

Edward Hart: Bricklayer, Theologian and Nonjuring Martyr

Abstract

This paper explores the neglected manuscripts and publications of Edward Hart, an early eighteenth-century Nonjuring bricklayer, whose determination to promote his cause ultimately led to his death. By discussing Hart's support for High Church doctrines, such as the apostolic succession and non-resistance, this study challenges traditional historiographical associations between artisan theology and 'radical' anticlericalism, while also illuminating the fundamental role played by the Nonjuring laity in the dissemination of conservative politico-theological ideas. Moreover, by discussing Hart's defence of Anglican 'orthodoxy', this paper shows that the Nonjurors operated not on the fringes but in the very centre of the early eighteenth-century politico-theological arena. Despite his fierce opposition to the perceived anticlericalism of Latitudinarians and Dissenters, Hart was not entirely subservient to Nonjuring divines. Rather, Hart openly challenged the liturgical reforms proposed by some Nonjuring clergymen, which, he believed, threatened the dwindling communion's survival.

Keywords: Nonjurors; Anglicanism; Eighteenth-Century England; Liturgy; Toryism

Historians have often associated plebeian theology with 'radical' religious movements. The egalitarian theology espoused by seventeenth-century Diggers was, according to Christopher Hill, reminiscent of earlier 'communist' teachings propagated by Lollards and participants in Jack Cade's 1450 rebellion. Moreover, the Lollards' belief that the Holy Spirit could be communicated effectively by 'mechanic' lay preachers was shared subsequently by Familists, whose ministers were 'itinerant craftsmen'.¹ Hill's tendency to view 'radical' seventeenth-century Protestantism through the 'lens of political thought' has been contested by Paul Lim,

¹ Christopher Hill, 'From Lollards to Levellers', in *Religion and Rural Revolt: Papers Presented to the Fourth Interdisciplinary Workshop on Peasant Studies, University of British Columbia, 1982*, ed. János M. Bak and Gerhard Benecke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 94-95.

who describes the theology of the ‘Ranterish rabble’ as a hybrid of ‘Socinian rationalism’ and anticlerical egalitarianism.² The common association between anticlericalism and plebeian theology has also pervaded discussions of religion (and irreligion) in eighteenth-century England. Some scholars have explored the assaults on miracles waged by deists, such as Thomas Chubb, who was ‘in that long tradition of radical Whig artisans exemplified by Benjamin Franklin in America.’³

At the opposite end of the theological spectrum from deists were evangelicals, such as John Wesley and George Whitefield, who, apparently, fostered an ‘enlightened’ individualism among numerous labourers and artisans by preaching about the ‘new birth’.⁴ In addition to its Puritan roots, evangelicalism was also influenced by the High Church piety of the Nonjurors, who remained loyal to the exiled Stuarts.⁵ An early influence on Wesley’s spirituality was his mother, Susanna, a High Churchwoman with Jacobite sympathies.⁶ Initially, both Wesley and Whitefield were receptive to the ascetic teachings of the Nonjuring divine, William Law. Eventually, both preachers concluded that Law’s rigorous self-denial was legalistic. Nevertheless, some of Law’s teachings – such as his endorsement of clerical celibacy – were maintained by Wesley.⁷ Furthermore, Wesley’s primitivism was inspired by the patristic

² Paul C.H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73-74.

³ Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1989), 54-59, at 54. See also Jeffrey Wigelsworth, ‘“God always acts suitable to his character, as a wise and good being”: Thomas Chubb and Thomas Morgan on Miracles and Providence’, in *Atheism and Deism Revalued: Heterodox Religious Identities in Britain, 1650-1800*, ed. Wayne Hudson, Diego Lucci and Jeffrey Wigelsworth (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 157-72.

⁴ See Bruce Hindmarsh, ‘Reshaping Individualism: The Private Christian, Eighteenth-Century Religion and the Enlightenment’, in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. Deryck W. Lovegrove (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 67-84; Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁵ See John Walsh, ‘“Methodism” and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism’, in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 19-37.

⁶ For Susanna Wesley’s Jacobitism, see Robert Walmsley, ‘John Wesley’s Parents: Quarrel and Reconciliation’, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 29, no. 3 (1953): 50-57.

⁷ See Gerda J. Joling-van der Sar, ‘The Controversy Between William Law and John Wesley’, *English Studies*, 87, no. 4 (2006): 442-65; Isabel Rivers, ‘William Law and Religious Revival: The Reception of *A Serious Call*’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71, no. 4 (2008): 633-49.

scholarship of several Nonjuring theologians, including Thomas Deacon, a Manchester clergyman, who formed the Orthodox British Church in 1733.⁸

Unlike evangelicals, however, the Nonjurors have rarely been associated with lay activism by scholars. The dearth of such scholarship is hardly surprising, given that the Nonjurors stressed the exclusive privileges of apostolically ordained ministry. While some have acknowledged the theological engagement of the Nonjuring laity, their discussions have focused predominantly on university-educated laymen, such as Robert Nelson and the ‘great lay dictator’, Henry Dodwell.⁹ Predictably, studies of plebeian Tory-Jacobitism have focused mainly on *physical* forms of politico-religious protest.¹⁰ As an ever-dwindling communion, the Nonjurors relied on the support of a diverse laity. Female Nonjuring activists included the London printer-author, Elinor James, and women from elite families, such as Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, and Susanna Hopton, husband of Richard Hopton, who served as Chief Justice of North Wales during the 1680s.¹¹ Grassroots artisans were also important to the Nonjuring cause. One Nonjuring artisan was Lee Carrick, a shoemaker, who subsequently served as secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge during the 1720s.

⁸ For Wesley’s engagement with the patristic scholarship of the Nonjurors, see Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), ch. 1. For Deacon, see Henry Broxap, *A Biography of Thomas Deacon: The Manchester Non-Juror* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1911).

⁹ See Mark Goldie, ‘The Nonjurors, Episcopacy, and the Origins of the Convocation Controversy’, in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689-1759*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1982), 15-35, at 22; Robert D. Cornwall, ‘Divine Right Monarchy: Henry Dodwell’s Critique of the Reformation and Defence of the Deprived Nonjuror Bishops’, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 68, no. 1 (1999): 37-66; C.D.A. Leighton, ‘The Religion of the Non-Jurors and the Early British Enlightenment: A Study of Henry Dodwell’, *History of European Ideas*, 28, no. 4 (2002): 247-62; C.D.A. Leighton, ‘Ancienneté Among the Non-Jurors: A Study of Henry Dodwell’, *History of European Ideas*, 31, no. 1 (2005): 1-16; Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 366-95; Brent S. Sirota, ‘Robert Nelson’s *Festivals and Fasts* and the Problem of the Sacred in Early Eighteenth-Century England’, *Church History*, 84, no. 3 (2015): 556-84.

¹⁰ See Geoffrey Holmes, ‘The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London’, *Past and Present*, 72 (1976): 55-85; Nicholas Rogers, ‘Riot and Popular Jacobitism in Early Hanoverian England’, in *Ideology and Conspiracy*, 70-88.

