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*“From the Example of Cornelius”:
Eighteenth-Century Sermons for Soldiers in Great Britain*

ABSTRACT: *The rich history of military chaplains spans centuries and continents. Focusing on eighteenth-century Great Britain and the Anglican Church, this article contributes historical interpretation to a small segment of this history and asks how the military profession and the Christian faith were reconciled in chaplains’ sermons addressed to soldiers. From a close reading of these sermons – and by applying a comparative method, intertextual analysis, and discourse theory – three themes emerge that pertain to this reconciliation of the military profession and the Christian faith, namely, service, conduct, and admonishment against sin.*

KEYWORDS: *modern history; Great Britain; Church of England; military; chaplains; soldiers; sermons; service; conduct; sin*

Introduction

Nor has any Change of Time, Place, or Customs, render’d Religion more difficult to be practis’d by our modern Soldiers: For does a military Life of itself unfit People for Devotion? Are they oblig’d to be vicious, *because* they bear Arms? Must they forsake Christ’s Banner, and forget that they are his Soldiers, as soon as they lift themselves in the King’s Service, and muster under his Colours? Surely no.¹

This statement by Rev. Thomas Broughton (1712–1777) is as relevant today as it was almost 300 years ago.² The debate of whether Christians can or should be soldiers is one that stretches back to the first century.³ From Broughton’s perspective, the military profession and the Christian faith were not irreconcilable, and his conviction was shared by many other chaplains in eighteenth-century Great Britain. This article investigates eighteenth-century sermons preached to soldiers in Great Britain to understand this conviction and how it was communicated. Through interdisciplinary analysis, comparison, and

¹ Thomas Broughton, *The Christian Soldier: Or, The Duties of a Religious Life, Recommended to the Army: In a Sermon Preach’d Before His Majesty’s Second Regiment of Foot-Guards in the Tower-Chapel, on Their Leaving the Garrison* (London: Printed for C. Rivington at the Bible, and Crown in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1738), 5–6.

² The sermon was preached on October 23, 1737, but was not published until 1738.

³ Mark Juergensmeyer, *God at War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 87–89. The “just-war theory” was created to justify war for a Christian state and expanded upon by Augustine of Hippo; see Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 14–15, 91–93. Juergensmeyer, Bainton, and others reference the Edict of Milan (AD 313) under Constantine as the beginning of reconciling war and Christianity; see Dale T. Irvin, and Scott W. Sunquist, “Donatists and Catholics: A Struggle over Holiness and Unity in Roman North Africa,” in *History of the World Christian Movement, Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 169–171; Doris L. Bergen, ed., *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 1, 4–5. However, this neglects the fact that there had been Christian converts in the army during the previous three centuries (e.g., Cornelius in Acts 10) who had had to reconcile their faith and their profession. Some modern military chaplaincies trace their origins as far back as the Old Testament, including the U.S. Chaplain Corps.

interpretation, common themes emerge that help to answer the question of how the military profession and Christian life could be reconciled.

This study is limited to sermons from the Anglican Church and only those that were preached and published in the eighteenth century.⁴ It is not intended to determine from a theological perspective whether Anglicans should be soldiers or vice versa. Rather, it is an investigation of how Anglicans preached to soldiers to reconcile faith and soldiering; therefore, it excludes sermons of dissidents and opposition clergymen.⁵ It does not seek to establish that the selected sermons represent all themes, rhetoric, and style for their respective soldier audiences; it maintains, though, that chaplains were aware of their audiences and catered their sermons to the soldiers' profession and circumstances.⁶ To limit the cultural variable, only sermons preached in Great Britain are used here.⁷ This geographical parameter facilitates a focus on the rhetoric chaplains employed on the home front during peacetime and wartime when they were addressing soldiers. In this article, the term "soldier" includes full-time army ("regulars"), militia, volunteers, and pioneers from regiments, corps, or companies;⁸ meanwhile, the term "chaplain" denotes any Anglican clergyman who was addressing soldiers.⁹

Chaplains composed sermons to cover themes pertaining to faith, war, and those the soldiers were fighting for. There was no template for chaplains to follow,

⁴ In this article, the terms "Anglican Church," "Church of England," "Anglicans," and "Anglican" (adj.) are used synonymously and reference the same profession of faith.

⁵ For such sources, see Gilles Teulié and Laurence Sterritt, eds., *War Sermons* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 130–131. Examples of opposition sermons (i.e., those proclaiming that Christians should not be soldiers) have not been found or were possibly prevented from being published. Dissident sermons also addressed soldiers, but their doctrinal differences convolute the themes discussed here. For an example of these sermons, see Percy Livingstone Parker, ed., *The Journal of John Wesley* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2016), 149, 187, 211.

⁶ John Barecroft, *Concionatorum Instructio: Rules for Preaching, Or, Advice to All Novices in that Divine Art [...]* (London: Printed for Jonas Browne [...] and Sold by A. Baldwin, in Warwick Lane, 1713), 10–11. There is evidence of sermons given to soldiers without any themes pertinent to their profession; these reconcile military activities and religion indirectly by refraining from any respective language of correction. An example is Benjamin McDowel, *A Charity Sermon, Preached in St. Mary's Abbey Meeting-House [...] at the Request of the First Regiment of Irish Brigade [...]* (Dublin: Printed by William Gilbert, No. 26, Great Georges-Street, [1783?]).

⁷ The British Empire outside of Great Britain is excluded. There are great examples of sermons given to soldiers while they were deployed in Europe, North America, and elsewhere.

⁸ This includes artillery companies and garrison regiments; it does not include colonial militia or soldiers in the East India Company army. Naval seamen and officers are not excluded, but available published sermons addressed to them were given while they were on board their ships, not at naval yards or in harbors in Great Britain.

⁹ For the ease of the reader, "chaplain" is the term most frequently used. In other sources and scholarly works, other terms appear (e.g., "clergyman," "reverend," or "Anglican priest,"). Since all the selected sermons address soldiers, the term "chaplain" is well suited and applicable. All sermons were delivered by ordained chaplains, so there is no need to differentiate between "lay people," "deacons," or "priests."

aside from their own convictions and their knowledge of Scripture that was relevant to their profession and circumstances.¹⁰ They could use guidelines for preaching sermons, but they had to come to their own theological understanding of how to reconcile the Anglican faith with the military profession.¹¹

The rich history of military chaplains spans centuries and continents. Focusing on eighteenth-century Great Britain and the Anglican Church, this article contributes historical interpretation to a small segment of this history and asks how the military profession and the Christian faith were reconciled in chaplains' sermons addressed to soldiers. From a close reading of these sermons three overarching themes emerge that pertain to this reconciliation of the military profession and the Christian faith, namely, service, conduct, and admonishment against sin. The theme of service reflected the argument that military service was also service to God; the theme of conduct challenged soldiers to reconcile violence, death, and professional behavior; and the theme of admonishment against sin reminded soldiers of the correlation between their failings and God's favor.

This article uses a comparative method and intertextual analysis; the latter focuses on the sermons' use of Scripture to establish context and interpret related contemporary issues. It also uses discourse theory for its framework of interpretation; applying discourse theory to sermons helps gain insight into the social, political, religious, and even military historical context that shaped why and how chaplains were using rhetoric, themes, and Scripture.¹² An adapted form of practical theological interpretation is also employed here to create historical questions for the sermons.¹³

Scholarship pertaining to the subject of this article is both helpful and limited. Quite a few of the existing works are interdisciplinary and bring together military, social, and church history, as well as theology, English literature, sociology, psychology, and military science respectively. Eighteenth-century British military

¹⁰ William Enfield, *The Preacher's Directory: Or a Series of Subjects Proper for Public Discourses* [...] (London: Printed for Joseph Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1771), contains sixty-six subjects for sermons, none of which are specific to soldiers or war. The closest subject pertains to days of thanksgiving, which have a subheading for victories and deliverance from public calamities.

¹¹ Barecroft, *Concionatorum Instructio*. This discourse was a mainstay for much of the century as a guide for clergymen to select sermon subjects in addition to methods and styles of preaching.

¹² For discourse theory and the methodology used here, see Robin Wooffitt, *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 146; Betty Jane Cataldi, "Foucault's Discourse Theory and Methodology: An Application to Art Education Policy Discourse, 1970-2000" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2004), 36-37.

¹³ For "practical theological interpretation," see Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 4. The questions are derived from Osmer's four interpretive tasks: descriptive-empirical (what was happening), interpretive (why this was happening), normative (what ought to be happening), and pragmatic (what was the expected response). These tasks were adapted as follows: Who was the chaplain and when, where, and to whom was the sermon preached? What was the occasion/reason? What themes, Scripture, and rebukes were applied? What did the sermon imply or challenge?

and ecclesiastical history have received considerable scholarly attention;¹⁴ however, the analysis of military sermons addressed to soldiers appears to have been neglected. This creates a niche of history that could provide new and useful insight across academic disciplines. There are significant scholarly contributions to sermons and sermon culture in this period, but they rarely include military history. Gilles Teulié's and Laurence Sterritt's collection *War Sermons* (2009) exemplifies both a similar framework and interpretative approach, but it covers the entire past millennium and encompasses much of the western hemisphere.¹⁵ Considerably more focused is Paul Kopperman's 1987 journal article "Religion and Religious Policy in the British Army, c. 1700–96."¹⁶ While Kopperman's study shares the geographical and chronological parameters of this article, it primarily concerns itself with the structure, challenges, and function of the military chaplaincy and the army rather than the content or rhetoric of sermons.¹⁷ Other, more comprehensive works apply the comparative approach on a national level.¹⁸

The most influential scholarly works for this article include Warren Johnston's 2020 monograph, *National Thanksgivings and Ideas of Britain, 1689–1816*, which analyzes hundreds of sermons pertaining to days of National Thanksgivings to identify trends,¹⁹ as well as James Downey's 1969 study, *The Eighteenth Century*

¹⁴ For British military history in the eighteenth century, see Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*, 1st American ed. (New York: Norton, 2002); Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, eds., *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014). For British Church history during this period, see William Gibson, *The Church of England, 1688–1832: Unity and Accord* (London: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁵ Teulié and Sterritt, *War Sermons*, xi–xiii. This collection of essays analyzes sermons from the Middle Ages to the present and sorts them roughly by century. It looks at the evolution of attitudes toward war and the use of rhetoric within military sermons from several Christian denominations ("military" referring here to the content, not the audience, of the sermon); it also addresses how sermons were used to encourage support for war, especially through the intertextual use of Scripture and just-war theory.

¹⁶ Paul Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy in the British Army, c. 1700–96," *Journal of Religious History* 14, no. 4 (1987): 390–405. This article addresses the British army's state of spiritual health; it shows how the army mismanaged the chaplaincy throughout the century and the benefits missed due to not having a religiously disciplined army.

