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To cite this article: Sarah Ward Clavier (2023) Loss and Survival: The Episcopalian Spiritual Vocation, 1646-62, *The Seventeenth Century*, 38:6, 1025-1034, DOI: [10.1080/0268117X.2023.2266301](https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117X.2023.2266301)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117X.2023.2266301>



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Published online: 14 Dec 2023.



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Loss and Survival: The Episcopalian Spiritual Vocation, 1646–62

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines a forthcoming project on the episcopalian spiritual vocation in the period c.1640 to 1662. It explains the rationale for the project and its place within the historiography. The article argues that seventeenth-century clergy may have conceptualised spiritual vocation in the light of the bishop's charge in the ordinal, and that the actions and words of episcopalian clerics after 1646 frequently referenced its command 'to teach, to premonish, to feed, and provide for the Lords family, and to seek for Christs sheep that be dispersed abroad.' The project seeks to explore that argument and to examine how clergy and laity responded to the loss of episcopalian vocation during the Interregnum. The article briefly discusses potential printed and manuscript sources to be examined, as well as possible approaches to be taken in relation to the evidence.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 September 2023

Accepted 28 September 2023

KEYWORDS

episcopalian; vocation; opposition; print; Church of England

Should you be considering a vocation to the priesthood in the modern Church of England you would find plenty of books, websites, podcasts, and other instructional materials to help you find your way. From theological works to those centred on more abstract notions of leadership, there are a wide variety of resources, no doubt of varying quality and churchmanship. The laity, too, are encouraged to undertake certificated courses on topics from 'discipleship' to the sociology of religion. Given the importance of vocation to the modern Church, it is interesting to find that the historical development and application of the concept has been largely overlooked by scholars.¹ This article is largely aspirational: it discusses a project which, as yet, is still in the thinking and planning stage.² The forthcoming project focuses on episcopalian clerical spiritual vocation from c.1640 to 1662. It considers the following research questions: how did episcopalian clergy define their role as 'ghostly fathers'? How did they express a sense of loss of that vocation from 1646 to 1662? What strategies did they use to continue, where possible, to exercise their vocation? And what role did the episcopalian laity play in defining and exercising clerical vocations in the period?

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¹One example of a study of an individual's calling is William J. McGill, 'The Calling: George Herbert, R.S. Thomas and the Vocations of Priest and Poet', *Anglican Theological Review*, 82:2 (2000), pp. 371–89.

²My thanks to Ken Fincham and Isaac Stephens. Our discussions have been instrumental in moulding this work to date.

Three interwoven strands of work led to my interest in these questions: first, a chapter on bishops' confessions of faith written for Elliot Vernon and Hunter Powell's edited collection on church polity in the British Atlantic world; second, research on Interregnum Wales as a refuge for episcopalian clergy; third, an exploration of Welsh clergy seditious words for Fiona McCall's recent edited volume.³ From this work emerged themes of a community of suffering; of physical, emotional, and above all spiritual exile; and of efforts to sustain orthodox episcopalianism under persecution. When considering the wills of the first generation of Restoration bishops it became clear that attacks on the buildings, traditions, and personnel of the Church had caused significant rupture and trauma.⁴ Autobiographical narratives and testimonies, for example those of Joseph Hall, Matthew Wren, and Brian Walton, told stories of suffering felt on multiple levels, for bishops and for ordinary clergy.⁵

Clerical experiences of physical and financial suffering have received some scholarly attention. As early as 1979 Ian Green explored the persecution of 'scandalous' and 'malignant' clergy in the First Civil War.⁶ Much more recently Fiona McCall has revealed stories of physical violence against episcopalian clergy and their families while Anne Laurence has considered the sufferings of northern clergy families.⁷ Other forms of suffering, however, remain unexplored or underexplored. Intellectual suffering, for example, in terms of the deprivation of books and a reduced ability to discuss, write and publish works, features frequently in clergy testimony and has been neglected.⁸ Spiritual suffering is possibly as prevalent within the surviving evidence but, unlike the intellectual travails of the clergy, it has rarely appeared even in ancillary discussions, for example of lost libraries. This neglect of spiritual deprivation may possibly be due to the almost completely secular nature of the twenty-first-century academy in the Western world, although it may be that emerging methodologies, interdisciplinarity, and sub-disciplines make it a more plausible topic to consider now. Work on the history of the emotions, for example, provides a framework to consider expressions of loss and mourning in a way that other approaches might not.⁹