¹¹ See Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), ch. 3; Gillian Wright, ‘Manuscript, Print, and Politics in Anne Finch’s “Upon the Hurricane”’, *Studies in Philology*, 111, no. 3 (2014): 571-90; Simon Lewis, ‘“The Faithful Remnant of the True Church of England”: Susanna Hopton and the Politico-Theology of the Nonjuring Schism’, *Journal of Theological Studies* (forthcoming, 2021).

Carrick's engagement in theological issues, such as the nature of Satan's power, is evidenced by his surviving correspondence with the Nonjuring bishop, Thomas Brett.¹²

Another Nonjuring artisan, who also befriended Brett, was Edward Hart, a bricklayer of Chatham, Kent. Between March 1717 and February 1718, Hart published four works, in which he engaged with various politico-theological disputes, including the Bangorian controversy and the usages debate. Other than his upbringing as a Baptist, virtually nothing is known about Hart's background. As with Roger Laurence, another Dissenting-turned-Anglican layman, Hart had all the zeal of a convert. It is unclear whether Hart – like Laurence – was re-baptised in the Church of England, though his claim that 'there is but one Church, so there is but one Baptism' suggests that he viewed this controversial practice as valid.¹³ Hart's short polemical career was characterised by his ardent defence of episcopacy, matched by a fierce dismissal of those who separated from the 'truly apostolick Church of England.'¹⁴ Also, Hart's correspondence with Brett illuminates his unwavering loyalty to the Nonjuring communion – a cause for which he ultimately paid with his life.

By providing the first large-scale examination of Hart's works and manuscripts, this paper enhances our understanding of the fundamental role played by the Nonjuring and artisan laity in the dissemination of theological ideas in eighteenth-century England. Few of the views expressed by Hart were specific to the Nonjuring cause. Rather, his attacks on Latitudinarianism and Dissent complemented those advanced by Juring High Church authors. A study of Hart, therefore, shows that – far from being an insignificant fringe group – the

¹² Henry Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 310. For Carrick's correspondence with Brett, dated between September 1722 and September 1725, see Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c. 28, fols. 43-44; MS Eng. th. c. 29, fols. 73-74; MS Eng. th. c. 29, fols. 89-90; MS Eng. th. c. 39, fols. 221-228.

¹³ Edward Hart, *The Bulwark Stormed: In an Answer to Thomas De Laune's Plea for the Non-Conformists. Wherein is Shewed the Fallaciousness and Unconclusiveness of Every Argument in That Pretended Unanswerable Book* (London: W. Innys, 1717), 6. For Tory High Church attacks on 'lay baptisms' administered by Dissenters, see Robert D. Cornwall, 'Politics and the Lay Baptism Controversy in England, 1708-1715', in *Religion, Politics and Dissent, 1660-1832: Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley*, ed. Robert D. Cornwall and William Gibson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 147-64; Ralph Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1689-1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018), ch. 5.

¹⁴ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 128.

Nonjurors played an important role in the defence of Anglican ‘orthodoxy’ during a period when the Church was widely perceived to be under threat from multiple foes. Of course, Hart differed from most Tory High Church polemicists in the sense that he was a lay artisan, whose educational opportunities had been limited. He represented his status not as a barrier, but rather as an opportunity that enabled him to articulate his message in a way that would resonate strongly among his lay readers, irrespective of their social class. It is, however, clear from Hart’s publications and correspondence that he was plagued by self-doubt regarding his intellectual abilities. Despite lacking the linguistic and theological training of clergymen, Hart appealed constantly to ‘primitive’ precedent, often citing works by the early Church Fathers and the patristic scholarship of William Cave (1637-1713). In his discussions of the post-Restoration Church, Jean-Louis Quantin argues that patristic knowledge was the mark of a clerical ‘professional’, who had undergone a ‘lengthy apprenticeship’. Hart’s writings, however, show that the study of patristics appealed to a far more socially diverse readership.¹⁵

1. *The Bulwark Stormed* (1717)

Four of the five known surviving letters from Hart were addressed to Thomas Brett. Born in Betteshanger, Kent, in 1667, Brett was educated at Queens’ College and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was ordained deacon in 1690 and priest in 1691. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Brett held multiple livings in his native Kent. Nevertheless, Brett’s support for the Revolution settlement declined in 1710, following the trial of Henry Sacheverell, whom he perceived as a victim of Whig persecution. In 1714, upon the accession of George I, Parliament passed the Security of the Sovereign Act, which required all clergymen and officeholders to take an oath of abjuration of the Pretender. Brett refused to take the oath,

¹⁵ Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 406. For further discussions of the ways in which Nonjurors engaged with patristics, see Cornel Zwierlein, ‘Non-Juror Patristic Studies and International Diplomacy: Cyprianic Exchange with the Greek Orthodox Church’, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 27, no. 3 (2020): 473-92.

forcing him to resign his livings. He quickly joined the Nonjuring fold and led a small clandestine congregation at his home in Wye, Kent. In January 1716, Brett was consecrated bishop by Jeremy Collier, Nathaniel Spinckes and Samuel Hawes. As with Brett, Hart was a resident of Kent. Hart's family home was in Chatham, though his occupation as a bricklayer entailed regular travel.¹⁶

On 29 October 1715, Hart wrote to Brett from Sittingbourne, Kent. Enclosed with the letter was the 1712 edition of *A Plea for the Non-Conformists* (1683) by Thomas De Laune, an Irish Baptist, who had migrated to London, where he worked as a schoolmaster. De Laune's *Plea* was written in response to a sermon by the Anglican divine, Benjamin Calamy (c.1646-1686), which claimed that the separation of Dissenters from the Church of England was unjustifiable. In the *Plea*, De Laune compared the plight of Restoration Dissenters to sixteenth-century English Reformers, who had separated from the 'Church of Rome'. The government authorities, who were predictably angered by De Laune's charges of 'popery', publicly burnt copies of the *Plea*. De Laune was arrested for and found guilty of sedition, and imprisoned in Newgate, where he died in 1685. He was predeceased by his wife and two children, whose circumstances had forced them to join him in Newgate. The *Plea* was, according to Hart, deemed 'unanswerable' by Dissenters, such as Daniel Defoe, whose commendatory preface was included in most editions from 1706 onwards. Despite being 'sensible' of his own 'imbecility', Hart had written a response to De Laune's *Plea*, which he also enclosed for Brett to review prior to publication.¹⁷ Over a year later, on 31 December 1716, Hart reported to the Nonjuring divine, Hilkiah Bedford, that he lived in 'dayly expectation' of seeing his book in print.¹⁸ On 21 March 1717, *The Bulwark Stormed* was published in London by William Innys,

¹⁶ Robert D. Cornwall, 'Brett, Thomas (1667-1744)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *ODNB*] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Idem, 'Into Nonjury: The Resignation of Thomas Brett in 1715', *Archives*, 40 (2014): 23-30.

¹⁷ Hart to Brett, 29 October 1715, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.25, fol. 237; Michael A.G. Haykin, 'Delaune, Thomas (d. 1685)', *ODNB*.