¹⁷ See also Michael Snape, *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department 1796–1953: Clergy Under Fire* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2008). Snape's framework resembles Kopperman's but concentrates on the official development of the military chaplaincy in Great Britain.

¹⁸ For an example, see Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch, and Swedish Public Churches, 1685–1772* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Ihalainen shows the relationship between sermon and political rhetoric and to what extent clergy rhetoric concerning national identity became more secular and shaped national identities.

¹⁹ Warren Johnston, *National Thanksgivings and Ideas of Britain, 1689–1816* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020). Going well beyond the scope of this article, Johnston's work addresses sermons from throughout the British Empire, including those by dissenting clergymen.

Pulpit, which evaluates sermons from six famous British preachers.²⁰ Methodologically, this article follows these works by presenting and interpreting excerpts from selected sermons. Works that have helped inspire the historical questions for each sermon include Jennifer Farooq's 2013 monograph, *Preaching in Eighteenth-Century London*, and James Joseph Caudle's 1995 Ph.D. dissertation, "Measures of Allegiance: Sermon Culture and the Creation of a Public Discourse of Obedience and Resistance in Georgian Britain, 1714–1760;" both provide analyses of sermons preached in London during the period in question.²¹

The primary sources used in this article encompass sixteen period publications containing twenty-nine military sermons made available through a database, "Eighteenth Century Collection Online."²² Eight sermons in particular serve as key evidence below;²³ these eight provide the best examples to show how chaplains conveyed the conviction that being a soldier was not contrary to the tenets of Christianity. While other documents, such as letters and journals, may provide more personal perspectives, they do not offer the same broad appeal as sermons.²⁴ This is true for both chaplains and soldiers (who may have remembered or understood sermons differently than they were delivered). The public nature of sermons makes interpreting them similar to interpreting normative texts: they tell us at least as much about how things "are" as they tell us about how things "should be." What is said in these sermons provides context to and draws context from contemporary issues (whether perceived or tangible).²⁵ What is not explicitly said is also telling: an emphasis on the need to be righteous might imply that sin was a concern. Sermons, like normative texts, also do not indicate how people

²⁰ James Downey, *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

²¹ Jennifer Farooq, *Preaching in Eighteenth-Century London* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013); James Joseph Caudle, "Measures of Allegiance: Sermon Culture and the Creation of a Public Discourse of Obedience and Resistance in Georgian Britain, 1714–1760" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995).

²² Gale, "Eighteenth-Century Collection Online," [online](#).

²³ Due to its exemplary content, Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, is used in two parts.

²⁴ Broughton expressed the spiritual need for soldiers to have copies of a popular Christian discourse, namely, *The Christian Monitor* (which was in its 44th edition in 1761): Thomas Broughton to George Germain, "Concerning Planned Distribution of the 'Christian Monitor' to the Armed Forces," June 27, 1776, CO 5/154 Part 2, The National Archives (UK); John Rawlet, *The Christian Monitor: Containing an Earnest Exhortation to an Holy Life [...]*, 44th ed. (London: Printed for John Beecroft, at the Bible and Crown in Pater-Noster-Row, 1761).

²⁵ A perceived issue could be the threat of invasion requiring men to volunteer, see Robert Acklom Ingram, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish Churches of Wormingford and Boxted, Essex, on Sunday, April the 29th, 1798, to Persuade the Congregations to Form Themselves into Military Associations, and Companies of Pioneers, for the Defence of the Country* (London: Printed for J. Debrett, Opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly, 1798), 3. For tangible issues, such as soldiers' pay and conduct, see Sidney Swinney, *A Sermon, Dedicated to the Most Honourable John Marquis of Granby, Commander in Chief of the British Forces during the Late War in Germany, and to All the General and Subaltern Officers and Soldiers [...]* (London: Printed for T. Evans, at No. 20, in Pater-Noster, 1769), 16–17.

reacted or adhered to them. If a chaplain repeated certain points in multiple sermons, one might think that these particular points were not adhered to, but then, again, repetition is common in sermons.

The sermons used here are as varied as possible to represent the breadth of the material, but there is also some overlap for the sake of comparative analysis and to show the evolution of themes (if there was any).²⁶ Each theme is discussed on the basis of sermons from different decades, and sermons from both wartime and peacetime are used to avoid thematic bias.²⁷ Each of the three parts also showcases one sermon that displays a unique perspective from the respective chaplain or his audience. Thus, Robert Acklom Ingram's 1798 sermon is the only one which takes the liberty to explain why Christians should be soldiers in hopes that members of the audience would volunteer for military service.²⁸ Thomas Broughton's *Christian Soldier* sermon, first preached 1737, is not just an example for a peacetime sermon, but was also a popular text intended for distribution among soldiers. William Agar served as a military chaplain during wartime and, in 1758, published the sermons he had given while on campaign in a collection to address soldiers' spiritual needs;²⁹ thus, Agar was able to use hindsight to determine what content would be most important. Five of the key sermons discussed below were preached in London, three were preached in different counties of Great Britain, and one was published in London but does not specify its preaching location.³⁰

When working with sermons, one of the challenges is the difference between the spoken and the published word. Once it had been delivered, assuming that funding was available, a sermon could be published, requiring the chaplain to review his notes and polish the text for publication.³¹ Therefore, what we are left

²⁶ For the sampled sermons, the best evidence for thematic evolution pertains to the French Revolution and rise of nationalism; see Joris Van Eijnatten, *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 233–234.

²⁷ Three of the nine key sermons were given during times of peace. During the French Revolutionary Wars, the perceived threat of invasion was very common (especially during the First and Second Coalitions); see Ingram, *Sermon*; John Davies, *Presentation of Colours, by Mrs. William Garrett, to the Royal Garrison Volunteers, Under the Command of Major William Garrett: A sermon, Preached in the Garrison Chapel, Portsmouth [...]* (Portsmouth: Printed for J.C. Mottley, [1799]); William Jarvis Abdy, *A Sermon, on the Occasion of the General Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 29, 1798: Preached at the Unanimous Request of the Corps of Loyal Volunteers, of Saint John, Southwark, at their Parish Church [...]* By the Rev. William Jarvis Abdy, A.M. Chaplain to the Corps (London: Printed and Sold by J. Hartnell, 153, Tooley-Street, 1799).

²⁸ This inclusion of an audience of non-soldiers gives insight into the arguments made to recruit Christians to become soldiers on spiritual grounds.

²⁹ This publication occurred after Agar's deployment in Europe during the Seven Years' War and thus fits the criteria of sermons offered in Great Britain.

³⁰ The latter sermon is by Swinney. It was likely preached in London, but may have been delivered in Yorkshire.

³¹ Cudde, "Measures of Allegiance," 121–122, 821; Farooq, *Preaching*, 74–76. The exception were sermons given on days of great significance, when the rush to print to stay current left

with is, at best, the second iteration of a sermon—not the sermon as originally delivered but, rather, the sermon that the chaplain would have preferred to have delivered. This is a double-edged sword: some wording was likely changed, which detracts from what the audience would have heard; on the other hand, publishing a sermon afforded a chaplain the opportunity to correct any errors and sharpen points to be more effective (for readers). The original notes for the sermons have not survived, though some chaplains claimed that their published sermons were true to their original notes.³² As a result, printed sermons remain the closest we can get to spoken sermons, and soldiers unable to attend a sermon's spoken delivery would have read these sermons with the attention of first-time listeners.

Eighteenth-century sermon titles are often very long; therefore, citations have been shortened for the reader's ease as much as possible while the most important title elements have been retained. The sermons usually share a clear structure that begins with a quotation from Scripture, a short introduction, and an initial explanation of the Scripture; this is followed by the sermon's main points, practical applications, and a conclusion.³³ Due to this common format, the sermons used as key evidence below are presented and interpreted "step by step," in their paginal order, to convey their original discourse and thematic emphasis. Other sermons are supplemented to illustrate particular Scripture use and thematic elements, or to establish certain rhetorical features. Sermons routinely contained uncited Scripture, and Scripture was often seamlessly woven into the chaplain's own wording. In the analysis below relevant Scripture is referenced to establish context; and all Scripture is presented in the King James Version, which was Britain's "standard" Bible during this century.

Each of the three parts below ("Servant," "Soldier," "Sinner") is dedicated to one of the sermons' overarching themes for the reconciliation of the military profession with the Christian faith, namely, service, conduct, and admonishment against sin. Then, within each part, three key sermons serve as primary evidence for a thematic element or perspective which may pertain to the chaplain (and his experiences), the soldiers who were the audience for the particular sermon, or the sermon's historical context. These themes and thematic elements are, of course, not exclusive to the specific sermons used here; in many cases a sermon includes several of them. The key sermons were selected because they illustrate a respective thematic element or perspective particularly well. The first part analyzes the theme of military service and how the chaplains presented it as a of service to God; the second part examines the theme of how Christian soldiers could reconcile their faith, mortality, and conduct; and the third part discusses the different types of sins chaplains focused on in order to admonish soldiers to be faithful and, thus,

chaplains unable to fix even spelling errors from their notes. There is no clear evidence of this being the case with regard to the sermons analyzed here.

³² Abdy, *Sermon*, 7. Abdy asserts as much in his sermon.

³³ Farooq, *Preaching*, 7.

retain God's favor for their nation. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and provides perspectives for future research across academic disciplines.

I. Servant

Servanthood is a core characteristic of being a soldier and being a Christian. It comes as no surprise, then, that the theme of service was commonly employed in sermons addressed to soldiers. This part details the types of service that, according to the chaplains' sermons, Christian soldiers were fulfilling as part of their professional and spiritual duties, namely, service to their king, service to their country, and service to one another. Through these types of service, soldiers were serving God.

For Christians, the call to service is threefold: service to God, service to one another, and – especially relevant for the rhetorical implementation in the military chaplains' sermons – service to authority. These types of service are based on the notion of submission: submission is required of a servant. The theme of submission to God is consistent throughout the Bible, but a good example is James 4.³⁴ According to Matthew 22, serving God is accomplished through serving and loving one another.³⁵ A servant is expected to be humble; therefore, service given with respect and submission to governing authorities and employers is an extension of service to Christ – as established in Romans 13 and Colossians 3.³⁶

With regard to the military, requirements for service or servanthood are more direct. In the eighteenth century, military service was either volunteered or forced through impressment.³⁷ Servant-like characteristics were expected of soldiers; this maintained military order by promoting obedience, respect of the chain of command, and patriotic duty. A soldier, especially a volunteer, was seen as serving his king, country, and family.³⁸ These characteristics of servant soldiers take center stage in the sermons of military chaplains.

