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## Healing the Nation: Royalist Visionaries, Cromwell, and the Restoration of Charles II

Bernard Capp

### Abstract

The radical visionaries of the civil war era had several royalist counterparts, today often overlooked. This article examines the three most significant: John Sanders of Harborne, Walter Gostelo, and Arise Evans. God, they claimed, had directed them to press Cromwell to restore Charles II, perhaps through a marriage alliance. This alone could settle the nation, and it would usher in a millennial age of peace. Sanders combined support for the crown and Church with a remarkable call for the nailers of Birmingham to strike against their oppressive employers. His family responded to his visionary mission with deep hostility. Evans attracted far greater public interest; he and Gostelo were able to present their ideas to Cromwell in person, and Gostelo travelled to the exiled royal court. The visionaries' message, if ultimately unacceptable, spoke to the concerns of many contemporaries anxious and uncertain about the future.

**Keywords:** Oliver Cromwell; Charles II; visions; millenarianism; civil war; royalists

Rarely do Cromwell, Charles II, the Fifth Monarchy, episcopacy, strikes and proto-trade unionism feature on the same page, as they do in a broadside published by a Staffordshire ironmonger in 1655. John Sanders of Harborne defies any simple classification. Inspired by messages from God and angels, he created an idiosyncratic fusion of political, religious, social and economic ideas which he sought to deliver in person to Charles I and later Cromwell, and set out in print for a wider readership. His family and friends thought him mad, a charge he indignantly rejected, and his marriage and business collapsed. Long overlooked, his story is well worth rescuing from oblivion.

**From the Henrician Reformation, England had witnessed a succession of visionaries and prophets, among them Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent, executed in 1534 after pronouncing the king's damnation, the pseudo-messiah William Hacket, executed for treason in 1591, and Lady Eleanor Davies, who prophesied the downfall of Charles I and lived to see her prophecy fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> The upheavals of the civil war generated a far larger crop of radical seers jostling for attention, including the Ranter Abiezer Coppe, the Fifth Monarchist Anna Trapnel, and Gerrard Winstanley, whose Digger movement was founded in obedience to visions and voices both "in trance and out of trance".<sup>2</sup> Several scholars have observed that once a vision was published, whether orally, in writing, or in print, it presented a challenge: should it be accepted as divinely inspired, rejected as demonic, or dismissed as fraudulent or a sign of madness?<sup>3</sup> Many contemporaries accepted that visions could be inspired, though they were often uncertain. In December 1648, for example, Elizabeth Poole was allowed to address the Council of Officers, to deliver a message from God on the fate of the king. The officers listened attentively, questioned her closely, and accepted that her vision was indeed divinely inspired. But when she returned a week later with another message, their**

response was sceptical. Much depended on how well a message matched the ideas and aspirations of the audience. Poole's first message, that God wished the army alone to direct the nation's affairs, was readily acceptable. Her second, that it could put the king on trial but must not harm him, proved divisive.<sup>4</sup> Whether or not a vision was accepted, political and religious figures had another judgement to make: was it a potential threat, or an opportunity they could turn to advantage? That issue had shaped responses to the Holy Maid of Kent and Hacket, among others.

Visions played a significant role in the radical movements of the 1640s and 1650s, and have attracted much scholarly attention.<sup>5</sup> This article has a different focus. Visions were not exclusive to radicals, and the biblical texts that often inspired them were available to all. Royalist visionaries, their messages and significance, have been largely overlooked, except in the case of Arise Evans.<sup>6</sup> This article has three aims. First, to recover the visionaries' stories and the proposals they put forward in God's name. Second, to explore the impact of a visionary's activities on his own immediate family, an issue that is rarely addressed but richly documented in the writings of John Sanders. And third, to assess the visionaries' wider impact, among both royalists and parliamentarians. Sanders had apparently limited public impact, so here the focus switches to the stories of Walter Gostelo and Arise Evans. All three were certain their visions and prophecies were divinely inspired, and that it was their duty to obey the divine commands they had received.

Sanders's broadside, *An Iron Rod for the Naylor and Trades-men near Brimingham*, provides an outline of his visionary career. Brought up in the ironmongery trade, he believed he had been called to deliver a divine message to the king and Parliament. He was to be "an Herald or Ambassadour from the great Kingly power and Parliament of Heaven", to reveal "how that the Church and State must be rebuilded and reformed in this Land". Four great kingdoms had already been overthrown, he explained, paving the way for a new "Kingly power under the Scepter of Jesus Christ". This echoed the thinking of the Fifth Monarchists, who interpreted the civil war and regicide in terms of the Old Testament prophets. Daniel had interpreted his vision of four great beasts as signifying four great kingdoms which would be succeeded by an everlasting kingdom ruled by "the saints of the most High". The Fifth Monarchists believed that the civil wars heralded this new age, a heaven on earth to be ruled by Christ or his servants.<sup>7</sup> Sanders anticipated an age of "righteousness and true holiness" in very different form: "our true born King Charles Stuart the second being restored, and Oliver Cromwell by the grace of God being united unto him, the civil magistracy will be a wall to the orthodox church ministry". To prove his credentials he described how God had sent him to the king at Holmby in 1647 to warn of the fate awaiting Charles if he ignored his message; how he had predicted the battle of Worcester in 1651; and how he had foretold the fall of parliaments. In December 1653, God had made him put on old clothes, rent the seams, and parade through Birmingham with a carpenter's rule in his hand, proclaiming "that the parliament that very day and hour was dissolving in London, being 88 miles from the City". The carpenter's rule was to "signifie that Parliaments time of sitting was measured out to sit no longer"; the rent garments signified parliament "renting and tearing" the nation apart; and putting off his old shoes signified that the people must put off "their old natural sinful affections".<sup>8</sup>

Thus far the broadside has the flavour of Old Testament prophecy. But lower down the page it shifts abruptly in tone and content. Sanders now delivers a fierce warning to "you rich, covetous and uncharitable ironmongers of mine own native country, and also to other trades and occupations in other countries". God will exact vengeance unless they stop "grinding the

faces of the poor”. They must “give better prices, 2d in 12d to poor workmen, that they may not have cause to hate you”. If they ignore his call, Sanders offers a way forward, in a marginal note crammed into the bottom of the page. Citing a custom by which business was traditionally suspended for a month “for the ending of harvest and mending of trade, which rich men were the cause of for their own gain”, he urged the nailers to exploit it. The “poor labouring Trades-men [should] hold together, by assisting and maintaining one another one fortnight or a moneth, and forbear working for the cunning Egyptian Task-masters now in the Spring”. In other words, they should strike, and at a time of their own choosing. Let ironmongers manufacture the nails themselves, he urged, adding that “certainly you that make the ware are the most & most considerable, though least valued, and worst provided for”.<sup>9</sup> A strike would secure better terms, and in the millennial age, he promised, “wilfull oppressors shall leave their evil waies, or be suddenly rooted out”. In the age shortly to dawn, “God hath promised to deliver the poor from the slavery of the wicked, Psalm 12.”<sup>10</sup> He offered another way forward too, less militant: “I will draw a Petition to the Lord Protector for a Corporation, that we may make orders among our selves; and those that have set up our Trade within these 7 or 8 yeers (not having served just apprenticeships) may be called in question”. Many apprentices had dropped out to serve in the war, and then allowed to practise their trade without completing their term, which provoked great resentment. Reducing their numbers would help the nailers negotiate better terms.<sup>11</sup>