¹⁸ Hart to Bedford, 31 December 1716, Bodleian, MS Rawl. Letters 42, fol. 161.

whose shop in St. Paul's Churchyard was the birthplace of much Tory High Church literature.¹⁹ The 'ten pounds' required for the commissioning of the book was provided by Hart's friend, Thomas Wagstaffe, the younger, who was subsequently ordained deacon (1718) and priest (1719) by Jeremy Collier.²⁰

Hart's status as a layman was emphasised in the lengthy preface, written by Brett, who feared initially that Hart was 'not qualified' to provide a 'solid answer' to De Laune because of his 'Education and Employment'. However, after reading a few 'leaves' of Hart's manuscript, Brett was convinced that 'good sense and a sound Understanding' was not 'confined to Men of a liberal Education'. Brett was particularly impressed that Hart – despite his 'low station in the World' – had 'not only read, but thoroughly understood and digested our best *English* Authors', grounding him firmly in the 'Principles of true Religion'. Brett conceded that Hart – having been deprived of the necessary 'Learning and Opportunities' – was unable to assess the 'fairness' of De Laune's 'quotations from ancient Authors'. Brett, therefore, reassured Hart's readers of the falsity of De Laune's allegations of corruption against several early Church Fathers. For instance, by describing 'St. Peter's Chair' as the 'Principal of Unity to the Church', Cyprian was not, as De Laune believed, referring to the 'Pope's Chair'. Rather, Cyprian meant the 'Commission, which was first given to Peter, and afterwards to all the Apostles', who were 'equal' before God.²¹

Brett's preface was followed by Hart's 162-page exposition. Rather than preach to the converted, Hart targeted De Laune's Dissenting followers, particularly those among the Baptists. Hart's opening remarks conveyed a strange combination of hostility and diplomacy.

¹⁹ *Daily Courant*, 21 March 1717.

²⁰ Thomas Brett to Nicholas Brett, 30 May 1743, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.36, fol. 324; Robert D. Cornwall, 'Wagstaffe, Thomas (1692-1770)', *ODNB*.

²¹ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, iv, x, xiv-xv; Thomas De Laune, *A Plea for the Non-Conformists: Shewing the True State of Their Case: And How Far the Conformist's Separation from the Church of Rome, for Their Popish Superstitions, &c. Introduc'd into the Service of God, Justifies the Non-Conformist's Separation from Them* (London: s.n., 1712), 19.

He bluntly informed his readers that he ‘had the misfortune to be educated in the Principles of the Dissenters’ but added that his former Baptist brethren remained his ‘Friends’. There had, apparently, been ‘so many times’ when Hart received copies of De Laune’s *Plea* from Dissenters, urging him to explain why its arguments had not convinced him to ‘leave the Church of England and again be one of them’. Hart made no apologies for the ‘meanness’ of his ‘Style’, adding that the *Bulwark Stormed* would have been ‘less useful to those, for whom’ it was ‘chiefly intended’ had its style been ‘more Scholastick’.²²

One issue to which Hart devoted much attention was defending the traditional practice of infant baptism, which De Laune had dismissed on the grounds that, despite their Christian parentage, several Fathers, including Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine of Hippo, had not been baptised until they ‘came to years’.²³ Citing William Wall’s *History of Infant Baptism* (1705), Hart described paedobaptism as the ‘Practice of the primitive Church in the Days of St. Cyprian, Origen, and Tertullian’. The latter – the ‘eldest of the three’ – lived within ‘150 Years distance from the Apostolick Age’, and spoke of paedobaptism ‘not as a thing then in dispute, but as the common Practice of the Church in his Time’.²⁴ Elsewhere, Hart addressed De Laune’s claim that the Church of England excluded ‘Primitive Antiquity’ from its ‘Liturgies, Rites and Ceremonies’, favouring a ‘Composition of Pagan, Papal Inventions’ instead. De Laune had highlighted the practice of ‘giving the Eucharist to the infant’ – observed between the third and twelfth centuries – as one ancient rite which the Church had ‘laid aside’. Hart scoffed that, by acknowledging this ancient ritual, De Laune was admitting that, as a prerequisite for Communion, ‘Infants were baptized in the primitive Church’.²⁵

According to De Laune, other ‘Papal Inventions’ observed by the Church of England included ‘above forty’ feasts, vigils and fasts, which were not ‘commanded by God’. Anglicans

²² Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 3, 9, 15.

²³ De Laune, *Plea for the Non-Conformists*, 24-25.

²⁴ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 120-21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 128; De Laune, *Plea for the Non-Conformists*, 34-35.

were, therefore, worse offenders for ‘will worship’ than the idolatrous King of Israel, Jeroboam, who ‘varied’ in only ‘four particular Circumstantials of Worship’. Hart defended the Church’s ‘indifferent’ ceremonies, which, unlike Jeroboam’s practices, did not contradict the ‘Command of God’. By exchanging cherubs for ‘Golden-calves’ as the ‘Signs of the divine Presence’, Jeroboam had contravened the teachings of Moses, who, under ‘special direction’ from God, had placed two cherubs on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25: 19-22). Also, rather than following God’s command to restrict the priesthood to the sons of Aaron, Jeroboam appointed the ‘lowest of the People’ priests (Numbers 18). Hart, therefore, denied that ‘every Saint’s-Day’ recognised by the Church was equivalent to a ‘Calf of Jeroboam’s Cow’.²⁶

As a supporter of Tory-Royalist doctrines, such as non-resistance and passive obedience, Hart was equally scathing of Jeroboam’s rebellion against Rehoboam, culminating in the former’s rule over an independent, northern Kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam’s ability to rally a ‘giddy Mob’ and usurp a divinely instituted monarch was exhibited by the republican Puritan, who was ‘no hearty Friend to Episcopacy’. Victims of this ‘good old Cause, to depose Kings, and murder Bishops’ included ‘Saint’ Charles I and James Sharp, archbishop of St Andrews, who was killed by Covenanters in 1679. Far from combating ‘popery’, the ‘Divisions’ fomented by these Protestant schismatics had merely aided the Papacy. That papists often masqueraded as Protestant schismatics was, according to Hart, known to all who consulted *Foxes and Firebrands* (1680), a highly dubious anti-Puritan history of the English Reformation by John Nalson, a Tory divine, and Robert Ware, an Irish Anglican layman. By invoking *Foxes and Firebrands*, Hart clearly sought to deflect De Laune’s charge of ‘popery’ back onto Dissenters.²⁷

²⁶ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 72, 77, 80-81; De Laune, *Plea for the Non-Conformists*, 14-16.

²⁷ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 76, 87, 142, 155-56. For *Foxes and Firebrands*, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, ‘Foxes, Firebrands, and Forgery: Robert Ware’s Pollution of Reformation History’, *Historical Journal*, 54, no. 2 (2011):

Polemical historiography was, of course, nothing new. Its prevalence in the early Church is evidenced by the triumphalist tone of Eusebius's influential *Church History*. This fourth-century work was the only patristic text cited by Hart in the *Bulwark Stormed*, which relied mostly on the arguments of scholars, such as Cave and Wall. English translations of Eusebius's *Church History* dated back to the sixteenth century and were still appearing during the first decade of the eighteenth century. In 1703, an abridged translation by the Nonjuring layman, Samuel Parker, appeared in London. The preface, written by the Nonjuring divine, Charles Leslie, stated that it was translated into English 'for the Benefit of the meaner Sort', who had 'never learnt the true Principles and Practice of Primitive Christianity'.²⁸ Hart's footnotes, however, suggest that he consulted a different, unabridged version – possibly the 1683 Cambridge edition, which was republished in London in 1709. Had Hart been able to read the Latin into which most patristic texts had been translated, he would not have limited his coverage to Eusebius's *Church History*. As will be shown, Hart cited additional patristic texts in his later works. These later citations were, however, mostly devoid of any bibliographical information, rendering them unhelpful to the reader. This lack of attention to detail was uncharacteristic of Hart, who was probably trying to disguise his reliance on English translations.²⁹

During the mid-1760s, *The Bulwark Stormed* was republished in New England, where De Laune's *Plea* was enjoying a healthy afterlife among Congregationalists, who were growing increasingly concerned about the prospect of an American episcopate. By this point, Hart's debut work had been long forgotten in England, where it – along with all his subsequent

307-46. For the varieties of anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England, see Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

²⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Eusebius Pamphilus: His Ten Books of Ecclesiastical History, Faithfully Translated and Abridg'd from the Original*, ed. and trans. Samuel Parker (London: George Sawbridge, 1703), unpaginated preface.