I.1. Serving King, Serving God

The first sermon considered here for the theme of service was published in 1715 and preached by Rev. Gershom Rawlins. Rawlins was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1686; he received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Harvard University in 1705 and then his Master of Arts in 1744.³⁹ After earning his Bachelor's degree, he taught for six months at the grammar school at Woburn,

³⁴ See James 4:6–7.

³⁵ See Matthew 22:37–40. See also 1 John 4:21.

³⁶ See Romans 13:1, 5; Colossians 3:23–24.

³⁷ Nicholas Ian Kane, "'Arms an Employment': Motivations for Enlisting in the 18th Century British Army" (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2019), 10.

³⁸ Kane, "Arms an Employment," 41–43.

³⁹ Harvard University, *Quinquennial Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates 1636–1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1930), 173.

Massachusetts.⁴⁰ Sometime between 1706 and 1715, he relocated to London, was ordained, and appointed as chaplain to Richard Newport, 2nd Earl of Bradford.⁴¹ Rawlins's move to London was an honor to both him and Harvard, as he was one of only five Americans selected for ministry service in Great Britain under episcopal orders.⁴² In 1744, after Rawlins had served for many years as an ordained minister of the Anglican Church in London, the Corporation of Harvard College voted to confer upon him the degree of Master of Arts.⁴³ The year of Rawlins's death is somewhat of a mystery, with London papers mixing him up with another minister who died in December 1757, while Harvard University records list him as deceased in 1757, 1758, and even 1763.⁴⁴

On September 18, 1715, Rawlins preached a sermon to the Second Regiment of Foot Guards in Hyde Park, titled *Great Britain's Happiness Under the Wise and Just Government of a Protestant King*.⁴⁵ This sermon was delivered on the anniversary of King George's arrival in Great Britain, one year earlier, for his coronation.⁴⁶ Hyde Park was used as a military camp, as a place for discipline and executions, and for troop reviews throughout the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ Rawlins's sermon is an example of a thanksgiving sermon. Thanksgiving sermons reflected the historical, political, or religious importance that a particular day held for the nation, as well as the need to observe it together through worship. Such sermons, like Rawlins's, often used theme-related Scripture as a foundation to contextualize current circumstances within a greater political and divine plan.⁴⁸

Fittingly, Rawlins's sermon promoted the advantages of King George as Britain's sovereign. This served a twofold purpose: it encouraged soldiers that their monarch was supported by the Church, and it asserted the king's right to rule as supported by the blessings of God. It was crucial for soldiers to have faith

⁴⁰ Albert Matthews, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. 26, Transactions 1920–1922* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1923), 4.

⁴¹ Matthews, *Publications*, 4; John Burke, *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerages of England, Ireland, and Scotland* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), 396.

⁴² Matthews, *Publications*, 5.

⁴³ Matthews, *Publications*, 8.

⁴⁴ Harvard, *Quinquennial Catalogue*, 173; Matthews, *Publications*, 3–4, 8. London magazines confused Rawlins with the dissenting minister, Rev. Richard Rawlin. No evidence has been found to support that Rawlins ever dissented from the Church of England.

⁴⁵ Gershom Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness under the Wise and Just Government of a Protestant King: A Sermon Preach'd before the Second Regiment of His Majesty's Foot Guards, at the Camp in Hyde-Park [...]* (London: Printed for Thomas Corbet; and Sold by R. Burleigh, 1715).

⁴⁶ Alison Weir, *Britain's Royal Families: The Complete Genealogy*, rev. ed. (London: Random House, 1996), 272–276. I refer to King George I simply as "King George" because he was called "King George" at the time the sermon was written; further mentions of King George II or King George III in this article include their regnal numbers.

⁴⁷ Paul Rabbitts, *Hyde Park: The People's Park* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing Ltd., 2015), 37, 47–49.

⁴⁸ Johnston, *National Thanksgivings*, 31.

in their king, especially since there had been public unrest due to the transition to the House of Hanover and the start of the Jacobite Rising of 1715 only days before the sermon.⁴⁹

Rawlins opens his sermon with 2 Chronicles 9:7, "Happy are thy Men, and happy are these thy Servants which stand continually before thee, and hear thy Wisdom."⁵⁰ He then describes the context and meaning of this Scripture, explaining that the Queen of Sheba had spoken it in amazement at King Solomon, at his people's happiness, and at the source of it all: God.⁵¹ Once he has done so, Rawlins draws the parallel that King George is like Solomon, since both create a happiness in their subjects that stems from their king's "Wisdom and Zeal for the *Protestant Cause* in general, and the hearty Concern he [i.e., King George] has already shown for the Honour and Interest of our Excellent *Establish'd Church* in particular."⁵² Rawlins impresses upon the soldiers that King George is not just a wise ruler, but a defender of their faith and a supporter of the Church of England.⁵³ This seemingly simple concept serves as the basis for the sermon's subsequent four points which are intended to demonstrate that God has approved this king and that service to him will bring great rewards.

Rawlins first three points work in unison by describing that the king is a gift of God, that this gift is a token of God's love for his people, and that this is a pledge from God to prosper their nation.⁵⁴ Throughout these first three points, Rawlins uses comparisons to King Solomon to promote the idea that service to King George is the appropriate way to secure happiness with God. At the same time, Rawlins also intersperses pointed remarks against James Francis Edward Stuart, the Jacobite pretender to the throne by comparing him to Solomon's own antagonist, Adonijah, in 1 Kings 1. Rawlins states that "The *Pretender* to this Crown has...Supports from Abroad [France]...[and] Hopes from a mad *Faction* here at Home...to meditate a second *Invasion* from abroad...at the Head of a powerful *Confederate Army*."⁵⁵ He contrasts this with "King George's peaceable *Accession* to the *Throne*," which is unlike the "*Pretender's*" actions that have the "Condition of sullyng the Glories of [Britain's] Reign; of prostituting the Honour of her Crown."⁵⁶ These points act together to show his audience both what is at stake for the country and where the opposing sides will find themselves with regard to the lawful succession and God's favor. Rawlins thus clarifies the just cause, namely,

⁴⁹ Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 173–178.

⁵⁰ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 3.

⁵¹ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 3–4.

⁵² Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 4.

⁵³ Caudle, "Measures of Allegiance," 371.

⁵⁴ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 5.

⁵⁵ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 7–8.

⁵⁶ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 8.

that serving King George, God's anointed and rightful king of Great Britain, is the extension of serving God. As Rawlins put it, "let us, my Brethren, lift up our Hearts to GOD in humble Adoration...of His good Providence, and in grateful Acknowledgements of the Wonders of His Mercy to us, in giving us a King in whom *He delighted, to make him His Vicegerent.*"⁵⁷

From his point that King George is God's gift, Rawlins moves to the need to obey the king, making strong claims for such service and obedience to the king:

How reasonable is it, that a King who makes it his chiefest Glory to be *GOD's Minister for our Good*, who is indefatigable in his Endeavours to advance the Glory of his Kingdoms and the Happiness of his People, how reasonable is it that he should be respected by all his Subjects, and treated with all that cheerful [*sic*] Submission, Love and Obedience, which is undoubtedly due to a King who is so remarkably the *Gift of GOD*? This is the *first Ingredient* of our Happiness.⁵⁸

Rawlins establishes the king's character as one that is worthy of the people's submission. If it is the king's "chiefest Glory" to be God's "*Minister for our Good*," then what reason can there be for faithful Christian soldiers not to submit and serve him? Furthermore, how can soldiers attain "Happiness" with God, or in the eyes of their country and its people, if they oppose such a king? Rawlins combines the political and religious cause to assert that the soldiers' service to their king is not merely expected, but the key "*first Ingredient of [their] Happiness*."

Rawlins's second and third points follow a similar pattern. In his second point, he explains that the king's communion, love, and protection of the Church of England and its clergy are sure signs that he is "*a Token of GOD's Love to the Church and Nation.*"⁵⁹ The king is also a stalwart Protestant defender, "*standing in the Gap, to save us from Popery, that [is] worse than Egyptian Darkness, and from Arbitrary Power, that fatal Yoke!*"⁶⁰ With this scriptural rhetoric, Rawlins appeals to the soldiers' desire to serve a king who fights for what is right – in the knowledge that God is on their side. Soldiers, much like anyone else, do not want to be on the losing side, especially when their lives are on the line, and this argument makes the call to serve King George more favorable to them.

According to the sermon's third point, the "*Gift*" (the king) is also a "*Pledge*, whereby He [i.e., God] is pleased to assure us of his gracious Design to *establish us for ever.*"⁶¹ Rawlins emphasizes the sanctity of the throne by alluding to Proverbs 16:12 and maintains that God will bless Great Britain as long as they pursue the "*Protestant Interest.*"⁶² For the soldiers, Rawlins implies that it is their role to show obedience to their zealous king to help maintain the current, blessed state of the

⁵⁷ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 10.

⁵⁸ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 11.

⁵⁹ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 12–16.

⁶⁰ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 16. For the "*Egyptian Darkness*," see Exodus 10:21–29.

⁶¹ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 16.

⁶² Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 17. See Proverbs 16:12.

nation through their own faith and by protecting it from the enemies that would corrupt it and bring an end to God's pledge to prosper their nation.

Rawlins fourth point shows that "*Servants and Attendants*" to the king receive "*greater Privileges [and] more valuable Advantages.*"⁶³ He assures his audience that proximity to the king is not reflective of these privileges: just as the Queen of Sheba had traveled far to see King Solomon, the opportunities for them to be in the presence of their king will likely be infrequent. Thus, these privileges are not material favors given by the king, as may be the case for those at his court and in his household, but ones that "they [can] safely promise themselves, when they have a *wise and just Prince* for their *Master*, who, as he will always be sensible of their Fidelity...[will] take pleasure in rewarding [to them]."⁶⁴ It is their privilege and honor to serve the king, and it is to their advantage to faithfully serve both their country and God who will take all this into account on Judgment Day.⁶⁵ The soldiers' service to king and country is to the glory of God, because He has established the king and has pledged to prosper the nation. This makes a soldier's service the most noble of causes.

Rawlins describes the privilege of serving a wise and just king, not just in terms of God's favor but also in terms of professional respect. He states that, "with particular Advantage to Men of your Profession, I have purposely reserv'd for this *Part of my Discourse,*"⁶⁶ and he then describes King George's personal courage in campaigns in Hungary, Germany, Flanders, and the Morea (Peloponnesus), in addition to his reputation as a "*Master of the Art of War.*"⁶⁷ This argument intends to build the soldiers' confidence that they are following a king and commander who is competent. Rawlins drives this point home by reminding the soldiers it had been King George who had reinstated William Cadogan, 1st Earl of Cadogan, a commanding general who had led them successfully during the Spanish War of Succession.⁶⁸ With such secular arguments, Rawlins strives to strengthen the soldiers' trust in their king's abilities and promote their willingness to serve him. Rawlins then ties the king's military competencies to the fact that his success in war is in the defense of liberties and religion.⁶⁹

Rawlins's final remarks on the theme of service pit his arguments against the conceivable alternative. His comments are placed to reassure those already convinced and pressure those still unconvinced that it is necessary to serve King

⁶³ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 18.