³Sarah Ward Clavier, 'The Restoration Episcopacy and the Interregnum: Autobiography, Suffering, and Professions of Faith' in Elliot Vernon and Hunter Powell (eds), *Church Polity and Politics in the British Atlantic World, c.1636-1688* (Manchester, 2020), pp. 242-59; 'God's Vigilant Watchmen: The Words of Episcopalian Clergy in Wales, 1646-1660' in Fiona McCall (ed.), *Church and People in Interregnum Britain* (London, Palgrave/RHS New Perspectives, May 2021), pp. 217-41; 'The Mountaineers did serve for their Refuge': 1650s Wales as a refuge for episcopalian clergy', in production.

⁴Ward Clavier, 'Restoration Episcopacy', pp. 242-59.

⁵Joseph Hall, *Contemplations on the history of the New Testament, by the Right Rev. Joseph Hall, ... Together with his life and hard measure, written by himself* (London, 1777); TNA, PROB 11/324/218: Will of Matthew Wren, Lord Bishop of Ely, 10 June 1667; TNA, SP 29/12 fo. 205: Petition of Brian Walton, ?August 1660.

⁶Ian M. Green, 'The Persecution of "Scandalous" and "Malignant" Parish Clergy During the English Civil Wars', *English Historical Review*, 94:372 (1979), pp. 507-31.

⁷Fiona McCall, 'Women's Experience of Violence and Suffering as Represented in Loyalist Accounts of the English Civil War', *Women's History Review*, 28:7 (2019), pp. 1136-56; 'Scandalous and Malignant? Settling Scores Against the Leicestershire Clergy After the First Civil War', *Midland History*, 40:2 (2015), pp. 220-42; *Baal's Priests: The Loyalist Clergy and the English Revolution* (Farnham, 2013); Anne Laurence, 'This Sad and Deplorable Condition: An Attempt Towards Recovering An Account of the Sufferings of Northern Clergy Families in the 1640s and 1650s', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Life and Thought in the Northern Church c. 1100-c. 1700: Essays in Honour of Claire Cross* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 465-88.

⁸For example, TNA, SP 29/17 fo. 31: Petition of Henry King, n.d.; PROB 11/331/371: Will of Henry King, 16 November 1669; Bodleian, MS Smith 22 fo. 21: A plain and true Narratiue of the Bp of Rochester; Gilbert Ironside, *A Sermon Preached at Dorchester* (London, 1660), pp. A3-4; Thomas Powell, *Quadruga Salutatis, or, The Four Heads of Christian religion surveyed and explained* (London, 1657), n.p.

⁹See, for example, Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway and Sarah Randles (eds), *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions Through History* (Oxford, 2018); Jan Plamper, *The History of the Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2017).

My chapter on the oppositional words of episcopalian clergy aimed to open discussions on the matter.¹⁰ It discussed several ways in which Welsh clergymen attempted to build, in the words of Rowan Williams, a ‘church of words’ to replace that subverted or destroyed Church of England.¹¹ This chapter briefly examined examples of clergy poetry, pamphlets, diaries, and sermons, as well as literature written to serve as a form of catechism for unserved episcopalian parishioners. Wales, as I note in an article currently in production, served as a refuge for ejected loyalist clergy, either as a return home for Welshmen from livings in England, or for English clergymen as a place to stay with episcopalian gentry sympathisers. Some of those clergymen, as well as their conformist colleagues, produced oppositional writings. Archibald Sparke of Northop wrote an occasional manuscript diary, Thomas Powell of Cantref his Welsh and English language pamphlets, Rowland Watkyns and Henry Vaughan composed poetry, and Alexander Griffith wrote polemical tracts addressed to the Lord Protector.¹² Such episcopalian writings seem to have three principal aims: to maintain the morale of loyalist clergy and laity; to persuade others to change their minds; and finally, to provide for the huge swathes of the population who remained consistently unserved in the Interregnum. All three of these aims are interwoven with spiritual vocation. For some episcopalian clerical writers it was part of their vocation to provide comfort, education, and pastoral support for their colleagues and for the laity, by print and manuscript if not in person.