²⁹ Hart, *Bulwark Stormed*, 123, 131, 133. The 1683 edition was an English translation of Henricus Valesius's Latin version (1659). See Eusebius of Caesarea, *The History of the Church, from Our Lord's Incarnation, to the Twelfth Year of the Emperour Mauricius Tiberius, or the Year of Christ 594* (Cambridge: John Hayes, 1683).

publications – only went through one edition.³⁰ Of course, a book's popularity cannot always be measured by the number of editions. Indeed, Jeremy Collier's oft-cited *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain* (1708-14) secured many subscriptions but was not republished until the Victorian period.³¹ Nevertheless, *The Bulwark Stormed* generated little, if any, income for Hart, who described his struggle for subsistence in a letter to Brett, dated 3 April 1717. Writing from London, Hart lamented that he was 'not yet settled in work'. Yet, he remained optimistic that, due to the ongoing 'fair' weather, bricklaying opportunities would soon materialise. This precarious situation had caused Hart's 'poor wife', who remained in Chatham with their children, to become 'very disconsolate'. This letter also sheds light on Hart's relationship with the Brett family. During Hart's absence, his family had benefited from the 'great kindness' of Brett's brother, Jeffery, to whom Hart extended his gratitude. Evidently, there was a strong bond between the two families. Elsewhere, Hart mentioned some unnamed books he had sent to Thomas Brett, further illuminating the two-way flow of knowledge and resources between them.³² Less than two months after this letter was written, Hart's second work, the *Lay-Man's Vindication of the Convocations Charge Against the Bishop of Bangor*, appeared in London, where it was sold by John Morphey and Elizabeth Smith. Clearly predicting that Hart's name would jog few memories, the publishers attributed this work to 'the Author of the Bulwork [sic] Storm'd.' Priced competitively at sixpence, this polemic would have been affordable to a wide readership. The *Lay-Man's Vindication* marked Hart's entry into the Bangorian controversy.³³

³⁰ In late 1763 and early 1764, Daniel Fowle, a printer of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, sought subscriptions for *The Bulwark Stormed*. It is unlikely that Fowle sympathised with this work, given that he aligned with the Patriots during the American Revolution. See *New-Hampshire Gazette, and Historical Chronicle*, 23 December 1763; 6 January 1764.

³¹ For subscriptions to works by Nonjuring authors, see Richard Sharp, "Our Common Mother, the Church of England": Nonjurors, High Churchmen, and the Evidence of Subscription Lists', in *Loyalty and Identity: Jacobites at Home and Abroad*, ed. Paul Monod, Murray Pittock and Daniel Szechi (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 167-79.

³² Hart to Brett, 3 April 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26 fol. 9-10.

³³ *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, 1 June 1717. Morphey published the bulk of the anti-Hoadly literature that appeared during the first year of the Bangorian controversy. Elizabeth Smith published far fewer anti-Hoadly

2. The Bangorian controversy

The Bangorian controversy was triggered by a posthumous publication by George Hickeys, Nonjuring bishop of Thetford, entitled *The Constitution of the Catholic Church* (1716), which charged conforming divines with schism. In response, Benjamin Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, published *A Preservative Against the Principles and Practices of the Nonjurors* (1716), which defended the Revolution settlement, and, controversially, dismissed the doctrine of apostolic succession. Citing Solomon's power over Abiathar, Hoadly argued that bishops derived their authority from the civil magistrate (1 Kings 2:26). Despite its blatant Erastianism, few Juring divines were willing to attack the *Preservative*, which was aimed explicitly at the Nonjurors. Hoadly's subsequent work, *The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ* (1717), was, however, targeted at both 'orthodox' Anglicans and Nonjurors. Based on a sermon preached before George I on 31 March 1717, *The Nature of the Kingdom* centred on Jesus's declaration to Pontius Pilate: 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). Equating 'kingdom' with 'church', Hoadly claimed that 'true' religion in the invisible church stemmed not from any 'popish' state-sponsored coercion to extra-biblical creeds and formularies, but rather from the 'sincerity' of one's beliefs. Hoadly's seemingly anticlerical sentiments generated a torrent of criticism from Tory High Churchmen.³⁴

A *Report* issued by the lower house of Convocation condemned Hoadly's 'doctrines', which 'naturally tend, to breed, in the Minds of the People, a Disregard to those who are appointed to rule over them.'³⁵ Hoadly was subsequently defended in the anonymous *Report*

items, though her loyalties clearly lay in this camp. See Andrew Starkie, *The Church of England and the Bangorian Controversy, 1716-1721* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 60.

³⁴ See Starkie, *Church of England*; William Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate: Benjamin Hoadly, 1676-1761* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2004), ch. 5; Guglielmo Sanna, "'Uprightness of Heart': The Doctrine of Religious Sincerity in Eighteenth Century Anglican Thought", *Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture*, 4, no. 1 (2018): 100-23.

³⁵ *A Report of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, Appointed to Draw up a Representation to be Laid Before the Arch-Bishop and Bishops of the Province of Canterbury; Concerning Several Dangerous*

Reported (1717), which is sometimes attributed to Defoe. The author claimed that, rather than rejecting the appointment of church leaders in ‘Matters of Government and Discipline’, Hoadly had simply denied the authority of humans in ‘Matters of Conscience and Salvation’. Such authority was reserved for ‘our Lord Jesus Christ alone’.³⁶ This argument was rejected by Hart, who named the *Report Reported* as one pro-Hoadly tract he sought to correct in his *Lay-Man’s Vindication*. It was, Hart claimed, preposterous to believe that church leaders had no authority to ‘give an Account for our Mistakes in Faith and Practice’. Such a notion rendered St. Paul a ‘Tyrant’ for condemning the ‘incestuous Corinthian’ (1 Corinthians 5:1-13) and instructing Timothy to ‘warn his Flock’ that Hymenaeus and Philetus were ‘Men of corrupt Minds’ (2 Timothy 2:17). In fact, bishops were empowered by the ‘Holy Ghost’ to continue the succession of ‘overseers’ which dated back to the apostles, whom Jesus commissioned as leaders shortly before the Ascension (Acts 1:2). That bishops were supposed to be more than simply administrators was evidenced by St. John’s condemnation of the bishop of Pergamus, who failed to excommunicate adherents to the ‘Doctrines of Baalim, and the Nicolaitans’ (Revelation 2:14-15).³⁷

Hart proceeded to cite patristic precedent for episcopal power, including Ignatius of Antioch’s declaration – advanced in his *Epistle to the Magnesians* – ‘Let all Honour the Bishop, as they would Honour God’.³⁸ Seemingly quoting from Cyprian’s fifty-ninth epistle, Hart described the ‘Adversary of Christ’s Church’ as someone who ‘strikes at the Bishop or chief Ruler of the Church’. In fact, these quotations were the plagiarised words of Charles Leslie,

Positions and Doctrines, Contained in the Bishop of Bangor’s Preservative, and His Sermon Preach’d March 31, 1717 (London: John Morphew, 1717), 6.