The broadside thus shifts, within a few lines, from the spirit of Old Testament Israel to one with the flavour of nineteenth-century England and early trade-unionism. Its title was carefully chosen. Ironmongers supplied their nailers with bundles of rod iron, four and half feet long, to be fashioned into nails. The title thus suggested both the nailers’ raw material and the biblical iron rod wielded by God to punish wrongdoers.<sup>12</sup> Sanders, we note, was not a nailer but an ironmonger, one of the wholesalers whose covetous practices he condemned. Seventeenth-century metal-working was a domestic industry, and the nailers were the largest, least skilled, and poorest group within it. As semi-independent craftsmen, they received their raw materials from the ironmongers, often on credit, and used their small-scale hearths and simple tools to manufacture the nails. These they delivered to the ironmongers, who carried them to markets and shops throughout the country. We do not know if Sanders’s call had any response, but the next century and a half saw repeated friction between the nailers (and other metal-workers) and ironmongers. And the nailers were not without some bargaining power. They could threaten to move to a different employer, or undermine the business of a bad one by filling their sacks with defective nails; and in the eighteenth century, at least, there is evidence of successful local collective bargaining.<sup>13</sup>

Sanders was far from alone, of course, in speaking out for the poor and oppressed. Gerrard Winstanley, for example, had sought to trigger the collapse of the social, economic and political order by urging agricultural tenants and labourers to join the new Digger communities, leaving landowners to work their land by themselves.<sup>14</sup> Yet Sanders cannot be fitted within the radical sectarianism of the age. He denounced religious radicals as heretics and enemies of the true church.

The main purpose of the broadside was to draw attention to a much longer tract Sanders had recently published at his own expense, sold at the Angel in Cornhill. The bookseller and collector George Thomason acquired the broadside on 22 April and the larger octavo work, somewhat belatedly, on 17 June.<sup>15</sup> Its title was similar: *An Iron Rod put into the Lord Protectors Hand, to break all Antichristian powers to pieces*. Curiously it contains none of the diatribes against oppressive ironmongers, and nothing on the plight of the poor. Running to 68 pages, it is divided into two parts. The first elaborates Sanders’s mission, and the shape

of the reformed church and state he envisaged. The second chronicles his sufferings at the hands of his wife and her family, who dismissed his visions as the ravings of a madman and set out to ruin him. These woes culminated in an extraordinary scene of domestic violence, with an equally extraordinary response when Sanders issued his own bill of divorce.

The first part of the work fleshes out the ideas summarised in the broadside. It is directed to Cromwell, addressed throughout in highly deferential terms. Though repeatedly denied an audience, Sanders identifies Cromwell as the instrument God has chosen to establish a new order.<sup>16</sup> There are obvious parallels with Winstanley's appeal to Cromwell in *The Law of Freedom* in 1652, and the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers's appeal in April 1653, after the fall of the Rump. Both compared Cromwell to Moses and urged him to lead the people to the Promised Land.<sup>17</sup> But Sanders warned that Cromwell would be swept aside if he failed to perform his duty. He feared power was already blinding the Protector's eyes, and explained that "God hath sent me to shew you your danger by plots, and which way to take to appease his wrath". His pamphlet appeared as nation-wide royalist conspiracies in the winter of 1654-5 were breaking into the open.<sup>18</sup>

Sanders explained that the civil war had begun with the pretence of rousing Protestants against Papists, but that some had then sought to impose a false Presbyterian church. In response, an angry God had allowed Protestants to destroy each other, while Catholics remained as strong as ever. The Roman Church must indeed fall, but it "must be done by love and a spiritual war". Sanders had no sympathy for puritans of any stripe. He had few regrets, either, for the bishops, "cast out for their corruption". God had "suffered the instruments of his wrath to pluck the Protestant Church government to pieces, when it was so old that it could stand no longer".<sup>19</sup> Cromwell must build it anew. "There is now a beginning of a fifth Monarchy or Kingly power; Your Highnesse is the first man God hath raised to be the man to erect it". But God was losing patience. Recent plots were a sign of divine anger and the near-fatal mishap in September 1654, when Cromwell's coach had tipped over in Hyde Park, was another warning.<sup>20</sup>

The true Church, Sanders explained, had three elements, which he elaborated with biblical citations. At its head Cromwell must appoint a "High Priest" presiding over a reformed episcopal order, with twelve "Apostolic" bishops and seventy Elders to preach, teach and assist in church government.<sup>21</sup> The old bishops had starved their flocks, while the new gathered churches were led by ignorant men motivated merely by greed.<sup>22</sup> The new Church must wage a spiritual war against all its enemies, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, and Catholics.<sup>23</sup> Turning to the secular order, Sanders claimed that God had cut off the king as punishment for the corruption of his ministers, but insisted that a new king would shortly arise. Cromwell must restore Charles II, and together they would establish a just order, with twelve "temporal Judges in chief" paralleling the bishops.<sup>24</sup> The universities would be reformed, and parish churches "restored to their Pristine adornments, to make them the beauty of holinesse, as Gods word requireth, without superstition or idolatry". Parish ministers would feed the people with "the sincere milk of Gods word", and uphold the Sabbath.<sup>25</sup> Sanders's religious vision contained both ceremonial and evangelical elements.

The first section ends with reflections on the fate of Charles I. Sanders blamed it on his determination "to maintain the ancient Rights of the Protestant Church", and dismissed claims that he had "almost turned Papist". But "I speak nothing in his behalf", he added. God had caused him to foretell the king's death, which must therefore have formed part of his providential design. So he will not condemn those who had brought it about; as with Christ's death, "they that were the instruments, did not know what they did, God hiding it from their

eyes by their spiritual blindness”. But he predicts the ruin of the “Pharasaical Presbyterians”, who had put to death their High Priest (Archbishop Laud) and raised an army that had opened the gates to a swarm of sects and heresies. Charles’s death, foretold in scripture, had set in train a process that would eventually culminate in the destruction of all sects and heresies, the conversion of Jews, pagans and Muslims, and the reign of Christ.<sup>26</sup>

The second section switches abruptly to a far more personal narrative, chronicling Sanders’s visions and the sufferings they had brought him. The story begins in June 1643 when Sanders, still an apprentice, and his master Robert Bloomer were on a sales-tour in the Home Counties. As he was serving at a fair in Newport Pagnel, Buckinghamshire, he saw a vision of a woman in a blue cloak, her face as “black as an Oven”, striking her face with her hands as if mourning the loss of her husband or children. This apparition he later interpreted as the Church in mourning, with kingly power unable to protect it from new heresies. His immediate response had been shock. Retreating to their inn, “heart and stomach sick”, he vomited blood. That evening, he described the vision to his master, who was sceptical. Over the next few days they moved on to fairs at Hemel Hempstead and Watford, and then began their journey homeward. They met up with Sanders’s father, with his own wagons, and one night the two parties stayed at Towcester where Sanders, sick and weak, lodged at the Peel inn. His uncle and a brother came to see him, worried about his health but incredulous over his vision. That night, feverish and fearing he would die before morning, Sanders had several new visions. First, an angel warned that he would face terrible temptations that night, but promised that God would stand by him. “Dear friends”, he insists in his narrative, “it was no dream nor fancy; for I was awake, and had my perfect memory.” He then saw, as in an open book of conscience, all the sins he had ever committed, which reduced him to despair, and two demons appeared at his bedside to lay them before God. Another Devil then materialised, adorned in majesty like an emperor, and urged him to renounce the Christian faith in return for great rewards in this life, a Faustian pact he was able to reject. The demons reappeared in several more forms, but at dawn the angel comforted him that he had overcome all temptations, and was restored to health. The angel then delivered the Lord’s commission: Sanders must direct the king to make peace and work with parliament to reform both church and state. He was to carry a similar message to parliament, and both would face ruin if they ignored these commands. The angel also revealed to him the shape the reformed church must take. For in the work of building this new order, “God had ordained that I must be one of the three [alongside the king and parliament], and my Talent was to shew first the Church-government”.<sup>27</sup>