To examine this idea in more depth, however, it is vital to understand, as far as is possible, what clergy considered their ‘spiritual vocation’ or ‘calling’ in the seventeenth century. Scholars have examined (albeit not extensively) spiritual discernment or clerical duties for Baptists and Presbyterians at different points in the seventeenth century.¹³ Ken Fincham and Stephen Taylor, John Spurr, and Judith Maltby all have considered Interregnum and Restoration episcopalian ordinations.¹⁴ This work is extremely useful in determining which bishops (and clergy) were active in the Interregnum, and showing that some individuals continued to feel episcopal ordination was important in legitimising and discharging their vocation. It cannot, however, give a sense of to what seventeenth-century clergy thought they were called to do. What did they understand as their priestly vocation?

¹⁰Ward Clavier, ‘God’s Vigilant Watchmen’.

¹¹Rowan Williams, ‘Reflections on the Vaughan Brothers: Poetry Meets Metaphysics’, *Scintilla*, xxi (2018) pp. 11–21, at p. 18.

¹²E.g., National Library of Wales, NLW MS 12463B: Notebook of the Reverend Archibald Sparke, c.1650–67; Thomas Powell, *Quadrige Salutatis*; Thomas Powell, *Cerbyd lechydwriaeth, neu prif bynciau grefydd Gristonogawl wedi eu egluro au gosod allan* (London, 1657); Roland Watkyns, *Flamma sine Fumo: or Poems without Fictions* (London, 1662); Alexander Griffith, *Mercurius Cambro-Britannicus* (London, 1652).

¹³Brian C. Brewer, ‘A Baptist View of Ordained Ministry: A Function or a Way of Being? Part 1’, in *Baptist Quarterly*, 43:3 (2009), pp. 154–69; Anthony R. Cross, ‘To communicate simply you must understand profoundly’: preparation for ministry among British Baptists (Didcot, 2016); David L. Wykes, ‘“The Minister’s Calling”: The Preparation and Qualification of Candidates for the Presbyterian Ministry in England, c. 1660–89’ in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 83 (2004), pp. 271–80.

¹⁴Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, ‘Ordination, Re-Ordination, Conformity and the Restoration of the Church of England, 1660–1662’ in Stephen Taylor and Grant Tapsell (eds), *The Nature of the English Revolution: Essays in Honour of John Morrill* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 197–232; Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor, ‘Vital Statistics: Episcopal Ordination and Ordinands in England, 1646–60’, *English Historical Review*, 126: 519 (2011), pp. 319–44; John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646–1689* (New Haven and London, 1991); Judith Maltby, ‘Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, Commonwealth and the formation of “Anglicanism”’ in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds), *Religion in Revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 158–80.

The bishop's charge and the liturgy laid out within the ordinal set out expectations of clerical actions and behaviours from ordination onwards. Priests were described as 'the messengers, the watchmen, the pastours, and the stewards of the Lord, to teach, to premonish, to feed, and provide for the Lords family, and to seek for Christs sheep that be dispersed abroad, and for his children which be in the midst of this naughty world, to be saved through Christ forever'.¹⁵ The liturgy required the man being priested, after swearing allegiance to the King, to commit to driving away 'all erroneous and strange doctrines', to be diligent in prayer and in studying Scripture, to fashion himself and his family as wholesome examples to his parishioners, to maintain peace, quietness and love amongst the Christian people committed to his charge, and to obey his bishop.¹⁶ The liturgy left no doubt as to the weight and importance of that charge. This gives some working idea of the official view or 'job description' of ordained episcopalian clergy immediately prior to the outbreak of Civil War. This was reinforced at various times in visitation articles and the sermons preached by carefully chosen clergy at those visitations.¹⁷ No doubt the detail varied significantly between bishops of different churchmanship, and visitation articles obviously depended on changing archepiscopal and episcopal priorities and policies. Alongside the ordinal, however, these documents should help to establish a framework by which we can understand something of the official boundaries and expectations of the clergy in the period immediately before the First Civil War.