⁶⁴ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 20.

⁶⁵ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 22.

⁶⁶ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 21.

⁶⁷ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 21.

⁶⁸ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 21; Charles Spencer, *Blenheim: Battle for Europe* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), 131,141.

⁶⁹ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 21–22.

George and oppose the rebels and those who support their efforts, particularly France and the Papal States:

You are too good Christians to be capable of *Disloyalty*, too sensible of your own Happiness in being Servants to King George, too thoroughly convinc'd, that his *Advancement* to the *Throne* of these Realms, is a *Token* of GOD's *Love* to our *Church* and *Nation*, and a happy *Pledge* of our *lasting Establishment*...[those in sedition are] unworthy of the Character of a *British Soldier*...I doubt not, my Brethren, but you are all in this *Loyal Disposition*.⁷⁰

Rawlins assumes the soldiers' loyalty, and his appeal does three things at once: firstly, he states, "you are too good Christians to be capable of *Disloyalty*." Soldiers would want to agree that they are "good Christians" and thus not capable of being disloyal; this reaffirms their service to God, king, and country. Secondly, Rawlins reiterates his sermon's emphasis on serving King George; King George might be a new king and hail from a new dynasty, but he was nonetheless their king—Britain's king. Thirdly, Rawlins combats any remaining self-doubt by assuring the soldiers of his confidence that they "are all in this *Loyal Disposition*." After this appeal, the chaplain encourages the soldiers to search their own hearts, "as what will advance the Honour of your Profession" and afford them "Serenity of Mind, that Peace and Comfort in your Breasts...and will raise you up to [Heaven]."⁷¹

I.2. Serving Country, Serving God

Whereas Rawlins's sermon had focused on soldiers serving God by serving their king, Rev. Robert Acklom Ingram delivered a sermon to encourage soldiers to serve God by serving their country. Ingram's sermon is unique in that he encouraged the members of his congregations to become soldiers by forming pioneer companies and military associations.⁷² Pioneer companies were raised and attached to regiments to provide labor for entrenchments, fortifications, and mine construction;⁷³ military associations were locally raised, volunteer-only militia that resembled an armed constabulary but could become part-time units or even home-defense forces.⁷⁴ These auxiliary forces were assembled by local communities when they perceived the threat of invasion, civil war, or military weakness during wartime.⁷⁵

Rev. Robert Acklom Ingram was born in 1763 in Wormingford, Essex, the son of Robert Ingram, vicar of Wormingford.⁷⁶ He was educated at Dedham Grammar

⁷⁰ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 23.

⁷¹ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 23–24.

⁷² Ingram, *Sermon*.

⁷³ Capt. George Smith, "Pioneers," in *An Universal Military Dictionary, Or a Copious Explanation of the Technical Terms &c. Used in the [...] Army [...]* (London: Printed for J. Millan, near Whitehall, 1779), n.p.

⁷⁴ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 209, 215.

⁷⁵ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 205.

⁷⁶ Sidney Lee, ed., "Ingram, Robert Acklom (1763–1809)," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 29 (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1892), 15.

School and then at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree as well as the title of senior wrangler (top mathematics student) in 1784.⁷⁷ He then took a position as tutor and fellow at Queen's College, and he began working on his Master of Arts degree in 1787.⁷⁸ In addition to teaching, he became a moderator for Queen's College in 1790, and he received a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1796, which led to his appointment as curate of Boxted, Essex (1802), and rector of Seagrave, Leicestershire, shortly thereafter.⁷⁹ He started publishing after receiving his Master's degree and was a respected political economist.⁸⁰ His many published works included sermons, discourses on Methodism and dissension, population, economics, curricula, politics, and improving the condition of the lower class.⁸¹ In 1803, Ingram became his father's caretaker for the final year of his life, and he himself died four and a half years later, in 1809.⁸²

Ingram asked the congregations of Wormingford and Boxted to volunteer for military service on April 29, 1798. At this time, the perceived threats of invasion and military weakness were not unfounded, so his request had merit. Tensions in Ireland were at a boiling point. British papers had reported the arrest of Irish rebel leaders, and while French plans in support of the rebellion had been discovered, the threat of a rebellion lingered.⁸³ In October 1797, the Treaty of Campo Formio had ended the War of the First Coalition, but Great Britain continued its fight against France and Spain, a fact that was not lost on Ingram.⁸⁴

In light of these developments, Ingram deemed it necessary to ask his parishioners to become soldiers. In fact, his notes reveal that he published his sermon in haste, so that it might be distributed and encourage others to join in the defense of their country.⁸⁵ Ingram's sermon opens with Nehemiah 4:14, which states "Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible; and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." This Scripture verse sets the tone for Ingram's message and central theme; he does not explain the verse any further, but apparently assumes that the audience is familiar with its meaning, which was ideal for his purposes. As for its scriptural context, the Old Testament leader Nehemiah had gone to Jerusalem (which, at the time, was controlled by Persia) and enlisted the Jews there to rebuild

⁷⁷ Lee, "Ingram," 16.

⁷⁸ Lee, "Ingram," 16.

⁷⁹ Lee, "Ingram," 16.

⁸⁰ Lee, "Ingram," 16.

⁸¹ Lee, "Ingram," 16.

⁸² Lee, "Ingram," 15-16.

⁸³ John Gibney, ed., *The United Irishmen, Rebellion and the Act of Union, 1798-1803* (Havertown: Pen & Sword Books Limited, 2019), 13, 43.

⁸⁴ Ingram, *Sermon*, 6.

⁸⁵ Ingram, *Sermon*, 2.

the wall; he had half of them build and the other half defend their work and homes against hostile neighbors who were opposed to the rebuilding of the wall.⁸⁶ To those aware of this context, Ingram's exhortation would have been clear. Even his request that they volunteer in a military association or pioneer company reflects Nehemiah 4:16 where some defend with arms and others build to strengthen the defense.

Ingram follows Nehemiah by reminding his audience of their duty to serve: "You are now called upon, my Christian brethren...by every principle of religious obligation, to proffer your best services in the aid and defense of your country...now threatened by the invasion of an exasperated and ferocious enemy."⁸⁷ This notion was not unfounded as France had designs for an invasion of England, but Napoleon refused to command it in favor of an invasion of Egypt.⁸⁸ Ingram goes on to say that, in the face of this threat, "it is as much your duty, as men, and as Christians, to be prepared to assist your country by every service it may require of you, in the protection of whatever is most dear to you."⁸⁹ Thus, according to Ingram, military service for one's country aligns with Christian and civic obligations and principles. Ingram's rhetoric is inclusive and targets both the men he calls upon to join the military ranks as well as their families. By claiming that their service is for the "protection of whatever is most dear," Ingram prompts the men to think of their loved ones. He does not ask them to campaign on foreign soil as full-time soldiers but, rather, to volunteer in order "to assist" their country in its defense. It is likely that such language was received more positively than any proposal that the men leave their families for distant lands.

Ingram establishes that service for one's country is the duty of a Christian, and he continues his plea by illustrating to his audience what is at stake:

Paint to your imaginations the horrid scene of a country lately fertile and populous, on a sudden, reduced to a solitary wilderness; the houses, barns, and every receptacle for man or beast in flames...your dear wives and children, flying for ever from their long-loved abodes; the springs...polluted with sable [i.e., dark] streams of human blood and gore...with the sighs and groans of wounded, mangled, dying wretches. Such is the mournful catalogue of distresses with which our implacable enemy designs to overwhelm us.⁹⁰

This vivid depiction is designed as a warning of what might come to pass if these men idly wait for the enemy, instead of rising up in defense of their country. In this warning, Ingram incorporates everything they need for their lives, including their "fertile" land (turned to "wilderness") and their farms and homes ("in flames"). Rural communities would have been aware of the hardships that would

⁸⁶ See Nehemiah 2-6; the above is a very brief synopsis.

⁸⁷ Ingram, *Sermon*, 3.

⁸⁸ Owen Connelly, *The Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1792-1815* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 96.

⁸⁹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 4.

⁹⁰ Ingram, *Sermon*, 5-6.

follow if they would be unable to farm. Ingram then points to wives and children "flying" from their homes. Since he is not mentioning the men, his audience can assume that they are the "wounded, mangled, dying wretches." Ingram's vision of such a violent and terrible future immediately conveys the notion that this can and must be stopped before it can come to pass.

Ingram's call to his Christian parishioners to serve their country is underscored by his description of the enemy. This is a key point for defenders to understand: not just what they are defending, but who and what they are fighting against. Ingram explains that France is seeking "universal dominion" and intent on ruining Britain economically, industrially, militarily, and religiously (as the prosperity of the "country is blended the interest of religion").⁹¹ He informs his parishioners that they will face soldiers who "have flocked to [the French] standard as the only probable means of securing a livelihood" and who have been indoctrinated against Great Britain to "fight with desperation."⁹² Such soldiers would be expendable to France, and there would be "ten thousands upon ten thousands" of them.⁹³ Ingram's description of the enemy has a twofold purpose: firstly, it establishes the nature of the soldiers they will face as villainous; secondly, it shows the callous lengths France is willing to go to defeat Great Britain.⁹⁴ Both carry the same message, namely, that the country is in need of men willing to serve.

Ingram then ties this back to his listeners' religious convictions by asking them, rhetorically, "Can you then, with the feelings and principles of a man and of a Christian, remain in a state of hardened insensibility and supineness, till the dear wife...[is taken], the virtue of a beloved daughter sacrificed to the rude assault...[of the enemy], or the tender infant...suspended on the bayonet?"⁹⁵ Ingram's gruesome description provokes strong emotions, making it hard to argue rationally against volunteering for the impending struggle. He then turns his attention to the argument that uses faith as a reason to refuse service, which Ingram refutes in no uncertain terms:

I have heard it said, apparently with a view to lull my countrymen into a fatal security, yes, I have heard it said, with a puritanical affectation of superior sanctity, that prayer is the only instrument by which we can hope to repel the attack of an invading enemy. I abhor and despise that man, that makes religion a base mask to cowardice and treachery.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 5, 7.

⁹² Ingram, *Sermon*, 8.

⁹³ Ingram, *Sermon*, 8.

⁹⁴ James Chartres, *A Sermon: Preached [...] before the Loyal Atherstone Volunteers, of Cavalry and Infantry, on [...] the Day of the Consecration and Presentation of Their Colours [...]* (Atherstone: [Printed for the Author], by James Harris, and Sold by R. Leigh [and seven others], 1800), 4–5. This sermon includes a similar description of the soldiers employed by France.