Once back home, Sanders recounted his visions and commands to his friends and family. They told him the age of revelations was over, and that these must have been delusions contrived by Satan. They urged him to ignore the angel’s commands, and for three years he reluctantly followed their advice. So after completing his apprenticeship, he looked to marry, and was soon matched with a “rich mans daughter of my own trade”. This was Bridget, middle daughter of Richard Bissell, a prosperous ironmonger of Yardley, Worcestershire. Sanders now set up in business on his account at Halesowen, five miles from Birmingham. He tells us he “kept neer 60. Nailors at work to make iron ware. I kept great trading, and many horses to send ware up unto other Countries, for to serve whole sale to many Chapmen.”<sup>28</sup> This prosperity, however, was to prove short-lived. For Sanders now decided to undertake at last the mission God had given him, a decision that triggered a succession of woes at the hands of his wife’s family. He commented ruefully that “if I should put them in a Book, it would be larger then could be read in the longest day of the year, and yet all true and good reading”.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of the civil war, the king had surrendered to the Scots, who transferred him to parliament. Early in 1647 he was taken south to Holmby (or Holdenby) House, in Northamptonshire, where he was guarded by troops under the command of Colonel Richard Graves. Sanders felt moved to deliver God's command to him there, and found the king playing bowls at Boulton Court, near Northampton, attended by numerous noblemen and gentlemen. But "possest with slavish fear", he was too nervous to approach him and turned instead to Graves, who was his "neighbour-countryman, and of great acquaintance with his kindred and family". The family connection, and the fact that Graves was a moderate eager for a political settlement, may have helped inspire his mission. He spelled out his message, and they talked for some time. Graves, however, would not let him speak to the king. "Countryman, Countryman," he said, "trouble not your selfe with these things, but go home and follow your calling, for there are many which are crack-brain'd comming with such stories to the Parliament". Sanders was stung by the slur, but followed the advice and returned home, feeling eased of his burden having delivered his message, if indirectly. When the king was removed from Holmby by Cornet Joyce, early in June, Sanders made another fruitless attempt to deliver God's message.<sup>30</sup>

The same year witnessed the collapse of Sanders's marriage. He and his wife had initially lived amicably together, but "she fel off to be my bitterest enemy". She and her close kin now saw him as mentally deranged. Expecting her first child, she moved back to her parents' house and refused him access. Sanders complained that her family had already "gotten a great part of my best goods and stock to their house, using much desperate cruelty against me". They did allow a visit after she had given birth, and the couple patched up their differences. But that evening, as Sanders went out to his horse, his wife's brother attacked him with a club, and the feud was reignited. They "sold my horses among them, and broke me of my Trade". They persuaded his father that he was distracted and his father, already alarmed by Sanders's self-appointed mission to the king, agreed to have him placed in the custody of a doctor "for a while".<sup>31</sup> Once restored to liberty, he went to see his wife and infant daughter, still living at her father's house, and urged her to put aside their differences and start afresh. She seemed amenable, but when her mother and sister Katherine returned to the house, they persuaded her that he was a deadly enemy to them all. As he sat with the baby on his lap, Bridget came from behind and struck him with his own staff, seized him by the throat, and banged his head against the wall. Her sister, "a great lusty wench", seized the staff and beat him about the head, while Bridget now attacked him with an axe, though he was able to parry the blow and fight off her sister. Bitter recriminations predictably followed. He told Bridget that he would forgive her only if she broke off all contact with her kin. She refused, cursing, and wished she had ratsbane to poison him. Sanders thereupon secured a warrant to have the family arrested, but he was easily outmanoeuvred; his brother-in-law had Sanders arrested on an unspecified charge of felony and thrown into gaol. His father and father-in-law later came to a private agreement, and proceedings were dropped by both sides. Sanders agreed to forgive his enemies, and wrote off the losses he had suffered, which he says amounted to over £200.<sup>32</sup>

Sanders now lived with his father, and set about rebuilding his trade. He had considerable success, and his estranged wife eventually decided she would after all like them to live together again. His father persuaded him to agree, and the couple now set up home in Harborne, two miles from Birmingham, living quietly together and enjoying a "good stock of cattel, and horses, and trading". But "about the time as the Levellers did rise against the Parliament", presumably the Leveller-inspired army mutiny in spring 1649, Sanders felt moved by the spirit to publish "a little book concerning the present misery of the times, both for Church and State". This was *A Description of the Ten Commandments concerning this*

*late War*, deploring the misery of the Church and the evil of “covetous and new fangled Teachers”.<sup>33</sup> No copy appears to have survived. This plunge back into the world of prophecy and public affairs shattered the family’s fragile unity. His wife left him again, and even his father turned against him. Sanders tells that us he now suffered the “greatest calamity” of his life, and concluded that God was punishing him for having neglected his divine mission. It would seem that he was imprisoned again on some charge fabricated by his wife’s family. His father said he would not seek to his release because, if freed, he would soon be “imprisoned for meddling with King and Parliament-affaires”. He had already been gaoled at Buckingham by soldiers who had seized his horses and goods and carried him to Aylesbury, where he had been tried for his life by a Council of War. During these troubles, his wife’s kin had again seized many of his goods and cattle. Once he was released, they feared he would prosecute them, and decided to counter-attack. So when Sanders attended Birmingham market, his brother-in-law John Bissell had him arrested for the ‘theft’ of two of his cattle that he had managed to recover. A justice unravelled the fraud, and told Bissell that “hanging was too good for him”. Bissell’s father, who had been unaware of his son’s plans, was able to negotiate another informal settlement.<sup>34</sup>

During the troubles after the publication of his “little book”, Sanders’s wife and her father visited him in prison where Bissell told him, in a scoffing manner, that he would like to see the couple divorced. Sanders retorted that he was more than willing. He vowed indeed that unless his wife brought their infant daughter to see him within three days, he would pen a bill of divorce, written in his own blood if necessary, and justify his action to the world. Lest this should encourage others to put away their own wives, he made a bizarre vow to “go such a hard way, that no one dare follow such an example”. And this he proceeded to do. Assured in a vision that God approved, he cut off the top joint of the little finger of his left hand.<sup>35</sup>

Sanders’s “Bill of Divorcement”, confirmed and published six years later, is an extraordinary document. Inspired by the biblical injunction in Deuteronomy 24.1 to cast out an “unclean” wife, it mixes legal formalism with personal recriminations. Sanders rehearsed the cruelty of his wife and her family, and recalled that they had often urged a divorce. He explained that God had given him “a Wife of Fornications”, as he had done the prophet Hosea, to symbolize the nation’s spiritual adultery. His divorce, like Hosea’s, symbolized how the nation must reject its spiritual whoredom. By that he understood the destruction of the true church and the king, both acts in flagrant contradiction to what parliament had pledged. The dissolution of several parliaments in quick succession proved that Hosea’s prophecies referred to England as well as ancient Israel. It had been Sanders’s “unhappy predestination” to endure a miserable marriage to fulfil God’s design, and now to divorce her to show what the nation must also do. The Bill expresses the hope that he and his wife would both now enjoy a “spiritual marriage to the Lamb Jesus”, but also declares them both free to marry again, should they so wish, “as Hosea did”.<sup>36</sup>