³⁶ *The Report Reported: Or, the Weakness and Injustice of the Proceedings of the Convocation in Their Censure of the Lord Bp. of Bangor, Examined and Expos’d*, 2nd ed. (London: S. Baker, 1717), 24.

³⁷ [Edward Hart], *Lay-Man’s Vindication of the Convocations Charge Against the Bishop of Bangor Being Some Animadversions on the Report Reported, &c.* (London: J. Morphew and E. Smith, 1717), 34-37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39. An English translation of this epistle appeared in *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers, S. Barnabas, S. Ignatius, S. Clement, S. Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Martyrdoms of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, Written by Those Who Were Present at Their Sufferings*, ed. and trans. William Wake (London: Ric. Sare, 1693). An abridged version, containing only Ignatius’s epistles, was published subsequently in Edinburgh (1708) and London (1710).

who had translated extracts of this epistle in a 1698 work.³⁹ Plagiarism was, of course, merely a trifling matter when ‘true religion’ was at stake. Looking to the future, Hart warned that the Hoadliean doctrine of sincerity posed two frightening dangers to the Church. First, it provided the perfect recipe for atheism because it taught

That Priests of all Religions are the same: That no one Sect or Party is of Divine Appointment more than another: That there is no such thing, as one Man or Church having Authority over another in Matters of Faith and Conscience: That every Man has a Right to Interpret Scripture and make Articles of Faith for himself...That Church-Power, is only a fine Name for Church Tyranny.⁴⁰

Second, instead of complementing Hoadly’s aim to extinguish ‘popery’ from the Church, the doctrine of ‘sincerity’ was pleasing to ‘papists’ because it rendered the Church powerless to excommunicate them on doctrinal grounds. Thus, Hart once again sought to deflect the charge of ‘popery’ back onto his opponents.⁴¹

Hart continued to combat Latitudinarianism in his next work, *A Preservative Against Comprehension*, published in London on 5 November 1717 by several booksellers with firm Tory leanings, including Morphew and Samuel Keble of Fleet Street. As with the *Lay-Man’s Vindication*, the title page simply attributed this work to ‘the Author of the Bulwark Storm’.⁴² The preface, dated Chatham, 9 September 1717, was addressed to the ‘Reverend and Learned the Clergy of the Church of England’. Hart did not expect this work to be ‘worthy’ of the clergy’s ‘acceptance’. Nevertheless, he believed that his status as a layman of ‘so low a station in the World’ enabled him to communicate with readers of his ‘own Rank and Quality’ more effectively than clergymen. Without revealing his own Nonjuring principles, Hart also sought

³⁹ *Lay-Man’s Vindication*, 40; Charles Leslie, *A Discourse Shewing, Who They Are That Are Now Qualify’d to Administer Baptism and the Lord’s-Supper. Wherein the Cause of Episcopacy Is Briefly Treated* (London: C. Brome et al., 1698), 43-44.

⁴⁰ *Lay-Man’s Vindication*, 5-6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴² *Post Boy*, 5 November 1717. Keble published both volumes of Collier’s *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*.

to convey a message of solidarity between Anglican and Nonjuring opponents of Hoadliean doctrines. While the Nonjurors were usually the first to ‘suffer’ the charge of being ‘Popishly Affected’, Hart predicted that everyone else who defended the doctrine of apostolic succession would soon receive similar treatment from Latitudinarians. As was characteristic of Tory literature, Hart based this fearful prediction on events from the 1640s. By calling for comprehension, Latitudinarians were allegedly using ‘soft Methods’ to abolish episcopacy and implement a ‘Presbyterian Church-Government’, in which any previous commitment to ‘Moderation’ would be reneged. Such double standards were, apparently, evidenced by the ‘honest’ and ‘plain’ sentiments conveyed by Presbyterians in the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), which equated episcopacy with ‘popery’.⁴³

The schism committed by Presbyterians was, according to Hart, an ‘evil’ sin, condemned by the Fathers. Throughout his clashes with the Novatians, Cyprian had placed no importance on ‘what or how well’ his adversaries preached because they ‘Preach’d in Schism’. Any Novatians who were ‘slain in the actual Confession of the Name of Christ’ remained guilty of the ‘Sin of Schism’, which was not ‘purg’d by Martyrdom’. Equally contrary to the Fathers’ teachings were Hoadly’s ‘Modern Notions, that the Secular Powers can legally deprive Bishops’ of their sees. That civil magistrates exercised no *spiritual* authority over bishops was, Hart claimed, evidenced by Ambrose’s excommunication of Emperor Theodosius during the fourth century. Rather than seeking absolution from the Pope, Theodosius had ‘submitted’ himself to Ambrose. Clearly, Theodosius did not believe that Ambrose had ‘exceeded his Power’ by excommunicating him.⁴⁴ Hart’s theological engagement in the Bangorian controversy shows that plebeian Tory-Jacobitism did not consist entirely of crimes committed by ‘House-breakers’, ‘Thieves’ and ‘Drunkards’, as described in one contemporary Whig

⁴³ [Edward Hart], *A Preservative Against Comprehension. Wherein the Heretical Notions of Judge Hale’s New Year’s Gift, and Some Other Late Latitudinarian Pamphlets are Examin’d and Confuted* (London: Samuel Keble et al., 1718 [i.e. 1717]), unpaginated preface, 65.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19, 25-26, 114.

newspaper.⁴⁵ By the time of the *Preservative's* publication, Hart remained distressed by the threat of schism. Only this time, however, the threat was posed by individuals *within* the Nonjuring communion.

3. The usages controversy

The usages controversy began in 1716, when a group of Nonjuring divines, including Bishops Brett and Collier, called for the restoration of four liturgical practices (or 'usages') contained in Archbishop Cranmer's original 1549 Prayer Book: (1) the mixing of water and wine in the chalice; (2) an oblationary prayer, describing the elements as sacrificial offerings to Christ; (3) a prayer of epiclesis, invoking the Holy Spirit to descend on the elements; and (4) prayers for the dead. Following pressure from continental Reformers, all four of these allegedly 'popish' usages were removed from Cranmer's revised 1552 Prayer Book, which subsequent versions followed closely. That each of these practices was endorsed by the Fathers was, according to the 'Usagers', evidence of their validity. The Usagers' petition for liturgical reform was contested by numerous 'non-Usager' divines, who sought no alteration to the Prayer Book. A bitter pamphlet war ensued in September 1717, when Collier published anonymously his *Reasons for Restoring Some Prayers and Directions*, implying that all who rejected the 1549 Prayer Book were in a state of schism.