⁹⁵ Ingram, *Sermon*, 9.

⁹⁶ Ingram, *Sermon*, 9–10.

His point here is to clarify that prayer without action is not faith. It is, at best, a lazy faith that wants or expects God to intercede so that they do not have to act, and, at worst, a veil to hide cowardice. Even worse, so Ingram, is that this argument is used to "lull my countrymen into a fatal security" that gives false hope. He likens this to a farmer who prays for an abundant harvest but does not plough or plant in season.⁹⁷ His perspective is that not serving your country is tantamount to contributing to its demise. Ingram explains that God has given them the means to defend and serve, to be courageous and have honor, and the "means of national security."⁹⁸ He refers to figures from the Bible, such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, who utilized these qualities of "heroic ardour" and "patriotic emulation," and who faced their enemies through faith.⁹⁹

Ingram's tone becomes more inspirational when he focuses on how Christian virtue is fulfilled by serving God and country. He notes that there is still great strength in Britain, and that being united is key to their success, a reference to both their unity to volunteer for their country and to the impending rebellion in Ireland.¹⁰⁰ He references Matthew 12:25 ("Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand") to promote unity in order to avert defeat. Ingram also points out that political differences are of little consequence when the nation itself is at risk, saying that the dangers posed to it are "the only object at this moment, worthy of a Briton's consideration."¹⁰¹ Ingram blames France, not the British government, for continuing the war, noting that France has refused peace negotiation twice.¹⁰² He then points to the differences between French and British notions and realities of liberty: the French, he argues, claim to possess true liberty but repeatedly abuse the liberties of the Dutch, Swiss, Italians, and even those of their own countrymen;¹⁰³ the British, meanwhile, "may...have not much property to lose; but you have some comforts and accommodations...Mean and poor as your cottage fare may be, would you consent, as cowards, to surrender it to the enemies of your country?"¹⁰⁴ Ingram blurs the wealth divide to unite his countrymen in their cause: it does not matter how rich or poor their home is; the only thing that matters is their willingness to defend it.

Next, Ingram turns his focus on the clergy and on himself. He explains that it is the role of the clergy to serve their country and their congregations by providing inspiration and by upholding Christian and British virtues. He asserts that "it will

⁹⁷ Ingram, *Sermon*, 10.

⁹⁸ Ingram, *Sermon*, 10.

⁹⁹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Ingram, *Sermon*, 11-12.

¹⁰¹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 13.

¹⁰² Ingram, *Sermon*, 14-15.

¹⁰³ Ingram, *Sermon*, 15-17.

¹⁰⁴ Ingram, *Sermon*, 18.

be my peculiar province to give you counsel and advice under every difficulty...to devise means for your security...to support...the most helpless and defenceless of my parishioners."¹⁰⁵ Ingram reassures his congregation that he, too, will serve. His defense is in aid of their spiritual "security," and he vows to protect the "most helpless and defenceless," namely, the widows and orphans. Ingram does not need to persuade widows and orphans; rather, their inclusion here is intended to reassure the men who are volunteering: if they should die in defense of their country, Ingram will look after their families. He then explains his role in inspiring them:

It will be my province also to inspire, with the ardour of patriotic emulation, those brave and loyal men amongst you, that have engaged in the defense of every dear object, to remind them of the virtues of their ancestors, and the long-established character of British courage.... [When] you are summoned...in the service of your country...to my care...you will resign the dearest objects of your affections.¹⁰⁶

The inspiration Ingram is providing here is twofold: firstly, he promises that he will instill courage in the soldiers who volunteer by reminding them of their "British courage." It is noteworthy that he points to "British" and not Christian courage, as he has just referenced several courageous, God-fearing men from the Old Testament; thus, he is using "British" courage as a cultural identifier to incite the men. Secondly, there is inspiration in his claim of mutual service. The "brave and loyal men" who are "summoned" to serve and defend their country leave their families behind in Ingram's care: as they defend the country, he will serve them by caring for their families. Ingram's statement also suggests that those men who do not volunteer (even though they are able to do so) are not "brave and loyal." Any arguments directed against him for not risking his own life are dismissed by his acknowledgment that he is prepared to serve as well because "my country, I know, has an equal claim to the faculties of my body...whatever services my country may demand of me, or may appear necessary for your security, I shall act...with the approbation of a superintending Providence."¹⁰⁷ This represents Ingram's own convictions, as clergy were exempt from military service and facing difficulties when trying to recruit military chaplains.¹⁰⁸

Ingram closes his sermon with words of comfort, a warning, a call to action, and a reminder of God's promises. His comfort is that the French will face "almost insurmountable" obstacles that are common to all invasions but compounded by Britain's defense and the "valour of Britons."¹⁰⁹ Here, Ingram's weaving of Scripture into his prose is particularly skillful:

¹⁰⁵ Ingram, *Sermon*, 19–20.

¹⁰⁶ Ingram, *Sermon*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Ingram, *Sermon*, 21.

¹⁰⁸ Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 393.

¹⁰⁹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 21.

*Be not afraid then, nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude that cometh against us [2 Chronicles 20:15]. At least, we are sure, that our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and we hope and trust, that he will deliver us [Daniel 3:17]. If the Lord our God is with us, to help us and to fight our battles [2 Chronicles 32:8], we may be assured, that more is with us than with them [2 Kings 6:16].*¹¹⁰

These portions of Scripture verses are not referenced explicitly; rather, they illustrate Ingram's familiarity with the Bible, as well as his oratory skills, to compose an artful, cohesive message for his congregation. These Scripture verses also share a common theme, namely, overcoming fear (of death and battle) through faith. Ingram follows this by warning them "to repent of every transgression" so that they can receive "divine pardon" and thus be more able soldiers with clear consciences.¹¹¹ This is not only important for the volunteers' spiritual state, but also for the quality of service they can provide. Ingram reminds them that their "divine pardon" is supported by their "discharge of every duty...our country demands of us, to which we are impelled by every tie of affection, and every principle of Christian obligation."¹¹² This call to action is reciprocal: the zeal they show in their service to their country fulfills their Christian obligation and vice versa. Finally, Ingram reminds his audience that God will deliver them to peace soon, and that they "shall shortly be reassembled together in this place to return our unfeigned thanks to Almighty God."¹¹³

I.3. Serving Army, Serving God

The third theme of service explains how serving one another – be it family, friends, or fellow soldiers – serves God. A sermon by Rev. John Davies illustrates this especially well. Aside from a few mentions in journals, little information is available on the life of John Davies (who has a rather common name). He received his Bachelor of Arts from St. Mary Hall, Oxford.¹¹⁴ In September 1785, he was offered the lectureship of Newport, Isle of Wight, which had become vacant due to the death of Reverend Edwards.¹¹⁵ Davies's sermon, preached on May 29, 1799, received a published review which remarked that his words were "plain and stirring" and "no doubt, gratified the hearers," but that it was otherwise unexceptional and that no other sermons of his were published.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Ingram, *Sermon*, 21–22.

¹¹¹ Ingram, *Sermon*, 22.

¹¹² Ingram, *Sermon*, 22.

¹¹³ Ingram, *Sermon*, 23.

¹¹⁴ Henry Press Wright, *The Story of the 'Domus Dei' of Portsmouth, Commonly called The Royal Garrison Church* (London: James Parker & Co., 1873), 26.

¹¹⁵ "Country News," *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, September 3, 1785, 3, The British Newspaper Archive, [online](#).

¹¹⁶ Wright, *Story of the 'Domus Dei'*, 27; *The British Critic* [...], vol. 14 (London: Printed for F. and C. Rivington, 1799), 197. Researching Rev. John Davies is difficult since there were several other contemporary eponymous clergymen, and references to them are sometimes indistinguishable.

Davies preached his sermon on the occasion of the Royal Garrison Volunteers being presented their "colours."¹¹⁷ In Britain, the presentation of "colours" is a ceremony that dates back centuries, but it was formalized in 1760 when new regimental "colours" (flags) were bestowed and consecrated;¹¹⁸ at this event, it was customary for a sermon to be addressed to the regiment.¹¹⁹ "Colours" and military chaplains allegedly share the same traditional origins: Martin of Tours, a Christian soldier in the fourth century, had torn his cloak (*cappa*) in half to give it to a cold, starving beggar who, in a dream, subsequently revealed himself as Jesus.¹²⁰ Martin later served as Bishop of Tours, his cloak became a holy relic, and he was posthumously revered as a saint.¹²¹ The clergymen who protected the cloak were known in Latin as *cappellani*, translated in French to "chapelains," which evolved into the English word "chaplains;" thus, "chaplains" became the term used for all clergymen serving in the army, and the cloak was symbolically represented by the army's "colours" and standards.¹²² According to this tradition, the "colours" have both religious and military importance.

Davies's sermon approaches the theme of military service as a service to God and to one another. It opens with a prayer asking for God's blessing of the "colours." The attributes he ascribes to God, "who breakest the bow and knapest the spear in sunder, and burnest the chariots in the fire," are taken from Psalm 46:9 and evoke God's power to protect them as soldiers.¹²³ Davies makes clear that their service as soldiers is to God first, praying (with Psalm 44:5) that "in thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us."¹²⁴ His prayer is also for the victory over enemies who seek to harm King George III, for whom they carry their "colours."¹²⁵ Davies asks that God "gird [the king] with strength unto the battle, and throw down his enemies under him."¹²⁶ This implies that the soldiers are representing the king as they fight in battle. This language underscores the idea that the soldiers are not separable from the king, nor is their service.

¹¹⁷ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*.

¹¹⁸ Major R. Holden, "The Vicissitudes of Regimental Colours," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 39 (January-June 1895): 29.

¹¹⁹ Holden, "Vicissitudes of Regimental Colours," 29.

¹²⁰ Adrian S. Hoch, "St. Martin of Tours: His Transformation into a Chivalric Hero and Franciscan Ideal," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 50, no. 4 (1987): 472-473; Rachel L. Seddon, Edgar Jones, and Neil Greenberg, "The Role of Chaplains in Maintaining the Psychological Health of Military Personnel: An Historical and Contemporary Perspective," *Military Medicine* 176, no. 12 (2011): 1357.

¹²¹ Hoch, "St. Martin," 474; Seddon, Jones, and Greenberg, "Chaplains," 1357.

¹²² Seddon, Jones, and Greenberg, "Chaplains," 1357; Bergen, *Sword of the Lord*, 6.

¹²³ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, v.

¹²⁴ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, v.

¹²⁵ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, v.

¹²⁶ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, vi.