The text then makes another sudden transition in style and content, to close with a formal petition to the Protector. For three and a half years, Sanders explains, he has travelled to London to deliver God’s messages, though always denied access. His petition therefore rehearses his visions and revelations, to establish his authority as God’s herald. In the spring of 1651 he had predicted that the king of Scots would invade England and come into Worcestershire, where he would be defeated, God’s punishment for having espoused the Presbyterian cause. This prophecy he had proclaimed at Birmingham and in many other places, including to Lady Graves, whose son, the colonel, he predicted would accompany the Scots’ army. Graves had fled abroad after Holmby to join the prince of Wales, and did indeed serve in the invading army; he was captured at Worcester and gaoled in the Tower. Sanders

had been arrested several times for predicting an invasion, and lost his stock and trade once more. Released after Worcester, he had come to London to deliver another warning to Cromwell about the fate of Parliament; denied an audience once more, he had delivered his message to Colonel Barkstead.<sup>37</sup>

With his business in ruins again, Sanders now moved to Ireland to set up as an ironmonger in Dublin. But in autumn 1653 he felt compelled to deliver a new message, and proclaimed in Westminster Hall that the new Nominated (Barebone's) Parliament would fall within weeks. After repeating this message to Barkstead, now Lieutenant of the Tower, he travelled back to Warwickshire, broadcasting his message as he went. And on Monday 12 December, the very day Parliament was dissolved, he was moved to put on old torn clothes and walk barefoot through the streets of Birmingham, holding a carpenter's rule, and proclaiming God's message. The rule or rod signified that God had measured Parliament's time, and found it exceeded. And he explained that Ezekiel's image of skimming a pot signified the ruin of those members, the "scum", who had been against ministers and church government. Power would now "be under one head suddenly, much like the power of a King, but not a King, which meant the Lord Protector". Sanders admitted that many who saw his performance called him a fraud, while others thought him mad. It had also been "griefe to my friends and kindred after the flesh". He insisted that he was sane, and "no Ranter, or Quaker, or strange Opinionist". Even so, within a few days he had been rearrested, and was gaoled for a month at Warwick.<sup>38</sup> Most of 1654 he spent moving between London and Dublin, pursuing his trade and badgering Barkstead with more letters. Early in 1655 several new dreams and visions foreshadowed a peace between the Protector and the king, and reformation of both church and state. But more alarming visions, early in March, told him of a large-scale uprising to overthrow the Protector. Though his sympathies had always been royalist, he dashed off warning letters and carried them to Barkstead. Charles was to be restored only at the time and by the means that God had appointed and revealed through his messenger. "Plotting is not of God", he insisted, "nor will never doe the King or any of his friends good."<sup>39</sup> With those words the tract ends abruptly. He had warned Cromwell, and had laid out the means God had designated for national reconciliation and unity. Plans for further publications did not materialise, and almost nothing more is known of his fate.

**Sanders was acutely conscious of the challenge he faced in convincing the world that his visions and prophecies were indeed sent by God. In his detailed account of the traumatic night in the inn, he insisted that he had been fully awake throughout. These were divine visions and visitations, not the troubled dreams of a sick man. From the start he had found his family and friends highly sceptical. Later, seeking to obey God's commands, he said he had often shrunk from the heavy burden that God had laid upon him. His wife's family had exploited the charge of madness to strip him of his property. But some had thought Christ possessed by devils, he reflected, and St Paul had also been called mad.** Commenting on his parade through Birmingham, he said he would have given £100 not to have had to do it. He was sufficiently rational and calculating to have a young man accompany him, carrying his normal clothes and shoes. He had changed back into them at the town's end, and retraced his steps, this time "civilly", to demonstrate to onlookers that he was no madman.<sup>40</sup> Sanders was also careful to insist that his prophetic insights came from the spirit alone, not from human reasoning. In his dedicatory epistle to Cromwell he explained that he would not draw on "any other mens labours, study, or Scripture phrases, lest you should rather think it to be brain knowledge then the dictates of Gods Spirit".<sup>41</sup> At this distance it is of course impossible to assess Sanders's mental condition. He was a capable businessman, a quality not often associated with the mentally ill (or indeed with visionaries), and had rebuilt his trade after being ruined by his enemies. But the self-certified divorce bill

and severed finger suggest very different mental qualities, and his own father doubted his stability. An idealistic obsessive, Sanders was consumed by the sense of his divine calling.

We have no evidence from other sources to confirm, modify or refute Sanders's narrative. **And we have almost nothing to tell us what impact he achieved, if any. Several arrests in 1651 during the Scottish invasion, and again in 1653, indicate that his activities were seen as posing a potential threat. He must have achieved some wider notoriety too, for in September 1655 the editor of *The Faithful Scout* placed "the strange prophesie of Mr J. Sanders of Harburne" among the newspaper's headlines. Had the editor only belatedly encountered the tract? Or had Sanders made another visit to London with fresh revelations?<sup>42</sup> If Sanders's public impact was limited, his writings remain of value for their ideas and especially for their graphic account of his domestic troubles. Rarely, if ever, do we learn in such vivid detail about a visionary's impact on family and close kin, and their response to the inevitable disruption of family life.**

Sanders's dream of Cromwell restoring Charles II to his throne appears far-fetched. Yet in this unsettled and fluid political world almost anything might seem possible. Most contemporaries viewed monarchy as the natural form of government, and the Stuarts as the only legitimate claimants. Few saw the Protectorate as a permanent settlement. Even Cromwell had driven forward the regicide on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds, and was not opposed to monarchy as an institution. The lawyer-politician Bulstrode Whitelocke recalled discussing the situation with him in November 1652, and said that Cromwell had suddenly demanded, "What if a man should take upon him to be King?" Whitelocke had countered that Cromwell should instead bring back Charles II, as the only way to settle the nation, and Cromwell allegedly replied that the suggestion deserved further consideration.<sup>43</sup> In the autumn of 1654 Lord Broghill, a former royalist turned Cromwellian, told the Protector about widespread rumours of a restoration to be underpinned by a match between Charles and Cromwell's daughter Frances. According to his chaplain, Broghill had been assured by some close to the king that their master was willing to explore this option, and Broghill had already sounded out Cromwell's wife and daughter. Cromwell apparently listened attentively to the arguments he spelled out in support of such an arrangement.<sup>44</sup> Nothing came of these moves, but in 1659, after the Protector's death, we find the Marquis of Newcastle speculating whether Lambert or Fleetwood, now the most powerful generals in England, might be persuaded to reach an accommodation with the king.<sup>45</sup> Only a year later, of course, Charles was indeed restored through the agency of General Monck, who reaped the handsome reward of a dukedom. Five years earlier, Sanders had assured officers they would have nothing to fear if they helped Cromwell take such a step. If they lost their positions as majors, colonels or generals, they could look to become instead lords, earls or dukes.<sup>46</sup>

It is unlikely that Monck had ever heard of John Sanders. But Sanders was not the only royalist prophet to imagine a restoration engineered by the Protector. Walter Gostelo and Arise Evans, both considerably older men, campaigned for a similar settlement.<sup>47</sup> Gostelo, born in 1604, was the son of an Oxfordshire gentleman, and three of his brothers were educated at Oxford. Walter became a tradesman in London and, according to one account, served for some time as milliner to Charles I. Before the war he travelled abroad quite widely. His career as a prophet began after he crossed to Ireland late in 1652. There he was soon associating with Lord Broghill and the earl and countess of Cork; his cousin Leonard was the earl's secretary. From March 1653 Gostelo experienced a series of dreams, visions, and angelic visitations, increasingly ambitious in scope. They told him that Broghill and Cromwell were to be God's instruments in restoring Charles II and the Church of England, and that Cork's younger daughter, Lady Elizabeth Boyle, aged 13, was to be the king's bride.