The purpose of this attempt to define clerical spiritual vocation is, then, to consider post-1642 episcopalian writings and actions in the light of what the clergy were charged to do. Whether in William Nicholson's *Plain, But Full Exposition of the Catechism of the Church of England*, Jeremy Taylor's *The Golden Grove*, or Rowland Watkyns's poem 'The New Illiterate Lay-teachers', there was in the Interregnum a sense of spiritual and vocational loss expressed by both ejected and conformist clergy.¹⁸ It was difficult to keep their vows to 'teach, to premonish, to feed, and provide for the Lords family' and for them to drive away 'all erroneous and strange doctrines' when the Church of England had, in effect, become one among many sects.¹⁹ This deprivation from being able to discharge one's spiritual duties, as many modern clergy discovered during the Covid-19 pandemic, was traumatic. I aim to discover the patterns to those expressions of loss and explore how they tied in with the concepts of priestly duties and vocation. The range of reactions to the post-Civil War treatment of the Church of England included the ideal of

¹⁵The ordinal printed in 1636 was that reintroduced by Elizabeth I in 1559: the ordinal of 1552 with some 'small alterations'. Subsequent Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical clarified and moderated aspects of the ordination ceremony. *The forme and manner of making and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons* (London, 1636), sig. B2; Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Anglican Ordinal: Its History and Development from the Reformation to the Present Day* (London, 1971), pp. 40, 61.

¹⁶*The forme and manner of making and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons*, sig. B2.

¹⁷E.g. George Walle, *A Sermon at the Lord-Archbishop of Canterbury his visitation metropolitall* (London, 1635); Thomas Lawrence, *Two Sermons. The First preached at St Maries in Oxford Iuly 13 1634 being Act Sunday. The Second in the Cathedrall Church of Sarum at the Visitation of the most Reverend Father in God William Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, May 23, 1634* (London, 1635); Samuel Hoard, *The Chvrches Authority Asserted in A Sermon Preached at Chelmsford at the Metropolitall Visitation of the most Reverend Father in God, William, Lord-Archbishop of Canterbury 1 March 1636* (London, 1637).

¹⁸William Nicholson, *A Plain, But Full Exposition of the Catechism of the Church of England* (London, 1655); Jeremy Taylor, *The Golden Grove, or, A Manuall of Daily Prayers and Letanies . . .* (London, 1655); Watkyns, *Flamma Sine Fumo*.

¹⁹*The forme and manner of making and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons*, sig. B2.

‘preservation’ (no matter how illusory); practical work to maintain networks of the episcopalian faithful; and attempts to compromise and conform.

Despite the difficulties they entailed, some of the duties described within the ordinal were even more important to loyalist clergy in the late 1640s and 1650s. These included the responsibilities for orthodox teaching and pastoral care, and the oath of allegiance to the King. Even for ejected episcopalian clergy it was often still plausible to find ways to teach and support laypeople and to uphold, in some form, the oath to the monarch. Episcopalian clergy, both prominent and obscure, produced a wealth of printed and manuscript texts during the late 1640s and 1650s. The wording of the ordinal turns up frequently in these works. John Cragge of Llantilio Pertholey and Thomas Powell of Cantref referenced the episcopalian clergy as ‘God’s watchmen’, for example, and William Nicholson and Powell both invoked the image of sheep dispersed, lacking a shepherd.²⁰ Powell’s catechism, produced in Welsh and English versions, argued that catechism was the principal way to fortify against ‘false Teachers’, and furthermore defended the importance of the eucharistic sacrament being administered by ‘ecclesiastical ministeries’, as ‘they are the Keepers of the Seals ... and are meetly qualified for them.’²¹

Other clergymen focused their efforts on upholding their oath of allegiance. Thomas Bassett, in his manuscript compendium ‘A Caveat for subiects; or the Danger of submitting themselves to the Mock-authority of a Foot-Jurisdiction’, built a case for his own sacrifice as a model for others that in many ways ran in modest parallel with that of Archbishop Laud and, of course, of the King. ‘Sure I am the Noble Army of Martyrs marcht this Rugged Path before me’, he wrote, expressing his ‘inward joy’ at this fact, later historicising his own and the King’s fate by saying that ‘The Martyrs in Queen Maries Dayes could not with more Glory Sacrifice their Lives, in Defence of the Second Commandement; then we can rescuing the fifth’.²² Like Powell, Bassett tied his case back to the demands of the ordinal, referring to the oath of allegiance specifically, and the new government’s requirements that the oath be broken.²³ It was, according to Bassett, ‘good conscience’ to suffer in prison, as that suffering was in aid of ‘God and his Anoynted’. Bassett repeatedly emphasised the importance of martyrdom, paraphrasing from Tertullian’s *Apologeticus*, ‘Sanguis Martyrum Semen Ecclesia’, or ‘the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church’.²⁴ For Bassett the church would be maintained and reborn through loyalty, suffering, and penitence.