Psalm 18:39, "Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou shalt throw down mine enemies under me," is the Scripture that Davies has chosen as the theme for his sermon.¹²⁷ This verse establishes that God will equip them with strength to face and be victorious against their enemies. It reinforces that they are in service to God, as He is the one who arms them for battle, not their king or government who physically employ and equip them. Davies uses this Scripture to introduce the providence of God, who "regulates all causes and all effects. He can neither be controled [*sic*] by any force, nor be disconcerted by any accident... Wise in heart and mighty in strength, He executeth the purposes of His will."¹²⁸ Launched by this introduction, Davies's sermon cites the belief in a "National Providence" as mankind's greatest consolatory idea through which God will "screen us [the nation] from injury."¹²⁹ He continues, "The same Providence, by which Kings reign and Princes decree judgment, encircles with its goodness the destitute stranger, and watcheth for his preservation."¹³⁰ He then alludes to the history of the "colours" with reference to St. Martin of Tours. Just as St. Martin had wrapped his torn cloak around the beggar, "Providence... encircles... the destitute stranger." Both St. Martin and the king (through "Providence" by which he reigns) share the concern for watching for the "preservation" of the "stranger" and the country, respectively.

Davies urges the garrison to remain penitent in their hearts, because "He suspends His wrath. *God is patient though provoked every day... he will never remit his concern... Under... [God] we shall dwell safely.*"¹³¹ By remaining penitent, the soldiers can effectively serve God.

But while we devoutly look up to God for deliverance, we must remember that he looks to us as *instruments* of that deliverance. The existing circumstances of the universe in general, and of our own country in particular, too plainly shew, that we are in a situation of unprecedented difficulty and danger... we are placed, singly and alone, in the scale of nations, to maintain social order, moral duty; the laws, the liberties, and the *violated* rights of man. To secure to us the blessings of peace and tranquility... [you] have stood voluntarily forth, and embraced the military profession.¹³²

Here, Davies addresses both their role as Christian soldiers – and thereby God's servants – and their cause. Similar to Ingram's message about faith through action,

¹²⁷ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 7. The pagination of this publication uses Roman numerals for the title and preface pages but does not reset the Arabic numerals for the body of the sermon.

¹²⁸ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 7.

¹²⁹ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 8.

¹³⁰ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 8.

¹³¹ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 9. "God is patient though provoked every day" is a variant of Psalm 7:12 (verse 11 in some versions) in the Book of Common Prayer: Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England [...]* (Oxford: Printed by Thomas Baskett, Printer to the University, 1745).

¹³² Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 10.

Davies views the soldiers as God's "instruments" for deliverance from their current state of war and danger.¹³³ At this time, Great Britain had been at war with France for seven years and at war with Spain for nearly three years. Davies's assertion that Great Britain is "singly and alone" hints at their social, moral, and lawful superiority as a nation; thus, they are the natural leaders to restore the "violated rights of man." Davies's rhetoric infers that these soldiers are the ones to help "secure" the "peace" that God wants for all nations. Their volunteering for the military fulfills their role as servants in God's plan to bring about peace.

Davies is not insensitive to what this service to God and country entails for these men. He expresses gratitude and praises the soldiers for their patriotism and virtue, "while we lament the necessity which calls for them."¹³⁴ He acknowledges that Great Britain owes its security to the sacrifice of these garrison soldiers and to others of the battalion who "guard in formidable array the coasts of their *native* kingdom, or, in *another*."¹³⁵ The Royal Garrison Volunteers were a corps of the Royal Garrison Battalion which was deployed primarily in Gibraltar and Jersey,¹³⁶ both crucial strategic positions against Spain and France.

In his sermon, Davies then directly addresses the soldiers present. He notes their banner's design as it relates to their service to king and country: their banner had the "ensigns of *royalty*" which was a "distinguished and exalted privilege" that signified a "token of pre-eminence and favour...[a] reward of strict and soldier-like conduct."¹³⁷ To be marked with a "royal" standard validates that the king has confidence in them; they represent him in their service, and this would be a source of pride for the soldiers and create an expectation of professionalism in others.¹³⁸ It also perpetuates the theme of a service that is worthy of their calling as both soldiers and Christians. Their service has been recognized, and they are now expected to measure up to their title. This is reminiscent of the message in Luke 12:48 that "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." For both Christians and soldiers, service and responsibility are connected. The corps of soldiers addressed here had already proven that their service to their country was voluntary and unconditional: they had dealt with delays in their pay, and they had responded with patience and contentment,

¹³³ Ingram, *Sermon*, 11–13.

¹³⁴ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 11.

¹³⁵ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 11.

¹³⁶ See henceforth Steve Brown, *King George's Army British Regiments and the Men Who Led Them 1793–1815* (Warwick: Helion & Company, 2023).

¹³⁷ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 11–12.

¹³⁸ Other interpretations may also have merit. As a garrison force, they would see less combat and be under less of a direct threat than other regiments of foot; thus, there was a reduced risk of their (and their monarch's) reputation being damaged by defeat, surrender, or cowardice.

which, as Davies points out, is a credit to their professionalism and to the trust of their superiors.¹³⁹

Davies celebrates their character and service even more when he comments on their role:

You may become, in the absence of *regular* forces, not merely a *local* safeguard and defence;— but to your vigilance may be entrusted the important charge of defending a Garrison, whose consequence to the Empire is no less the subject of *deserved* than *universal* admiration: and whose spacious docks, and immense magazines, for the ready equipment of our vast naval bulwark, stand unrivalled in the annals of the world.¹⁴⁰

According to Davies, their role as a garrison unit is one of great responsibility and trust. Indeed, the Royal Garrison Battalion had been created to allow "*regular*" battalions to be released from garrison duty for overseas service and campaigns.¹⁴¹ Therefore, as Davies reminds his audience, their service is of paramount importance to the British Empire and worthy of "*deserved*" and "*universal* admiration." In the middle of the eighteenth century, Portsmouth Dockyard was Great Britain's oldest and most important naval yard;¹⁴² it was also the dockyard that the Royal Navy used for its "spoils of vanquished squadrons" and where its fleets were "collected," which drew the presence of King George III who "celebrated the triumphs of His *Fleets*: and...[gave] gratitude and thanks to [God]."¹⁴³

Davies continues his sermon by citing recent naval victories, their heroes, and the "tried valour and steady discipline of our *Regular Forces*, joined to the *active* co-operation of our *Militia*, and the *provincial armed Associations* which...must wipe away from the mind of every rational man the terrors of *invasion*."¹⁴⁴ Since their garrison corps is deserving of "*universal* admiration," the cited British victories and glories are also theirs: the soldiers of the corps serve their fellow soldiers and sailors; they offer their service to the navy by protecting the naval yard and the munitions used to strike against the enemy; they provide service to "*Regular Forces*" by freeing them from garrison duty to fight the enemy; and they protect Great Britain from the threat of invasion along with their brothers in arms (i.e., the militia and armed associations). By serving one another, they share in the military success and glory against the enemy. This theme of service evokes 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, which establishes that Christian believers all work together, despite their different roles, like many parts of one body, "And whether one member suffer, all

¹³⁹ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 13.

¹⁴¹ Brown, "British Regiments."

¹⁴² Royal Museums Greenwich, "Royal Naval Dockyards," [online](#).

¹⁴³ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 14–16.

the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."¹⁴⁵

This theme of service to one another is further promoted by the words spoken during the presentation of the corps' "colours." First, Major Garrett addresses his wife, who presents him with the "colours," stating that "in following the laudable example of our brother volunteers, we may have in any degree contributed to the permanent security and welfare of our country against either its foreign or domestic foes."¹⁴⁶ He then addresses his men, telling them that "the cause they have engaged in, is for the preservation of all that Englishmen hold most dear – their wives, their children, their country and its laws!"¹⁴⁷ Both statements reiterate that the soldiers are engaged in service to something greater. They may only contribute to a certain "degree...to the permanent security" of Great Britain, just like a small part of the body nonetheless contributes to its health but, no matter the degree, their "example" is "laudable" because it is in service to those they "hold most dear." Thus, it is not the nature (or degree) of their service that matters; it is who or what they are serving. Major Garrett concludes by addressing Davies and the Governor, Sir William Pitt, to assure "that being animated with the most zealous ardour for the defence of our King and Country, we will, to the utmost of our abilities, whenever called upon, perform the duties of faithful soldiers and good citizens!"¹⁴⁸

The notion of enlisting service on earth as an extension of service to God was not a new development, but rather an evolving one. Military service as service to God can be traced back to Old-Testament times. However, the emergence of patriotism and nationalism, as well as the competition between empires, led to threats on a global scale,¹⁴⁹ which in turn impacted how chaplains addressed threats, enemies, and God's providence. This was especially true during the French Revolutionary Wars when the social and political differences between Britain and France grew ever more intense. Consequently, some chaplains dedicated half of their discourse (or more) to these differences and to the impact of war on British commerce, economy, and society.¹⁵⁰

The use of identity to draw people together for both religion and war was part of a cultural evolution.¹⁵¹ This cultural evolution is evident in sermons that used British identity as a foundation to denounce Britain's enemies. In a 1723 sermon, John Jackson preached to a regiment of dragoons to "lay aside all Prejudice, Party

¹⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:26.

¹⁴⁶ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 19–20.

¹⁴⁷ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 20.

¹⁴⁹ Bergen, *Sword of the Lord*, 7; Van Eijnatten, *Preaching*, 233–234; Teulié and Sterritt, *War Sermons*, 109.

¹⁵⁰ Chartres, *Sermon*, 2–9; Ingram, *Sermon*, 5–9, 14–17; Abdy, *Sermon*.

¹⁵¹ Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 103.

and Faction; exert the Spirit of our *British* Ancestors, and like *Christians*, like *Protestants*, like *Englishmen*, unite our Hearts and Hands to maintain...[the country and Church]."¹⁵² This notion of cultural unity reinforced an "us" versus "other" mentality and led to an increase in the respective rhetoric throughout the century.¹⁵³ Rawlins emphasized the religious differences between Britain and France, pointing out that King George was the head of the Church of England while France was a Catholic country.¹⁵⁴ Ingram noted the two country's differences in governance and the (British) benefits that separated British and French culture.¹⁵⁵ Discourse on differences usually focused on disavowing the French Revolution as a disturbing and fallacious development.¹⁵⁶ Chaplains imparted on soldiers that their service to Britain—and the preservation of all things British—was the equivalent of service to God.