In a glorious new age, Catholic nations and the Jews would convert to Protestantism, and Charles would become “King of the World”. An angel told Gostelo that he was to carry a message to Cromwell, whom Gostelo viewed as “a Man of blood”, the charge often levelled at Charles I. The angel explained that he was to overlook Cromwell’s past and instead guide his future. Gostelo outlined his mission to Cork and Broghill, and it is just possible that he was linked in some way to the secret correspondence between Broghill and the exiled court. Totally lacking in discretion, however, later that year he was gaoled by the military authorities on suspicion of treason. On 12 January 1654, shortly after his release, he announced his divine mission to a large congregation in Youghall church, and proclaimed Charles II king. Promptly rearrested, he endured another spell in prison. At Easter 1654 he crossed to England in the hope of securing an audience with Cromwell, and eventually succeeded. He describes a lengthy meeting at Hampton Court in June, where he explained his mission. Other officials were present, including Sir Gilbert Pickering, and he also met Thomas Goodwin, a leading Independent and one of Cromwell’s chaplains. There were no further audiences, however, and he complained that the Council had blocked further access. Instead he reiterated his message by letter, and worked on an account of his mission. It was finished in early November, though he lamented that “I have not this day on[e] penny in the world” to have it published. *Charls Stuart and Oliver Cromwell United* eventually appeared in late January 1655. By then he had sent five letters to Cromwell and five to the king, and he inserted one of each as postscripts to the book, along with an open letter to the Jewish leader Menassah ben Israel, who was campaigning for the Jews’ readmission to England.<sup>48</sup>

The publication of Gostelo’s book coincided with a wave of royalist conspiracies, which inevitably brought him under suspicion. Major Richard Creed reported in March that Gostelo had sent forty unsolicited copies to a bookseller in Warwick, with a covering letter identifying potential sympathisers in the area and claiming to have Cromwell’s approval for his activities. Creed dismissed the claim and confiscated the books.<sup>49</sup> Gostelo nonetheless persisted. At Easter 1656 he was gaoled at Northampton by the mayor, and interpreted his sudden death a few days later as divine retribution.<sup>50</sup> In December he crossed to Flanders, and made his way to the impoverished court of Charles II at Bruges. There he had an audience with the king and his royal brothers, and presented another copy of the manuscript account he had given Cromwell. He sent a detailed account of the meeting to Cromwell, via a friend in the Protector’s household. It stressed the king’s piety and remorse for his profligate past, which Gostelo doubtless hoped might assuage Cromwell’s distrust of Charles on that score.<sup>51</sup> He remained in Flanders until May 1657, and described several more meetings with the king and his brothers. New visions revealed that God still intended Cromwell to restore the king, but was about to destroy London (“sinful as Sodom & Gomorrah”) unless it returned to obedience. After reporting his vision to the king and his brothers, Gostelo hastened back to London to convey this dire warning.<sup>52</sup> His double message was set out in *The Coming of God in Mercy, in Vengeance*, published after some delay in April 1658. It commended Cromwell for having declined the offer of the crown and dissolved the “dirty” parliament, leaving the way still open for him to fulfil God’s design. The authorities took a different view. The book’s printer, Peter Lillicrap, was arrested in May and imprisoned in the Tower for five weeks.<sup>53</sup> Cromwell’s death in September instantly nullified all Gostelo’s predictions.

Rhys Evans, born around 1607, had experienced visions from the age of fourteen, winning him the nickname Arise, which he adopted, and had proclaimed the doom of Charles I in the early 1630s. Highly vocal in London in the 1640s, he claimed to speak as the Almighty’s mouthpiece, for “there is an union between Christ and me, so that I dwell in Christ”. On one occasion, a scandalised crowd thought he was claiming to be Christ, and responded with shouts of “Crucify him”. Evans spent time in Newgate and Bridewell facing charges of

blasphemy, but he was no radical. He stoutly defended what he (and others) now referred to as the “Protestant” church, disputed with Baptists and Independents, and denounced the Presbyterians.<sup>54</sup> In 1647, when the king was held at Holmby, Evans urged Cromwell to bring him to London, and place him back on the throne. Remarkably, Cromwell gave him a lengthy audience at his lodgings in Drury Lane, with his sons-in-law Ireton and Fleetwood also present, where Evans argued that such a move would win popular support for the army. He claimed to have argued with the Army Council for four hours, urging it not to seek vengeance against the king, and later often argued with army officers at Whitehall.<sup>55</sup> Though bitterly disheartened that his advice was ignored, he appealed to the Rump in September 1651 to expiate its sins by restoring Charles II. His letter circulated between Cromwell, his chaplain Hugh Peter, several MPs, and London’s mayor, Thomas Andrews, albeit to little effect.<sup>56</sup> Evans welcomed the Rump’s dissolution in April 1653, and petitioned Cromwell to restore the king. This, he argued, would “save an Ocean of English blood from being spilt” and make Cromwell and his family “glorious Nobles for ever”. Recognising that he was too lowly for his voice to carry weight, he rushed his appeal into print in the hope of galvanizing a “generall Petition” of the whole nation and soldiery.<sup>57</sup> Evans urged Charles, for his part, to forgive Cromwell’s regicidal past, and negotiate a peaceable restoration by marrying one of his daughters. **He claimed that Cromwell had tried, in vain, to resist the king’s execution. In new visions he saw the Protector weeping in shame for his part in it, and walking amicably arm-in-arm with the king’s ghost as they discussed the restoration of his son.** Cromwell had royal blood in his veins, he insisted, so a marriage would not bemorganatic. And he might well make himself king, whereupon any of Europe’s royal heads would be willing to marry into his family.<sup>58</sup> There were indeed rumours abroad in 1655 that the young Louis XIV might marry one of his daughters.<sup>59</sup>