Episcopalian texts, alongside episcopalian prayers, sermons and services, provided their loyalist readers with spiritual food and pastoral support. They were both devotional and oppositional in nature. The small sample of sources examined so far indicates a tendency to mirror the words of the ordinal when describing what was lost. The project will build on Ian Green’s magisterial work identifying and analysing English catechisms

²⁰ John Cragge, *The Arraignment, and Conviction of Anabaptism* (London, 1656), sigs A3– 4; Nicholson, *Plain, But Full Exposition*, sig. A3; Thomas Powell, *Quadrige Salutatis*, pp. 123–5.

²¹ Powell, *Quadrige Salutatis*, p. 28.

²² Cardiff Public Library, Cardiff MS 1.223: ‘A Caveat for subiects; or the Danger of submitting themselves to the Mock-authority of a Foot-Jurisdiction’, c. Sept. 1646– Aug. 1650, p. 22.

²³ As well (in 1647) as denying the legality of the proceedings that tried him, due to the lack of royal warrant for the court. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–19, 65, 122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, unfol.

to encompass Welsh-language examples.²⁵ It will consider Interregnum episcopalian printed books, sermons, and tracts in relation to spiritual vocation and examine whether the ordination charge really did frame episcopalian resistance as it seems to have done for Thomas Powell and others. This will require a thorough survey of the printed works of clergy in the late 1640s and 1650s. This will not be an easy task as there is no complete list of episcopalian clergy even before the outbreak of the Civil Wars. My own database of clergy wills will be helpful in that regard, but it remains a work in progress. The Clergy of the Church of England Database (CCED) will be very useful but it does not reliably include Welsh clergy, and so the use of extant diocesan and provincial records will be needed to supplement CCED.

One possible approach is to cross-reference clergy names from a sample of counties with the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database. A recent examination of the printed works of Breconshire clergy in the 1650s yielded substantially more material than had previously been assumed, from sermons to catechisms. These print and manuscript works have already revealed previously unknown episcopalian and royalist networks and connections: from the hyper-local in Brecon and its surroundings to those individuals acting as contact points to publishers, royalist agents, and influential episcopalian clergy. A detailed examination of a significantly broader range of source material should uncover more of these networks and potentially connect them together.

The project will then look beyond the framework of episcopalian clergy words to their actions in the period from 1646 to 1662. An examination of papers relating to the sequestration or prosecution of episcopalian clergy will give more information about their actions during the period, as will pamphlets, correspondence and diaries. Thomas Powell, for example, was ejected in 1646. His appeal against this fate was rejected because he ‘adhered to the King’ in the wars.²⁶ Powell was a close friend of the poet and clergyman Henry Vaughan, who wrote several poems in praise of Powell. He was also a connexion of the controversialist cleric Alexander Griffith.²⁷ A petition of Powell and two local colleagues to the radical itinerant and Propagation commissioner Jenkin Jones featured in Griffith’s 1654 pamphlet concerning the paucity of ministers in Wales.²⁸ In this letter, dated February 1654, the three Brecknockshire clergymen beseeched Jones, on behalf of ‘the ejected ministers of this country’ to have ‘the door of utterance opened, and be permitted to preach the Gospel freely among those that do much want it, & do as earnestly call for it, as the parched Earth after the dew and Raine of Heaven’.²⁹ This followed a series of arrests of episcopalian ministers, some ‘pull’d out of the Pulpit’ and others sent prisoner to

²⁵Ian M. Green, *The Christian’s ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (Oxford, 1996).

²⁶Powell’s fate has been examined by Vaughan scholars in the light of his encouragement of the poet. Thomas Pritchard cites SP 20: Sequestration Committee Books and Papers regarding Thomas Vaughan’s sequestration and ejection, and although he does not reference any document regarding Powell’s history, this collection would no doubt bear fruit in relation to this project. Thomas Pritchard, *A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales* (London, 1920), p. 52; F. E. Hutchinson, *Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 16, 37, 69, 93, 110, 202.