II. Soldier

Throughout history, soldiering has featured the same basic requirements, namely, discipline, order, and the ability to defeat the enemy. These have their analogies in the Christian life, although the victory over the enemy is achieved there through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and not by military prowess. Both the military life and the Christian life also share an emphasis on the type of conduct that reflects its respective tenets. For chaplains, the military life presents three challenging themes that need to be addressed: the burden of violence and killing, the danger of death, and the importance of conduct that reflects both military standards and Christian values. Much was a stake with regard to the soldiers' conduct: they had to earn their community's respect because public opinion still associated them with sinful lifestyles for much of the century.¹⁵⁷ Suspicion of the army began to wane after the Militia Act of 1757, but its reputation for sinfulness lingered.¹⁵⁸

The ability to kill is a necessary skill for an effective soldier on the battlefield but also a counterpoint to Christ's teaching of loving others as oneself.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the theme of validating the military profession and reconciling it with the Christian faith was an integral part of sermons preached to soldiers, and it

¹⁵² John Jackson, *The Duty of Subjects Towards their Governors: Set forth in a Sermon Preach'd before the Honourable Col. Charles Churchill's Regiment of Dragoons, At their Camp near Leicester [...]* (London: Printed for J. Knapton, at the Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1723), 28.

¹⁵³ Van Eijnatten, *Preaching*, 233.

¹⁵⁴ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 10–14, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Ingram, *Sermon*, 15–19.

¹⁵⁶ Chartres, *Sermon*, 8.

¹⁵⁷ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 203, 215, 218.

¹⁵⁸ Julia Banister, *Masculinity, Militarism and Eighteenth-Century Culture, 1689–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 94; Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 396–398.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew 22:39.

seems that Rev. Thomas Broughton delivered one of the most popular sermons in this regard.

II.1. Conscience and Faith

Rev. Thomas Broughton was born in Oxford in 1712 to English parents who had taken up residence in Edinburgh (Scotland). He joined the Methodist movement in 1732 and befriended John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield. Broughton's sermons were known for their fidelity, candid zeal, and conscientiousness.¹⁶⁰ His style more closely resembled Whitefield's emotional and animated rhetoric than John Wesley's more reasoned and crafted theological arguments.¹⁶¹ Broughton separated from the Methodist movement in 1738 after a disagreement over the Moravian doctrines, which centered on the point of conversion (gradual or instantaneous) and the merit of works of faith, however the rhetoric, style, and zeal of his preaching remained the same.¹⁶² Broughton was as a fellow of Exeter College, a curate at the Tower of London, a lecturer at All Hallows on Lombard Street, and the secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,¹⁶³ a position he held from 1743 until his death in 1777.¹⁶⁴

Broughton's most famous sermon is *The Christian Soldier*. First preached in 1737 and printed in 1738, it was published in twelve editions during the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, including a Welsh translation published in 1797.¹⁶⁵ Broughton preached the sermon as part of his official duties while he was curate at the Tower of London, and it was published at the request of the garrison's commander, one Colonel Churchill, and the regiment's officers.¹⁶⁶ The sponsorship of these officers to have the sermon published indicates that it was well received. In fact, of his many sermons, this was one of Broughton's only two published sermons.¹⁶⁷

Broughton opens his sermon by addressing his "Fellow Soldiers in the Christian Warfare."¹⁶⁸ This establishes him, too, as a soldier, and affirms his

¹⁶⁰ Luke Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists: Memoirs of the Rev. Messrs. Clayton, Ingham, Gambold, Hervey, and Broughton, with Biographical Notices of Others* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1873), 334–336, 346.

¹⁶¹ Van Eijnatten, *Preaching*, 14–15; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 338–339, 345–346.

¹⁶² Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 342–344, 352–353.

¹⁶³ Charles William Boase, *Registrum Collegii Exoniensis: Register of the Rectors, Fellows, and Other Members on the Foundation of Exeter College, Oxford*, new edition (Oxford: Printed for the Oxford Historical Society, 1894), cxlii, 140; Jeremy Gregory, ed., *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume II: Establishment and Empire, 1662–1829* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 444.

¹⁶⁴ Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 358–359.

¹⁶⁵ Leslie Stephen, ed., "Broughton, Thomas (1712–1777)," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 6 (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1886), 464–465.

¹⁶⁶ Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 336; Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, ii.

¹⁶⁷ Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 352.

¹⁶⁸ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 1.

audience as Christians, which then provides the basis for him to speak candidly. He follows this by expressing his desire that his sermon will "be for the better, and not for the worse," and that they will be patient with him.¹⁶⁹ His wording here indicates that Broughton will not skirt around what needs to be said, so much so that he feels it necessary to ask his military audience to not be turned away by his sermon's contents. Imparting this to his soldier audience is a wise move, as he is about to reprimand them for their sins and to point out the dangers that sin poses to their salvation.¹⁷⁰ However, beyond these reproofs and warnings, Broughton's sermon reads like a manual for reconciling the faith with the military profession, as well as like a template for the character of a Christian soldier.

The central Scripture Broughton uses in this sermon is Acts 10:1-2. Acts 10 relates a pivotal moment in the New Testament and the history of the early Church. It refers to a point in time after Jesus had been crucified, risen, and ascended to heaven, leaving his disciples to share the gospel. Up until Acts 10, the gospel had been spreading within the Jewish communities. Then, in the opening verses of Acts 10, one Cornelius is introduced as the centurion of the Italian Regiment at Caesarea (Maritima), and he is noted as being devout (along with his family), God-fearing, prayerful, and generous to the poor.¹⁷¹ An angel visits Cornelius, telling him to find the apostle Simon Peter; meanwhile, Peter is directed by the Holy Spirit to go with the men who will be sent to him by Cornelius. Peter and Cornelius meet, and this leads to the gospel (and the Holy Spirit) being shared with the gentiles (i.e., the non-Jewish people), thus ushering in a movement that will spread Christianity over the known world.¹⁷² Acts 10 contains an important qualifier of Cornelius, namely, that he was "respected by all the Jewish people;"¹⁷³ this is noteworthy because of the Jews' general animosity toward the Romans, making the respect of the Jews toward Cornelius a testament to his character.

Based on this scriptural context, Broughton calls upon the soldiers to follow the example of Cornelius. It is his goal for them to be both good soldiers and Christians to the point that they will earn the respect of those around them based on the quality of their character. Broughton accomplishes this by first addressing the issue of violence. He uses two New Testament examples of interaction with soldiers, first with John the Baptist and then with Jesus.¹⁷⁴ He cites Luke 3:14 where soldiers ask John the Baptist what they need to do to obtain salvation, and John tells them to refrain from extorting and falsely accusing others, and to be content

¹⁶⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 339.

¹⁷¹ Acts 10:1-5.

¹⁷² Acts 10:6-11. Broughton only references the first two verses of Acts 10, suggesting that his audience was familiar with the chapter and its impact on Christianity, or he assumed they were.

¹⁷³ Acts 10:22.

¹⁷⁴ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 2.

with their pay.¹⁷⁵ This biblical reference is also found in a sermon by Rev. George Vanbrugh (some fifty years later) who uses the same examples of both Cornelius and John the Baptist as evidence that "the good Christian and the valiant soldier are perfectly compatible."¹⁷⁶ Broughton, in his sermon, then references Luke 7:1-9, where Jesus commends the faith of a centurion. From this, Broughton concludes that the absence of a reproach against military life on Jesus's part is sufficient evidence in support of it. This argument also appears in Rev. William Agar's sermon on Luke 3:14, which permits violence in defense of the innocent and for the protection of the faith, but condemns acts of extortion and discontent.¹⁷⁷ Broughton then comments on the current state of the army: the military life, he posits, is not wicked, but "too many persons in the Army (to our Grief be it spoken!) are at present exceedingly vicious and corrupt, yet...there are some pious Centurions amongst them, some devout Soldiers of Jesus Christ."¹⁷⁸ He makes the case that the problem is not the army, but that there are "too many" sinful soldiers in it.

The weight of this argument cannot be overstated. Broughton refers to Simon Peter, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ and their respective show of concern for the soldiers' conduct and faith, not their profession as such. They all could have commented on or even advised a change from soldiering, but they did not do so. This is similar to the interaction between John the Baptist and Jesus, respectively, and tax collectors in which they rebuked sins common to the profession but not the profession itself.¹⁷⁹ Broughton also points to David as the example of a faithful soldier who feared God. Using this reference, he addresses the killing of one's enemies directly:

Then, tho' you should be call'd forth to Battle, like the gallant Son of *Jesse*, you will enter the Field with Courage, hear the Din of War undisturbed, and with your Prayers and Arms, as *David* with his smooth Stones, smite and wound the Head of your Enemies...O blessed Portion of every devout Soldier! He fights with Courage, dies in Peace, and lives in Glory.¹⁸⁰

The rhetoric employed in this section of Broughton's sermon plainly absolves soldiers of guilt for killing or wounding their enemies in battle. Broughton and the

¹⁷⁵ Luke 3:14. Broughton used the King James Bible, which translates *διασεισητε* as "Do violence to no man." Most modern translations understand *διασεισητε* as "intimidate" or "shake violently in order to extort;" see *Strong's Greek Dictionary*.

¹⁷⁶ George Vanbrugh, *A Sermon, Preached [...] before Major-General Sir George Osborn, Bart. and many of the Officers and Soldiers of the 40th Regiment, upon the Delivery of the New Colours [...]* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard [and two others], 1786), 10-11.

¹⁷⁷ William Agar, "Sermon VI: Sober Advice to the Inferior Soldier, to Do no Violence, and Be Content with the Wages," in *Military Devotion: Or, the Soldier's Duty to God, His Prince and His Country [...]* (London: Printed for the Author, and Sold by P. Brindley in Bond-Street [and five others], 1758), 105-109, 111-116.

¹⁷⁸ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 2-3.

¹⁷⁹ Luke 3:12-13; Luke 19:1-10.

¹⁸⁰ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 15-16. See 1 Samuel 17.

soldiers are aware that fighting entails killing or the attempt to kill, yet he exhorts them to do so with courage. Dying in peace implies that there is no reason for their conscience to be troubled; in fact, these devout soldiers will attain salvation ("live in Glory").

Earlier in his sermon, Broughton had detailed the characteristics of Cornelius as worthy of imitation (i.e., being devoted, God-fearing, giving, and prayerful).¹⁸¹ In his next point, Broughton laments the soldiers' lack of the fear of God. He sharply compares them to Cornelius who did not conduct himself as they do.¹⁸² Broughton then changes his tone to be sympathetic on the topic of charitable giving because of the "Narrowness of [their] Incomes."¹⁸³ Yet, his sympathy evaporates when he addresses their frivolous spending of what little money they earn on lust, namely alcohol and women.¹⁸⁴ In the eighteenth century, soldiers' wages were relatively small; in addition to this, they had to purchase their own equipment and mount (for cavalymen), and augment their food rations.¹⁸⁵ This restricted their ability to give charitably and made their spending on sinful activities (drinking, gambling, and soliciting prostitutes) more blatant.