In 1924, Henry Broxap claimed that the 'main difference' between the two factions rested 'not upon the doctrines themselves, but on the point of their expression in the Book of Common Prayer'. More recently, however, James David Smith has contested Broxap's analysis, arguing instead that any liturgies 'not written specifically by the Apostles' were viewed predominantly by the non-Usagers as 'inconsistent with Christ's institution.'⁴⁶ Edward

⁴⁵ *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, 22 December 1716.

⁴⁶ See Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 319; James D. Smith, *The Eucharistic Doctrine of the Later Nonjurors: A Revisionist View of the Eighteenth-Century Usages Controversy* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2000), 11. See also Robert D. Cornwall, 'The Later Nonjurors and the Theological Basis of the Usages Controversy', *Anglican*

Hart's engagement in the usages controversy does not fit neatly into either Broxap or Smith's frameworks. In his correspondence with Brett, Hart objected primarily to the liturgical restoration of the usages, mainly on the grounds that it fuelled division within the Nonjuring communion. The *doctrinal* validity of the usages was, however, an issue on which Hart largely refrained from questioning his friend. The exception to this rule was prayers for the dead – a practice which Hart viewed as inconsistent with scripture.

In a letter to Brett – dated Limehouse, 3 October 1717 – Hart lamented that there was now a 'party' spirit among the Nonjurors. To Hart, this 'confusion and disorder' was a self-inflicted injury to the communion, far worse than anything the civil authorities were capable of wreaking. He attributed this dispute largely to generational differences. The non-Usagers were apparently dominated by priests of the 'old deprivation', who had lost their livings following the Revolution. The Usagers, on the other hand, allegedly consisted of younger divines of the 'new conviction', who had refused to take an oath of abjuration of the Pretender following George I's accession.⁴⁷ Certainly, several non-Usagers, including Charles Leslie and Nathaniel Spinckes, were of the 'old deprivation'. Nevertheless, this camp also contained several 'Nonabjurors', such as Matthias Earberry and William Law.⁴⁸ Contrary to Hart's belief that the Usager faction was dominated by Nonabjurors like Brett, its leadership included two Nonjuring bishops of the 'old deprivation': Jeremy Collier and the Scottish Episcopalian, James Gadderar (though many non-Usagers viewed the Scottish Usagers as interlopers in an *English* dispute).⁴⁹

Theological Review, 75 (1993): 166-86; Matthew M. Davis, 'Ask for the Old Paths': Johnson and the Nonjurors', in *The Politics of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Jonathan Clark and Howard Erskine-Hill (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 113-17.

⁴⁷ Hart to Brett, 3 October 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26, fol. 105.

⁴⁸ John Findon estimates that the Nonjuring communion benefited from the reception of only 130 Nonabjurors and 'Penitents', the latter of whom had renounced their oath-taking. See John Findon, 'The Nonjurors and the Church of England, 1689-1716' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1979), 72.

⁴⁹ Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 49.

Regardless of who was leading the Usager faction on the surface, Hart feared that either a 'state politician' or a Jesuit seeking 'proselytes to popery' was covertly behind it. He further invoked anti-popery by observing that those who refused to join this 'reforming' movement would immediately be 'Transubstantiated' into 'hereticks' and 'schismaticks' by the Usagers. Hart was equally aware that, if he joined the Usagers, he would be viewed as a 'schismatick' by 'those of the old Deprivation'. He observed that neither Brett nor any other divines of the 'new conviction' had viewed the Nonjuring communion as 'defective' when they were received into it. Hart was also curious to know why the Usagers did not seek the restoration of various other 'primitive' practices, such as the 'use of unleavened bread in the sacrament', 'the Holy Kiss' and 'the chrism in confirmation'. Despite his friendship with Brett, Hart's loyalties lay firmly in the non-Usager camp. In what was clearly a divergence from typical lay-clerical relations, Hart informed Brett that he and his Usager allies were free to treat him 'as they please', adding that he would 'forgive' them for their charges of schism. He closed by directing Brett to send his response to 'James Barwick', who resided 'next door to the Plasterers Arms', near St Paul's Cathedral. Clearly, Hart was trying to keep a low profile in London, though this, apparently, did not prevent the authorities from tracing him the next day.⁵⁰

A certificate issued at the Middlesex Sessions of the Peace on 9 October 1717 named 'Edward Hart', a bricklayer of Limehouse, as a 'person suspected of being so dangerous and disaffected to his Majesty or his Government'. On 4 October 1717, Hart had been summoned to appear immediately at the 'house of Thomas West Esquire of Poplar within the said County' to 'take the oaths' under the terms of the Security of the Sovereign Act (1714). This law enabled two or more Justices of the Peace to tender the oaths to any suspected papists or Jacobites. While there was 'due proof' that Hart received the summons, the Justices involved testified that he failed to appear before them. In the eyes of the law, Hart was now a 'Popish recusant

⁵⁰ Hart to Brett, 3 October 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26, fols. 106-107.

convict'. Presumably, the individual named in this certificate was the Nonjuring controversialist. If so, the threat of judicial action did not prevent Hart from staying in Limehouse for the short term.⁵¹

In his response to Hart, dated 12 October 1717, Brett denied that the Usagers were dominated by 'young men of the new conviction', adding that Collier was of the 'old deprivation'. He also observed that, far from being novel sentiments, the Usagers' reverence for the 1549 Prayer Book mirrored earlier teachings found in George Hickes's *Christian Priesthood* (1707) and the conforming High Churchman John Johnson's *Unbloody Sacrifice* (1714). Neither theologian, however, had overtly sought liturgical reform. Brett maintained his belief that the removal of the four usages from the 1552 Prayer Book rendered it and all subsequent versions 'defective'. He focused particularly on the prayers of oblation and epiclesis. The words 'given' and 'shed', declared by Jesus during the Last Supper, showed that the 'symbols of bread and wine' were being offered to God as 'his representative body and blood' (Luke 22:19-20). Citing Hebrews 9:14, Brett added that Jesus made this offering through the 'eternal spirit'. It was, therefore, necessary to 'bless the bread and the cup by a prayer of oblation and invocation of the Holy Ghost as Christ did.'⁵²

Brett predicted Hart's counterargument that the scriptures provided no 'form' for these prayers. In fact, the 'form of words' used by Jesus were 'not proper' for Christians to replicate. Where Jesus 'offered his own body to be broken and his own blood to be shed', Christians offered the 'memorial or commemoration of that body and blood long since broken and shed.' Christians were, nevertheless, 'obliged to offer the elements and invoke the Holy Spirit as he [Jesus] did'. Contrary to Hart's belief that the Usagers were 'running into popery', it was the 'Church of Rome' that 'threw out' these 'primitive' prayers first, believing that they 'spoiled

⁵¹ London Metropolitan Archives, MR/R/R/025/21; *The Statutes at Large, from Magna Charta, to the Thirtieth Year of King George the Second, Inclusive*, ed. John Cay, 6 vols. (London: Thomas Baskett et al., 1758), 4:80.