Pride’s Purge, the king’s execution, and the Rump’s dissolution in 1653 had left most parliamentarians bereft. “You went out to fight for the King and Parliament”, Evans reminded them, “but now there’s none”. Moderate royalists and parliamentarians alike fretted about the future. Many royalists recognised that armed insurrection was unlikely to succeed. But parliamentarians could not be complacent, for “if the King come in by the sword, you will become Slaves, and force him to use tyranny”.<sup>60</sup> A peaceful, negotiated restoration might thus appeal to moderates on both sides as the safest way forward. Royalist agents in England reported Evans’s activities, and his pamphlets were sent to potential sympathisers overseas. “I am sure my books are gone all over Europe,” he boasted in 1654. **He certainly attracted considerable attention in the confusion following the fall of the Rump, and complained that he was pestered by people “all the day long”. “Every one saith to me, why do not you, who have this wisdome of God, go to the General and shew him the way?”**<sup>61</sup> His pamphlets were in sufficient demand to be worth pirating. He repudiated two short pieces published under his name in February 1654, commenting sternly that while they contained many of his own words, “I do not use to write the same matter over again, and put it out in print; therefore be not deceived.” *Mr Evans and Mr Penningtons Prophecie* (1655), predicting a royalist Fifth Monarchy, was another piece of catch-penny opportunism. All the visions it described had been experienced by one William Pennington, otherwise unknown, with no mention of Evans beyond the title-page. Among Evans’s admirers was the anonymous but well-educated author of *King Charls his Starre* (1654). He urged Cromwell and the whole nation to study the writings of that ‘eminent saint and servant of God, Mr Arise Evans, who hath publikely declared the truth of God these twenty years’. Though some ‘worldlings’ might dismiss him as a ‘pseudo Prophet’, his predictions had repeatedly proved true, and England would never be at peace until it heeded his message. Evans and Gostelo enjoyed some practical

**support as well as praise.** Evans, an impoverished journeyman-tailor, acknowledged in 1655 that he had received almost £50 from several “Persons of Quality” to fund his pamphlets. The only sponsors he named were William Satterthwayt of Gray’s Inn, later an Exchequer official, and Samuel Starling, who after the Restoration served as alderman, sheriff and mayor of London. **He also mentions an admiring baronet and another gentleman, a ‘great Historian’, and referred to Monck’s royalist kinsman Sir John Granville (created earl of Bath after the Restoration) as “my very good friend”.**<sup>62</sup> Gostelo’s acquaintances appear to have included Ralph Bathurst, at that time a young cleric and physician, who had come to terms with the new regime, despite his royalist principles, and had even composed a poem addressed to Cromwell.<sup>63</sup> Though penniless in November 1657, Gostelo was able to fund the publication of his second pamphlet a few months later, and give away numerous copies.

**Both Charles and Cromwell were willing at least to toy with a wide range of political scenarios. Charles even negotiated indirectly with Levellers and republicans.** When Gostelo met the king and his brothers at Bruges, they were probably less interested in his visions than in exploring whether any significant parties might promote his agenda. His account of one meeting suggests that Prince James had been mainly eager to question him about Cromwell.<sup>64</sup> Cromwell, as we have seen, gave Gostelo an audience at Hampton Court, while Evans mentions several encounters, and was able to spell out his mission in detail to the Protector’s household and family. On one occasion, he states, Cromwell’s daughters asked if he had any commission from the king. Some people, by contrast, suspected that Evans was a Cromwellian instrument, a suggestion he indignantly refuted.<sup>65</sup> Evans was indeed always ready to address the Protector in blunt terms. He reminded Cromwell in February 1655 of his “now tottering falling condition”, hated by the people, much of the army, and most members of parliament. England faced the likelihood of nation-wide rebellions and tax-strikes, and total confusion whenever Cromwell died. Evans offered his project as a lifeline for a dangerously embattled ruler.<sup>66</sup> He addressed Charles in similarly blunt style. He told him that God had been deeply offended by the court scandals of the early Stuarts, and declared that “King James destroyed his Throne, by making a Law to profane the Sabbath”. The debauched royalist armies had deserved to be defeated. The abortive risings early in 1655, the work of similarly “bloody irreligious” cavaliers, proved that Charles could never be restored by violence. A negotiated restoration thus offered a lifeline for royalists too. In the summer of 1654, with parliamentary elections approaching, Evans had urged voters to shun both committed royalists and parliamentarians, and support candidates who had been ‘neuters’ in the civil wars. Moderates, he insisted, were the most likely to restore national harmony, and help unite Cromwell and Charles.<sup>67</sup>

Gostelo and Evans became acquainted in 1654, and they often discussed their respective visions. Gostelo scolded Cromwellians for having treated Evans so poorly, for he had “almost worn himself out, that you might turn and live.” Evans had indeed neglected his trade to pursue his mission, and admitted that his family had suffered. His wife was worried and sometimes angered by his activities. Evans, for his part, cited Gostelo’s visions in one of his own tracts, while the royalist vision of Eleanor Channel, which Evans had published, also features in Gostelo’s writings.<sup>68</sup> Neither made any mention of John Sanders, nor he of them. Sanders, of course, lived near Birmingham, making only short visits to London. The similarity between Sanders’s titles and Evans’s *The Voice of the Iron Rod, to his Highness the Lord Protector*, published a few weeks earlier, was probably coincidental, with both writers simply echoing biblical phraseology.<sup>69</sup>

The royalist conspiracies early in 1655, and the repression that followed, dealt a heavy blow to any rapprochement between parliamentarian and royalist moderates. Even so, Ralph Bathurst claimed that Gostelo was devastated by Cromwell's death. He had declared himself ready to be put to death if his predictions failed to materialise, the fate ordained for false prophets in scripture (Deut. 18.20-22). He survived until 1662, described as a broken man who now refused to talk about his former visions.<sup>70</sup> Arise Evans proved far more resilient. In May 1659 he responded to the collapse of the Protectorate by setting out an extraordinary new model of government. England, he pointed out, was now in a state of hopeless confusion. The restored Rump was fragile, the Good Old Cause a sham, and the army leaders self-seeking. Charles II, though "the best of all kings", had repeatedly failed to establish his rights. Moreover, many former monarchs had been oppressive, while parliaments had proved "worse then our kings, laying heavier burdens upon us".<sup>71</sup> Evans offered his own, divinely inspired solution to this impasse. The Rump should call back Charles II, and he and his descendants would govern England. Charles would be subordinate to a new and higher monarch, in effect a "people's king". This supreme figure would summon a single-chamber parliament every three years, and together they would hold Charles and his government to account. Charles would thus occupy a far less exalted position than earlier monarchs, the price he must pay to be restored. The new "higher" king and his successors would be chosen by lot, in a process overseen by the Lord Mayor. He would have the power to do good, redressing grievances, but his circumstances and limited powers would render him incapable of doing harm. For this king would be literally a man of the people. He was to be a poor and godly London artisan, at least fifty years old, and worth no more than £5. Though honest and diligent, he would have been sometimes dependent on alms to support his family. As king, he would receive an annual income of £100. Evans insisted that the elevation of such a humble, "everyman" figure reflected the spirit of the New Testament, and that "in such a King, Christ comes to reign on earth".<sup>72</sup> This was a truly bizarre constitution, yet carefully balanced. Like Harrington's *Oceana*, it aimed to secure stability while preventing any slide into tyranny. There are hints that Evans saw himself as potentially the first people's king, and his age and circumstances certainly matched, but the choice would be God's, revealed through the lot. This was surely the most idiosyncratic model of government ever to emerge in this period, and perhaps any.

Evans's proposal was of course ignored. For a time he floated the idea of Lambert restoring the king, and then used an audience with William Lenthall, the Rump's Speaker, to try to interest him in promoting a restoration.<sup>73</sup> In a pamphlet dated 30 January 1660, the anniversary of the regicide, he appealed to General Monck to restore the king, and resurrected his scheme for a twofold monarchy. More surprisingly, almost on the eve of the Restoration, he showed for the first time some of the concern for the poor that Sanders had earlier voiced. Evans lambasted the covetous clergy, and denounced the operation of the law in a spirit that contained something of both the Levellers' humanity and the Fifth Monarchists' moral rigour. He argued that it was cruel, irrational and against scripture to hang thieves. Evans insisted, indeed, that "all the thieves that have been put to death for only thieving ... have been murdered, and that their Blood lyeth heavily upon this Nation; and especially upon the Royal Family". Their guilt helped explain God's wrath towards them.<sup>74</sup> Coming from a royalist, that was an astonishing charge. Like Sanders, Evans had an independent spirit that defies classification.