²⁷Eluned Brown, “‘Learned Friend and Loyal Fellow-Prisoner’: Thomas Powell and Welsh Royalists”, *NLWJ*, XVIII (1974), pp. 374-81.

²⁸This is likely to be Thomas Lewis, M.A. of Lanvigan and Veynor, listed in John Walker, *An attempt towards recovering an account of the numbers and sufferings of the clergy of the Church of England . . .* (London, 1714), p. 300. A. Griffith, *A true and perfect relation of the whole transactions concerning the petition of the six counties of South-Wales, and the county of Monmouth, formerly presented to the Parliament of the Common-Wealth of England for a supply of Godly ministers, and an account of ecclesiasticall revenues therein* (London, 1654).

²⁹Griffith, *True and Perfect Relation*, p. 50.

Chepstow garrison.³⁰ Powell and his colleagues' intervention was evidently unsuccessful and he remained ejected until the Restoration. Powell's writing indicates that he continued to advocate for his church consistently and it is probable that a detailed examination of local government records and the papers of his friends and connections will yield more information in that regard.

This element of the project will supplement clerical manuscript and printed works with quarter session, Great Sessions and Assize court records, wills, Exchequer commissions, State Papers, and financial accounts to identify those clergy engaged in oppositional activities that allowed them to carry out their vocation, even where it was legally proscribed. The Crown Book of Flintshire has yielded up interesting information in this regard, as have churchwardens' accounts and extracts from parish registers.³¹ The post-Restoration Exchequer Commissions provide fascinating detail concerning the operation of Interregnum religious activities: to the work of intruded ministers and itinerants as well as to ejected episcopalian clergy. In cases where depositions on behalf of plaintiff and defendant survive, like those relating to Llangattock in Breconshire, this material is particularly rich.³² In selected geographical areas the project will use the above material alongside that produced by radicals or conformists, reading against the grain to better understand the actions of episcopalian clergy.

An assessment of Interregnum episcopalian clerical actions, for example teaching, preaching, and providing pastoral care to episcopalian laity, should aid in a discernment of their goals in continuing to discharge a vocation and, alongside this, to maintain a Church in the face of persecution and indifference. From 1660 clearly the picture changed, and the wheel revolved again. It would be eminently possible to halt this project at the Restoration of 1660 but, as I think the programme for the 'Contesting the Church in England' conference demonstrated, it is no longer acceptable to stop at this point. Arguments about spiritual vocation before the Civil War and during the Interregnum would be under-developed if there were no consideration of the range of responses and reactions to the process of settlement after 1660. My chapter on bishops' wills and confessions of faith revealed that the reverberations of the 1640s and 1650s continued long into the 1660s and beyond, shaping the Church in crucial ways.³³ This extension into the Restoration will help to assess whether episcopalian attitudes to spiritual vocation changed over the years 1642, and if so, whose attitudes, and what changes occurred. Given the broader historiographical arguments concerning the creation of episcopalian identity in this period, it would be very surprising if there was no evidence of a renewed commitment to pastoral care, for example.

The examples given herein are drawn from a small geographical area and from one episcopalian network. I chose to focus on Powell, Bassett and their Welsh colleagues here because of their obscurity: if small-scale preparatory research can yield new knowledge of networks and approaches on the geographical 'margins' of England and Wales in the 1640s and 1650s, the project clearly has the potential to draw out wider patterns involving more prominent episcopalian clergy and laity in urban as well as

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 50.

³¹NLW, Great Sessions 14/70: Flintshire Crown Book, 1637-1660.

³²See Sarah Ward Clavier, 'A Boiling Furnace of Contradictions? Interregnum Opposition in Brecon and the Borders', forthcoming in *Scintilla*, 27 (2024).

³³Ward Clavier, 'The Restoration Episcopacy'.

rural landscapes. It may transform our understanding of the operation of episcopalianism, conformity, and non-conformity in the period, particularly the connections that people made or renewed in order to achieve their spiritual objectives. It will help us to comprehend the centrality of spiritual vocation to the survival of the Church of England in a period of intense crisis. In a difficult funding environment and during a period of flux in the Higher Education sector more generally it is most likely that the project will be long-term work. I hope that this will allow for questions, collaborations, and new evidence to emerge, and that the story of episcopalian spiritual loss and survival will ultimately be heard.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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