⁵² Brett to Hart, 12 October 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.38, fols. 249-50.

their Doctrine of Transubstantiation'. Finally, in response to Hart's reference to other 'primitive' practices, such as the 'Holy Kiss', Brett stated that he would not 'oppose the introduction' of anything that was a 'universal practice of the church at or before the time of the Council of Nice [*sic*].' Unlike the usages, however, these other 'primitive' practices were 'indifferent'.⁵³

Despite his apparent brush with the law, Hart was still living in Limehouse when he responded to Brett on 13 November 1717. As with his previous letter to Brett, Hart lamented these 'unhappy debates', which he described as 'a dishonour to our Blessed Lord and Saviour' and an 'advantage' to Juring 'complyors'. Quoting from Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hart claimed that this separation had 'perverted', 'discouraged' and 'raised dissidence' in 'many and grief in us all'. As a result of these divisions, the London congregation of Robert Montgomery, a Scottish Episcopalian exile, was 'as good as destroyed'. Montgomery 'unwarrantably began' to use Archbishop Laud's abortive 1637 Scottish Prayer Book – which contained the prayers of oblation and epiclesis – in his services, but later decided that he wished to 'discontinue the use of that form'. Montgomery had concluded that he could only achieve this by leaving his congregation. Unnamed members of the Nonjuring hierarchy had apparently 'consulted' Hart about 'fixing' Montgomery with another congregation. The Usager 'party', however, soon discovered that Montgomery intended to discard the 1637 liturgy. Suddenly, Montgomery was being represented by the Usagers as a man who was 'very unfit' to hold clerical orders. Hart was then asked to 'promote the interest' of a 'Mr. Park' as Montgomery's replacement. Park informed Hart that, if he assumed the position, he would use the 1549 liturgy in his services. Hart responded by doubting that Park had the 'authority' to use this form, adding that he 'would not joyne with him' until he was 'better informed...with respect to that matter.' The same reservations were voiced by members of Park's prospective congregation, making

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fols. 250-51.

its survival even more unlikely. It is, therefore, clear from these anecdotes that Hart was not only a respected and influential figure among the London Nonjuring community, but also someone who was willing to disagree openly with clergymen.⁵⁴

After describing these grassroots divisions, Hart proceeded to address Brett's implication that the prayers of oblation and epiclesis were 'not there to be found' in the scriptures. Hart failed to understand how, under Brett's rule, these prayers were 'essential', whereas the use of unleavened bread – a practice attributed to Christ in the scriptures – was merely 'indifferent'.⁵⁵ Also, the 'Holy Kiss', another allegedly 'indifferent' practice, was 'five or six times mentioned in the New Testament'. Hart closed by assuring Brett that he would be 'heartily glad' if, at some 'proper season', the Nonjuring clergy agreed unanimously to restore all these 'primitive' practices, 'excepting prayers for the dead'. Hart provided little explanation for his opposition to prayers for the dead, though he did refer briefly to *Some Primitive Doctrines Reviv'd: Or the Intermediate or Middle State of Departed Souls* (1713), published anonymously by the Scottish Episcopalian divine, Archibald Campbell.⁵⁶

In this work, Campbell described an intermediate state between death and Judgement Day. This middle state was, Campbell claimed, divided into several zones, specific to different levels of righteousness. As with Augustine, Campbell believed that prayers *could* assist the souls of those who were neither undoubtedly good nor resolutely evil, while denying that they served any purpose for damned souls.⁵⁷ Far from representing mainstream Usager beliefs, Campbell's purgatorial eschatology was rejected by Collier and Thomas Deacon (who was

⁵⁴ Hart to Brett, 13 November 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26, fols. 141-42; Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 51-52. I have been unable to trace any further information on 'Mr. Park'. Hart probably consulted William Wake's English translation of Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*.

⁵⁵ Hart to Brett, 13 November 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26 fols. 144-45. Hart must have been referring to Matthew 26:17, which states: 'Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"' (KJV).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 144-45. Biblical support for the 'Holy Kiss' can be found in: Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; and 1 Peter 5:14.

⁵⁷ For Campbell's discussions of the afterlife, see Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78-79; Martha McGill, 'A Protestant Purgatory? Visions of an Intermediate State in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, 97, no. 2 (2018): 153-86.

Collier's stepson). Both denied that the 'Assistance of the Living' could affect the ultimate destination of souls, arguing instead that prayers for the dead served only as a means of celebrating Communion with the 'faithful departed'.⁵⁸ There may, therefore, have been some truth in Hart's claim – based, albeit, on rumours – that *Some Primitive Doctrines Reviv'd* had been condemned by the late George Hickes, to whose teachings both parties often appealed. In his next and final publication, Hart adopted a decisive stance in the usages debate, arguing that Campbell's discussions of the afterlife contravened the scriptures.⁵⁹

On 13 February 1718, Hart's *No Reason to Alter the Present Liturgy of the Church of England, on Account of Prayers for the Dead* was published in London by John Morpew, who sold both Usager and non-Usager works.⁶⁰ It differed from Hart's previous works in the sense that it was published anonymously as the work of a 'Lay-Hand of the Non-Juring Communion', without any references to Hart's earlier publications. This difference can be attributed to Hart's changing priorities. Where his earlier works were Tory High Church attacks on Latitudinarianism and Dissent, this final polemic addressed an internal dispute within the Nonjuring communion. In the preface, Hart claimed that the contents of *No Reason to Alter* appeared originally in two letters to Campbell, with whom he became acquainted during one of Campbell's numerous stays in London. On 31 December 1716, Hart had sent two letters containing his 'notions of the separate state of the dead' to Hilkiah Bedford, from whom he sought criticism, while apologising that they had not been written by an 'abler pen'. Presumably, these were the same two letters that eventually became *No Reason to Alter*. The

⁵⁸ Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 73; Jeremy Collier, *Reasons for Restoring Some Prayers and Directions, as They Stand in the Communion-Service of the First English Reform'd Liturgy, Compiled by the Bishops in the 2d and 3d Years of the Reign of King Edward VI* (London: John Morpew, 1717), 18-20; Thomas Deacon, *The Doctrine of the Church of Rome Concerning Purgatory Proved to be Contrary to Catholick Tradition, and Inconsistent with the Necessary Duty of Praying for the Dead, as Practised in the Ancient Church* (London: Richard King, 1718), xi-xii.

⁵⁹ Hart to Brett, 13 November 1717, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.26, fol. 144.

⁶⁰ *Post Boy*, 13 February 1718. Morpew had previously published Collier's *Reasons for Restoring*.

title, however, shows that Hart also wished to display this work as a non-Usager polemic, thereby implying that Campbell's eschatology represented mainstream Usager belief.⁶¹

Hart began this work by stating that 'Tradition alone' failed to provide a 'sufficient foundation' on which to 'build an Article of Faith'. Rather, all prayers needed to be 'built on the Word of God', as outlined in the scriptures. Hart conceded that, if one insisted that the Books of the Maccabees were 'Canonical Scripture', biblical support for prayers for the dead *could* be advanced. In 2 Maccabees 12:38-46, Judas Maccabeus commands that prayers and expiatory sacrifices be offered in the Temple of Jerusalem for Jewish warriors who died with idolatrous charms on their persons. Hart, however, denied that this 'instance' rendered such prayers an 'obligatory' practice. Similarly, while the Fathers 'from Tertullian downwards' frequently described praying for the dead as a 'Practice in the Church', none commanded it as a 'Duty incumbent on all Christians by virtue of some divine Law'. Rather than arguing simply that prayers for the dead were not *commanded* in the scriptures, Hart proceeded to claim that such prayers were *contrary* to the scriptures. Where Henry VIII had stipulated that a daily mass be celebrated for his soul after his death, 'much better Men', such as Abraham and Joseph, had simply requested that their bones be 'decently interr'd in their own Caves'. Furthermore, the presence of Moses and Elijah in a 'Glorified State' during the Transfiguration showed that they were not 'detain'd in an Intermediate State' – the 'foundation' on which prayers for the dead were 'founded'. That the Fathers did not agree 'unanimously' in the existence of a middle state was evidenced by Ignatius's declaration, contained in his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*: 'the nearer I am to the Sword, the nearer I am to God.' Also, in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Cyprian claimed that those who died for Christ would 'immediately' partake in his joy.⁶²

⁶¹ [Edward Hart], *No Reason to Alter the Present Liturgy of the Church of England, on Account of Prayers for the Dead* (London: J. Morphew, 1718), 3-5; Hart to Bedford, 31 December 1716, Bodleian, MS Rawl. Letters 42, fol. 161.