In 1659 Evans had developed a fungal disease that disfigured his face. Following the king's return, he hoped to be cured by the royal touch. No-one was willing to present him, for his face was now "nauseous to view" and "fetid of smell", but when he encountered the king in St James's Park, one day in August 1660, he is said to have kissed his hand, and rubbed his

“ulcerated and scabbed Nose therewith”. Evans’s own account suggests a more respectful encounter, and he claimed to have been quickly cured.<sup>75</sup> He certainly survived for at least another five years, and now looked for some reward for his former labours. In an open letter to the king he claimed to have done much for the royal cause, and not only in raising morale. He argued now that his proposal of a marriage between Charles and Cromwell’s daughter had served royal interests by breeding suspicions and divisions within the New Model army, as the Protector had feared. His meetings with Lenthall, he hinted, might have encouraged the Speaker to invite Monck to march into England, which had paved the way for the Restoration.<sup>76</sup> The king rewarded him with a grant of £70. In 1664 Evans petitioned for a regular pension, reminding Charles that “all the world” was aware of his contribution, and that his books had been “carried by Marchants into all Countryes and translated into divers Languages”. Whether out of gratitude or compassion, this secured him another £20.<sup>77</sup> In July 1665 we find Evans complaining to Sir Henry Bennet, Secretary of State, **over the government’s refusal to reward him for his recent publication, *Light for the Jewes*. This had warned that God would send war and plague to punish the nation’s sins unless it repented, though it also predicted a decisive victory over the Dutch. But the government was informed that it was merely a reprint of an old piece. Evans acknowledged that he had indeed written it in 1656 and passed it to “Mr John Andrews, a Person of Quality” in Castle-yard, but had been unable to fund publication and had merely distributed manuscript copies. If any pirated edition existed, he insisted, it had been without his knowledge. The tract itself had been written in response to *The Hope of Israel*, by Menasseh ben Israel, who had visited England to urge Cromwell to readmit the Jews. Evans had composed a reply, translated into Latin and delivered to Menasseh, arguing that it was Charles not Cromwell who would restore the Jews. Menasseh, the interpreter reported, was unconvinced. *Light for the Jewes* was the most overtly millenarian of Evans’s writings. Christ will soon reign and Charles, his viceroy, will lead an army of 144,000 to overthrow the Turks, occupy the Holy Land, and restore and convert the Jews. “Charles Steeward is the chosen of God, who shall Rule all Nations with a Rod of Iron, and Jesus calls him his son”. Charles would also have two key colleagues: the archbishop of Canterbury, and a prophet whose “Works will make him known”, presumably Evans himself.<sup>78</sup> Nothing more is heard of him, and the plague he had predicted may well have swept him away. He was clearly dead by 1672, when Joseph Blacklock published a collection of extracts from two of his old pamphlets, pointing to victory in the new Dutch War that had just broken out. The originals, it explained, could be viewed at Blacklock’s coffee-house in Ivy Lane.<sup>79</sup>**

**The dreams and visions so often described by men and women in early modern England had multiple meanings for contemporaries, and sometimes for the visionaries themselves. A dream or vision might be merely the natural product of the mind, reflecting the concerns, fears or hopes of its waking hours. In other cases, especially in puritan circles, it could be understood as part of a spiritual journey, in which divine guidance both by night and day led eventually to assurance of grace and salvation. A dream or vision might have an overtly visual element, but in other cases the individual was guided more subtly towards a divine insight.<sup>80</sup> The visions of Sanders, Gostelo and Evans belong to a very different, prophetic category, and had no soteriological dimension. These visions were unambiguous messages and commands, sent by God to be communicated to the nation and its rulers. Many contemporaries in this time of upheaval were desperate for providential signals of God’s plans, or any other clues to the future. The period also saw an upsurge of interest in the secular prophecies of Merlin, Mother Shipton, and the like, and in astrological predictions. Arise Evans drew**

on Merlin, other ancient prophecies, and astrological predictions as well as his visions, and such eclecticism was not uncommon. Ralph Josselin, a moderate puritan minister, recorded numerous dreams with a millennial or political dimension, and while most reflected biblical images and prophecies, he too pored over the prophecies of Merlin and Grebner as well as astrological predictions.<sup>81</sup>

Radical prophets such as Abiezer Coppe saw the “Great Ones” of the land as God’s enemies, facing destruction unless they repented. Their royalist equivalents, by contrast, identified Cromwell and Charles as the instruments God had chosen to usher in the new golden age. The period witnessed, perhaps for the first time, competing visionaries, mirroring the rivalry between royalist and parliamentary astrologers. John Sanders repudiated Ranters and Quakers, and prophesied a Fifth Monarchy utterly different from the millennium envisaged by the Fifth Monarchist movement. Arise Evans insisted that the royalist visions of Eleanor Channel, which he published, were far superior to the “songs and sayings” of the Fifth Monarchists’ prophet Anna Trapnel, and dismissed the simpletons who saw Trapnel as “the Diana of the English”.<sup>82</sup>

The royalist visionaries made intriguing contributions to the flood of social, political, and religious ideas generated by the revolution, from Sanders’s proto-trade unionism to Evans’s pauper monarchy and fierce criticism of past royal behaviour. Their vision of a peaceful Restoration achieved by consent was one shared by many moderates, and not too far from what did eventually occur in 1660, though of course without Cromwell and without its millennial dimension. Its wide-ranging appeal rested in part on the fact that Cromwell and the royalists both had clear goals (healing and settling in Cromwell’s case, restoration for the royalists), but little idea of how to achieve them, or where God was leading the nation. The vision of a harmonious reconciliation guided by divine providence had an obvious attraction. But the mechanism proposed, including a possible marriage between Charles and Cromwell’s daughter, was unpalatable and politically difficult. According to Evans, his suggestion of a marriage had angered Cromwell, who knew it would breed divisions and suspicion in the army. Even so, many parliamentarians and royalists gave Evans a hearing. No doubt Cromwell was highly sceptical, but he would have accepted at least the possibility of God using an unlikely messenger to convey his wishes, just as the officers had listened to Elizabeth Poole in 1648. Royalists could see the visionaries’ usefulness, and after the Restoration, the king was ready to acknowledge Evans’s contribution in sustaining morale. John Sanders, by contrast, had voiced a social radicalism that probably put him beyond the pale. Moderates would have recoiled from his call for strikes to better the lot of the poor, while his prophetic display in Birmingham was all too reminiscent of Quaker behaviour. Long before the Restoration, Sanders had already vanished into oblivion.

<sup>1</sup> On Barton and Davies see e.g. Watt, *Secretaries of God*; on Hacket, Walsham, “Frantick Hacket”.

<sup>2</sup> Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*, 13, 16-20; for the radical movements, see e.g. Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*; Bradstock, *Radical Religion*.

<sup>3</sup> Wiseman, “I Saw No Angel”, 131 and *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Brod, “Politics and Prophecy”, 403-10.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Mack, *Visionary Women*.

