> All dissenters who separated from the Church on this

<sup>205</sup> Hickes, *Enthusiasm*, p. 5.

<sup>206</sup> George Keith, *The Magick of Quakerism: Or, The Chief Mysteries of Quakerism Laid Open, to Which Are Added a Preface and a Postscript relating to the Camisars* (London, 1707), p. 82.

<sup>207</sup> Keith, *Magick*, p. 9.

<sup>208</sup> Keith, *Magick*, p. 9.

<sup>209</sup> *PW III*, p. 20.

<sup>210</sup> *PD V*, p. 173-76.

<sup>211</sup> *PD V*, p. 186.

basis do so unreasonably.<sup>212</sup>

But their arguments, on face value, invited the question of whose spirit, exactly, is stinted during the recital of prayer set-forms: the spirit of the speaker, the spirit of the listener, or the holy spirit of God? It was granted that the speaker's spirit was stinted, but 'there is no Harm in this; nay, I say more, there's a great deal of Good in it'.<sup>213</sup> The very point of carefully composing prayers was to limit those who allowed themselves the liberty of preaching or praying *extempore*, and would thereby limit idle, vain, repetitious, or extravagant expressions.<sup>214</sup> Certainly Blackall had in mind here the enthusiasts he encountered in the 1700s: 'So that all the Spirit which is stinted, by a good Form of Prayer, is only a Spirit of Folly and Vanity, of Carelessness and Irreverence.'<sup>215</sup> The spirit of the hearer was always stinted, no matter the nature of the assembly. If the hearer's attention was focused on the words of the speaker, which was surely the point of the assembly, it must be assumed that the mind of the hearer was not divided and not occupied with something other than the words of the speaker. If the spirit of the hearer was not stinted in this manner then 'they cease to pray in common'.<sup>216</sup>

Blackall's discussion on whether the holy spirit of God was stinted in the manner Lacy and other enthusiasts claimed shifted into a discussion of the quality of private worship. It was the ordinary assistance of the spirit, not extraordinary prophetic assistance, that was needed when one prayed.<sup>217</sup> God's omniscience was such that the content of an individual's mind and heart was always apparent to the holy spirit.<sup>218</sup> Communicating the sins and emotions therein required only honesty on the part of the speaker and the presence of the holy spirit, which would be known by means other than as a supplier of words.<sup>219</sup> The marks of the holy spirit were familiar features of the Anglican testimony: quiet of mind, patience, contentment, not prone to anger, and free from boisterous passions.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> *PD V*, p. 177.

<sup>213</sup> *PD V*, p. 187.

<sup>214</sup> *PD V*, p. 188.

<sup>215</sup> *PD V*, p. 189.

<sup>216</sup> *PD V*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>217</sup> *PD V*, p. 190.

<sup>218</sup> Offspring Blackall, *Practical Discourses Upon Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount: In Eight Volumes, Volume 3* (8 vols., London, 1717-18), p. 425 (hereafter *PD III*).

<sup>219</sup> *PD V*, p. 190.

<sup>220</sup> *PD I*, pp. 27, 30, 35, 52-54, 199.

Blackall's investigation into spirit entailed distinguishing the phrases commonly used to signify prayer, whether public or private. Whereas proponents of *extempore*, spontaneous, or prophetic interaction with the spirit would say that it was the duty of Christians to pray by the spirit, it was not, he claimed, a requirement specified in scripture.<sup>221</sup> 'By' the spirit referred to the extraordinary operations of the holy spirit, according to which the individual received prophecies and revelations directly from it.<sup>222</sup> In contrast, scripture and the Anglican testimony required praying 'in' or 'with' the spirit. This meant precisely to 'give good Attention to our Prayers, and to accompany the Words of our Mouth with suitable Affections and Desires of the Heart'.<sup>223</sup> Although God's nature was one infinitely distinct from us, human beings could receive steady 'fresh Supplies of the divine Grace' in the form of the ordinary assistance of the holy spirit.<sup>224</sup> Though neither seen nor 'felt' in the way described by Lacy or Cavalier - violently, abruptly, or just sensibly - its effects were apparent in proportion to the individual's virtue.

It has been a central concern throughout the present project that these additional factors, political and religious, must be taken seriously if the tensions critics perceived are to be understood. Schwartz's first book, especially, pointed to the importance of incorporating the establishment, not limited to tories and Anglicans, into the story of the French prophets. But he does not go where they go. Certainly, they have their place in the story of the increasing unseasonableness of millenarian, prophetic, and enthusiastic behaviour during the period. For Schwartz, a comparison between the French prophets and the architects of the evangelical revival of the mid-eighteenth century yielded some possible, though not causal, connections.<sup>225</sup> As Stuart E. Prall remarked in a review of Schwartz's first book, the prophets, construed in this way, seemed to help 'to make the English human once again' in a society that separated emotional from rational.<sup>226</sup> This assumes that the efforts of Anglicans to negotiate or extinguish the religious conflicts that tore the country asunder came at the cost of soullessness. But one is not obliged to arrive at this conclusion.

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<sup>221</sup> *PD V*, p. 193.

<sup>222</sup> *PD V*, p. 193.

<sup>223</sup> *PD V*, p. 196.

<sup>224</sup> *PD V*, pp. 227, 340.

<sup>225</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, p. 207.

<sup>226</sup> Prall, 'Review Article', pp. 178-79.