⁶² [Hart], *No Reason to Alter*, 6-7, 11, 13, 16, 24, 33. Hart probably consulted William Wake's English translation of Ignatius's *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*. Cyprian's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* appeared in *The Genuine Works of St Cyprian, Archbishop of Carthage, and Primate of All Africa; Who Suffer'd Martyrdom for the Christian Faith*

No Reason to Alter marked the end of Hart's short polemical career. Less than a fortnight after its publication, the Usagers approved a new liturgy, which restored the four usages removed from the 1552 Prayer Book. Its prayers of oblation and epiclesis were taken, not from the 1549 Prayer Book, but from the late-fourth-century liturgy, the *Apostolic Constitutions*.⁶³ Fuelled by dwindling numbers on both sides, a partial reunion between the Usagers and non-Usagers was achieved in 1732. Nevertheless, a faction of 'extreme Usagers', led initially by Campbell and Deacon, persisted until the early nineteenth century. But what happened to Edward Hart?⁶⁴

4. Conclusion: a nonjuring 'martyr'

In a letter to his son, Nicholas, dated 30 May 1743, the elderly Thomas Brett remembered 'one Hart a Bricklayer' of 'much better understanding than usual in those of his Rank'. Brett proceeded to describe *The Bulwark Stormed*, lamenting that his one copy of the book had never been returned by an individual to whom he had lent it twenty years previously. Brett reported that, during his last visit to London, he had visited William Innys's shop to ask if he had any bound copies. Innys 'answered in the negative' but ordered 'his man' to 'get some bound.' For some unexplained reason – possibly due to age-related memory problems – Brett had left London the next day without the book. Brett was keen to revisit his 'long preface' to *The Bulwark Stormed*, though he also sought a copy as a means of 'remembering poor Hart who was made a martyr for endeavouring to make converts to the non-jurors.' While he was working at Chatham naval dockyard, Hart had 'began to make proselytes amongst the workmen'. His

in the Year of Our Lord 258. Together with His Life, Written by His Own Deacon Pontius, ed. and trans. Nathaniel Marshall (London: W. Taylor and H. Clements, 1717), 167-84. It is possible that Hart consulted Marshall's English translation, which was published on 26 April 1717 (see the *Daily Courant* issue for that day).

⁶³ Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 66-71; Smith, *Eucharistic Doctrine of the Later Nonjurors*, ch. 3.

⁶⁴ Charles Booth, a Deaconite clockmaker, is often described as the last Nonjuring bishop. In 1804, he was said to be leading a congregation of approximately thirty in his Manchester home. Claims that Booth died in 1805, shortly after emigrating to Ireland, are disputed. See Broxap, *Later Non-Jurors*, 289-90; Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 142.

actions were reported to the dock commissioner, who ‘clapt him on Board a ship just ready to sail’. Due to the ‘hard usage’ Hart ‘underwent’ while on board, he ‘soon died.’⁶⁵ That Hart, a zealous lay convert to High Church Toryism, had been forced to replicate the outdoor evangelism of Restoration Dissenters is ironic to say the least. His willingness to risk martyrdom was mirrored subsequently by evangelical itinerant preachers, who were often victims of violence fuelled by local officials. In 1740, William Seward, a Calvinist evangelical and associate of Whitefield, died from injuries sustained in a mob attack. Unlike De Laune or Seward, however, Hart’s martyrdom went virtually unnoticed.⁶⁶

Brett’s 1743 letter provides no indication of the date of Hart’s death. A convincing clue to this puzzle can be gleaned from the last will and testament of ‘Edward Hart, Bricklayer of Chatham’, dated 14 April 1718. The testator claimed to be ‘in Bodily health’, implying that his death was not perceived to be imminent. He named his wife, Frances Hart, as the executor and sole beneficiary of his estate. Yet, this information is inconsequential because the Nonjuring controversialist failed to refer to his wife by name in any of his known surviving correspondence. Far more revealing, however, is evidence that the testator – despite his land-based trade – was engaged in maritime activities at the time of writing the will. This can be discerned from both his reference to the ‘perils and dangers of the seas’ and his subsequent statement that his body would be committed to the ‘earth or sea as it shall please God to order’. Probate was granted on 11 July 1721, suggesting that the testator probably died in either 1719 or 1720. These dates tie in with the seemingly abrupt cessation of Hart’s correspondence with Brett in the Autumn of 1717.⁶⁷

Despite the obscure circumstances surrounding his death, Hart was clearly a respected figure among the Nonjuring communion, which he served in several roles. Exploring Hart’s

⁶⁵ Thomas Brett to Nicholas Brett, 30 May 1743, Bodleian, MS Eng. th. c.36, fol. 324.

⁶⁶ See John Walsh, ‘Methodism and the Mob in the Eighteenth Century’, *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G.J. Cuming and Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History*, 8 (1972), 213-27.

⁶⁷ National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/580/426.

correspondence with Brett has elucidated the former's activism among the London Nonjuring community. During the Montgomery affair, Hart was called to assist in the matching of clergymen to congregations, thereby showing that he exerted a degree of influence at grassroots level. Also, as a Tory polemicist, Hart aided the plight of High Church and Nonjuring divines by combating the seemingly interlinked threats of Latitudinarianism and Dissent. As is clear from Hart's first three publications, the Nonjurors operated not on the fringes but in the very centre of the early eighteenth-century politico-theological arena. Complementing Hart's role as a polemicist was his 'low station', which, he believed, enabled his message to resonate effectively among his lay readers, especially his former Dissenting brethren. More broadly, Hart's writings enhance our understanding of the ways in which the eighteenth-century laity engaged in doctrinal controversies, particularly those rooted in patristics. As a lay artisan who supported High Church doctrines, such as non-resistance and the apostolic succession, Hart does not conform to the common stereotype linking plebeian theology and 'radical' anticlericalism. In fact, Hart was plagued persistently by a sense of social inferiority and self-doubt regarding his abilities as a controversialist. Yet, the assertive way in which he confronted Brett over his leading role in the usages controversy shows that Hart's subservience to the Nonjuring clergy should not be overstated. Rather, when faced with bitter divisions within his own communion, Hart was willing to take a decisive stance, even if it meant defying someone who was not only a clergyman, but also a friend.

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