<sup>6</sup> Hill, “Arise Evans”.

<sup>7</sup> Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*.

<sup>8</sup> Sanders, *Iron Rod* (brs); Sanders, *An Iron Rod put into the Lord Protectors Hand*, 64-5.

<sup>9</sup> *Iron Rod* (brs).

<sup>10</sup> *Iron Rod* (brs)

<sup>11</sup> James, *Social Problems and Policy*, 173-4, 205.

- <sup>12</sup> Psalms 2.9; Rev. 2.27, 12.5, 19.15.
- <sup>13</sup> Rowlands, *Masters and Men*, 26-8, 80-4.
- <sup>14</sup> Winstanley, *True Levellers Standard*.
- <sup>15</sup> The Thomason shelfmarks are respectively 669f19(72) and E842(23).
- <sup>16</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 1.
- <sup>17</sup> Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, sig. A2; Rogers, *To His Excellency*, brs.
- <sup>18</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 2; Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy*, chaps. 6-7.
- <sup>19</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 5-6.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-21. On the Hyde Park incident see Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, iii.474.
- <sup>21</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 6-11, 17-18.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-14.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-5.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-9.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-32.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-6.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. A2, pp.37-44.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-6, 58.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-8. For Graves see Firth and Davies, *Regimental History*, i.102-7.
- <sup>31</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 48-50.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-4.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. A2v-3, pp. 54-5.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-7.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-8.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-61.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-3; Firth and Davies, *Regimental History*, i.114-15.
- <sup>38</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 63-6; *Iron Rod* (brs); see Ezekiel 24.6.
- <sup>39</sup> *An Iron Rod*, 66-7.
- <sup>40</sup> *Iron Rod* (brs); *An Iron Rod*, 64-6.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1..
- <sup>42</sup> *Faithful Scout*, 246 (21-28 Sept. 1655), 1961. The issue also contains news about Arise Evans.
- <sup>43</sup> Spalding, *Diary of Bulstrode Whitlocke*, 282.
- <sup>44</sup> *A Collection of the State Letters of ...Roger Boyle*, 21-2; Burnet, *History*, i.124-5.
- <sup>45</sup> Warner, *Nicholas Papers*, iii.125.
- <sup>46</sup> Sanders, *An Iron Rod*, sig. A4v.
- <sup>47</sup> Both have short entries by Thomas Corns in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- <sup>48</sup> Gostelo, *Charls Stuart and Oliver Cromwell*, 48-58, 70-1, 82-90, 98-110, 124-5, 146, 182-4, 270-310 and *passim*; Gostelo, *For the Lord Protector*, brs.; Birch, *Thurloe*, v.673; *ODNB*, Gostelo.
- <sup>49</sup> Birch, *Thurloe*, iii.212-13. Gostelo's letter mentioned Sir James Hayle of Snitterfield and his son Richard.
- <sup>50</sup> Gostelo, *Coming of God*, sig. A4-5.
- <sup>51</sup> Birch, *Thurloe*, v.672-5; Gostelo, *Coming of God*, sig. C7v-D. Cromwell was said to have dismissed any idea of restoring Charles because he was 'so damnably debauched': Burnet, *History*, i.124-5.
- <sup>52</sup> Birch, *Thurloe*, v.672-5; Gostelo, *Coming of God*, sig. A7v, C3v, 7v-8, D6v-7, Ev-E4v, 8.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. B3-4v; *ODNB*, Gostelo.
- <sup>54</sup> Evans, *Eccho*, 53-69.
- <sup>55</sup> Evans, *Eccho*, 71-3; Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince Charles*, 18-19.
- <sup>56</sup> Evans, *Voice from Heaven*, 27-40.
- <sup>57</sup> Evans, *To his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell*. The text also appears as an 'Addition' to his *Voice from Heaven*.
- <sup>58</sup> Evans, *Voice of King Charls*, sig. A6-7v, pp.8-14; Evans, *Euroclydon Winde*, 1-4, 8-11.
- <sup>59</sup> Warner, *Nicholas Papers*, iii.3. Other rumours linked Cromwell's daughters to Cardinal Mazarin's nephew and heir, and the Swedish king's brother: *ibid.*, 75, 221.
- <sup>60</sup> Evans, *To his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell*, sig. A2v-3.
- <sup>61</sup> Evans, *Voice from Heaven*, sig. D2; Evans, *Voice of Michael*, 27; Evans, *Euroclydon Winde*, sig. A5v-6.
- <sup>62</sup> Macray, *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers*, ii.204, 206, 208; Gostelo, *Coming of God*, sig. B5, E8; Evans, *Voice of King Charls*, 12, 21, 27; Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, 10-11, 16-17, 19-20, 28-31. Satterthwayt was probably related to the London bookseller Samuel Satterthwaite, which would have facilitated the publication of Evans's work. Plomer, *Dictionary of Booksellers*, 161. On Granville see Burnet, *History*, i.178-9.

- <sup>63</sup> Warton, *Life of Ralph Bathurst*, 106, 290; *ODNB*, Bathurst. After the Restoration he became President of Trinity College, Oxford, and Dean of Wells.
- <sup>64</sup> Birch, *Thurloe*, v.675.
- <sup>65</sup> Evans, *Voice of King Charls*, sig. A7v-8; Evans, *Message from God*, 12.
- <sup>66</sup> Evans, *Voice of Michael*, 2-3; Evans, *Voice of the Iron Rod*, 2, 5-9.
- <sup>67</sup> Evans, *Voice of King Charls*, sig. A2-8v, pp. 4-5, 31; Evans, *Message from God*, 8-9.
- <sup>68</sup> Gostelo, *Charls Stuart and Oliver Cromwell*, 63-6, 189-92; Evans, *Voice of King Charls*, 14, 20-1; Evans, *Eccho*, 17, 91, 122; Gostelo, *Coming of God*, sig. D2-v.
- <sup>69</sup> Evans, *Voice of the Iron Rod*, 1.
- <sup>70</sup> Gostelo, *Coming of God*, manuscript note in a leaf inserted in one of Thomason's two copies (E1833 (1)).
- <sup>71</sup> Evans, *Rule from Heaven*, 41, 46-7.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-34, 41, 43, 46; Hill, "Arise Evans", 68-9. Evans suggested a royal salary of £200 in his *Voice of the People*, 4-5.
- <sup>73</sup> Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, 20-30.
- <sup>74</sup> Evans, *Voice of the People*, 8 and *passim*.
- <sup>75</sup> Evans, *Rule from Heaven*, 45; Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, 35; cf. Josten, *Elias Ashmole*, ii.778-9. Ashmole first encountered Evans in 1653, on the day the Rump was dissolved, as Evans had predicted: *ibid.*, ii.641-2.
- <sup>76</sup> Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, 16-17.
- <sup>77</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1663-4*, 250, 527. This corrects Hill and *ODNB*, which suggests that Evans died soon after the Restoration, unrewarded.
- <sup>78</sup> TNA, SP 29/95, f.33; Evans, *Light for the Jewjs*, 5-6, 11-16, 37 and *passim*.
- <sup>79</sup> *Arise Evans the English Prophet*.
- <sup>80</sup> Hodgkin, "Dreaming Meanings"; Wiseman, "I Saw No Angel".
- <sup>81</sup> Thornton, *Politics, Prophecy*, chap.2; Josselin, *Diary*, 219-504, *passim*.
- <sup>82</sup> Evans, *Message from God*, 7.

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