The third point of Broughton's sermon addresses the theme of death. Broughton refers to death as a powerful motivation to repent for everyone, but especially for soldiers, whose case "is generally more dangerous; and the Hazards [they] run, more perilous than that of other Men."¹⁸⁶ He uses the uncertainty of life to exhort soldiers to show a "constant Readiness to die" through their devotion and fear of God.¹⁸⁷ He points out that Britain's current state of peace offers little security to them who "know not how soon the Trumpet may sound, and ye be called forth to the Battle."¹⁸⁸ He then reminds the soldiers that they will have to give an account of all their misdeeds on Judgment Day and, if they remain unrepentant, will face the torments of Hell.¹⁸⁹

Broughton then pivots and reminds them that, as Christ's soldiers, they should wear the whole Armor of God (a reference to Ephesians 6:10-18), meditate on

¹⁸¹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 5-8.

¹⁸² Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 7, 9-11.

¹⁸³ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 11-12.

¹⁸⁴ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 12.

¹⁸⁵ Stephen Conway, *History of the British Army, 1714-1783: An Institutional History* (Philadelphia: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2021), 83; Holmes, *Redcoat*, xxi-xxii; Kane, "Arms an Employment," 25, 31, 51.

¹⁸⁶ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 15.

¹⁸⁷ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 15.

¹⁸⁸ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 15. This sermon was given near the end of Great Britain's longest period of peace in the eighteenth century. From the end of the Great Northern War (1721) until the onset of the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739), Great Britain was officially at peace, except for the Dummer's War in New England, but there Great Britain relied on colonial militia to fight.

¹⁸⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 16-18.

godly things, and pray often.¹⁹⁰ He even suggests that meditating on Heaven can be done while they are on guard duty during the night.¹⁹¹ He tells them to "Meditate also upon *Death*, to be prepared for it...[these meditations] will greatly sweeten the Fatigues and Toils of your present Alotment in the World, and dispose you to bear up with Courage" their difficult future.¹⁹² Broughton concludes his sermon by expressing his desire that they heed his advice and embrace repentance, reminding them of the ever-present danger of death: "considering the many Casualties of this uncertain Life, we may not behold one another's Faces again...till we all appear before the Judgment-Seat of *Christ*."¹⁹³ The regiment Broughton was preaching to was about to leave the garrison, which makes these last statements especially significant, as their "uncertain Life," the military profession, could send them wherever their service was needed.¹⁹⁴ They might all live long lives and still not cross paths in the future, or they might die in service to their country in the near future, "considering...[their dangerous] uncertain Life." Broughton's reflection that their next meeting might be before Christ both acknowledges death and gives hope for the afterlife, because they will see each other again.¹⁹⁵

Before closing his sermon with a prayer, Broughton addresses the officers of the regiment. This direct address is not common in these types of sermons and provides valuable insight into the conduct expected of Christian soldiers.

Gentlemen, 'Tis your Ambition and Aim to have your Men in good Order, comely Array, and manly Discipline; you instruct them in the Arts of War, train them up for martial Achievements [*sic*] and noble Exploits, and awe them to respect *You* and to honour the KING. In this ye do well: be it spoken to your Credit and Reputation. But then, *Gentlemen*, you would also do well to inspect sometimes the moral Behaviour of the Soldiers that are under you: The pious Captain *Cornelius* stoop'd to this Employ, who (we are told) had a devout Soldier that attended him; and whose Goodness, we may suppose, was in a great Measure owing to the Captain's shining Example and virtuous Conversation. May this truly brave and noble Centurion be your Pattern: May you, *Gentlemen*, tread in the Steps of this illustrious Warrior, and engage your Inferiours to be Wise and Good by your Commands and Examples. It is scarce imaginable what Glory might be given to GOD, what Success to the Enterprizes of an Army, and what Comfort would accrue to the Minds of such a *General* and other *Officers*, who took strict Care to suppress the Vices of those under their Command; particularly, the horrid Impiety of prophane Swearing and Cursing, which, as a great Duke once told his Soldiers, is a Sin that has the least Temptation, and is of the most heavy Guilt. To which, as Soldiers are too often very subject, so being committed openly, and thereby made liable to Observation, may

¹⁹⁰ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 18–20. Ephesians 6:10–18 was frequently employed due to its use of various pieces of armor as analogies for Christian characteristics (e.g., the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation), and it emphasizes the need to wear the full suit of armor.

¹⁹¹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 22.

¹⁹² Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 23.

¹⁹³ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 24.

¹⁹⁴ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 23–24.

¹⁹⁵ Other interpretations may be surmised. It would be less reassuring to those who thought their salvation in question, but perhaps it was intended to spur such soldiers on to repentance.

be easily punish'd and suppress'd. The mere Frowns of *Officers* would do much towards it, but the constant Resentment of it would do it more, and a general Punishment of it, most effectually. All this, *Gentlemen*, being consider'd, you will be induc'd, I hope, to vindicate the much injur'd Honour of your GOD, by using your utmost Efforts to put a Stop to this monstrous Sin; which if you do, and strive to excel in the other Parts of your Duty to GOD and your Neighbours, you will reap the blessed Comforts of so doing even in this Life, and when *your Warfare is accomplish'd* here upon Earth, you will be preferr'd in the noble Army of the LORD of *Hosts*, and celebrate an eternal Triumph in the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁹⁶

Here, Broughton uses his pulpit to great effect by leveraging societal pressures for the spiritual benefit of both the officers and the enlisted men in attendance. Officers were expected to conduct themselves as gentlemen according to societal standards.¹⁹⁷ Broughton's address calls out the officers in front of their men, so all know where the proverbial bar has been set for the conduct, behavior, and righteousness of the officers. This standard is then, by default, transposed on the enlisted men because they are expected to follow and adopt the character of their officers who, in turn, should be imitating Cornelius and, by extension, Christ. It also effectively exposes those who are not devout based on their behavior after hearing (or reading) this sermon.

Broughton's desire for soldiers to be faithful Christians was not limited to this one instance of preaching. The second edition of the sermon, *The Christian Soldier*, includes a dedication to The Right Honourable Lord Viscount Ossulstone, who was the patron of its publication. In this dedication Broughton emphasizes the positive reception the sermon had enjoyed with his military audience and the potential of future publications to aid more officers and soldiers alike "for their present and future Welfare."¹⁹⁸ Broughton's second edition is also easier to read (e.g., "Penman" is changed to "Writer" and "abominable" to "unprofitable").¹⁹⁹ It includes prayers and hymns after the sermon so that soldiers can practically apply Broughton's call for them to be prayerful in the face of temptation.²⁰⁰ Broughton's care for the soldiers' spiritual welfare was still evident in the last years of his life. A year before his death, Broughton was advocating for British soldiers fighting in the American Revolution to be distributed a publication he thought would help them in their faith.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 24–26.

¹⁹⁷ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 90–92.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Broughton, *The Christian Soldier: Or, The Duties of a Religious Life Recommended to the Army, from the Example of Cornelius: In a Sermon Preached before His Majesty's Second Regiment of Foot-Guards. By an Assistant Chaplain of a Garrison*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for John and James Rivington [...], 1748), v–vii. The subtitle of all subsequently published editions of this sermon included the phrase "from the Example of Cornelius;" in the sermon itself, Broughton used the phrase "after the Example of Cornelius." Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 15.

¹⁹⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 1, 4; Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 2nd ed., 1, 5.

²⁰⁰ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 2nd ed., 33–36.

²⁰¹ Thomas Broughton to George Germain, June 27, 1776, The National Archives (UK).

II.2. Courage and Faith

Another sermon that delves into the theme of soldiering and compares the character of soldiers and Christians is Joshua Kyte's 1758 *True Religion the Only Foundation of True Courage*.²⁰² It shares some of the rhetoric of Broughton's *Christian Soldier* but emphasizes the correlation between faithfulness and courage. Kyte's and Broughton's convictions concerning soldiers are closely aligned; however, Kyte's sermon can best be described as overzealous, perhaps because it was preached in 1758, when the Seven Years' War had been raging for nearly two years.

Rev. Joshua Kyte was born in Sherborne, Gloucestershire, in 1725.²⁰³ He attended Saint Peter's College in Westminster at the age of fourteen and then, after four years, went on to Christ Church at the University of Oxford where he was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (1747) and a Master of Arts (1751) while also serving as master at a school in Hammersmith.²⁰⁴ He served as usher of Westminster School from 1751 until 1764 and as rector of Saint John the Evangelist, Westminster, from 1758 until 1764.²⁰⁵ In 1764, Kyte was appointed rector of Wendlebury, Oxfordshire, and he received his Bachelor of Divinity and Doctorate of Divinity within one year.²⁰⁶ After serving as rector of Swyncombe, Oxfordshire, for just a few months, Kyte died in 1788.²⁰⁷

Kyte emphasized that courage and resoluteness were essential for both soldiers and Christians. He correlated cowardice with wickedness and courage with righteousness.²⁰⁸ Similar to Broughton's *Christian Soldier*, Kyte's *True Religion* argues that the best way for soldiers to excel in their profession is to be good men.²⁰⁹ Kyte begins his sermon by stressing that training in the art and conduct of war, as well as physical armor, has some value, but "upon reflection you will find no just confidence, no real security, but in the *Armour of God*; viz. in the belief and practice of true Religion."²¹⁰ Here, Kyte alludes to 1 Timothy 4:8: "For bodily

²⁰² Joshua Kyte, *True Religion the Only Foundation of True Courage: A Sermon Preached at the Horse-Guards on Friday the 17th of February, 1758 [...] Particularly Addressed to the Military Gentlemen [...] (London: Printed for B. Barker, and Sold by P. Davey and B. Law, [1758?])*.

²⁰³ Henry Alfred Napier, *Historical Notices of the Parishes of Swyncombe and Ewelme in the County of Oxford, by the Hon. and Rev. Henry Alfred Napier, M.A., Rector of Swyncombe (Oxford: Printed for the Author, by James Wright, Printer to the University, 1858)*, 235–236.

²⁰⁴ Joseph Welch, *The List of the Queen's Scholars of St. Peter's College, Westminster, Admitted on that Foundation since 1663 (London: G.W. Ginger, College Street, Westminster, 1852)*, 328; Napier, *Historical Notices*, 235–236.

²⁰⁵ Welch, *List of the Queen's Scholars*, 328. An usher was the second headmaster at a school.

²⁰⁶ Napier, *Historical Notices*, 236.

²⁰⁷ John Dunkin, *Oxfordshire: The History and Antiquities of the Hundreds of Bullington and Ploughley*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for Harding, Mavor, and Lepard, Pinsbury Square, 1823), 183.

²⁰⁸ Kyte, *True Religion*, 1.

²⁰⁹ Kyte, *True Religion*, 2.

²¹⁰ Kyte, *True Religion*, 2.

exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Kyte likens military training (and armor) to physical training and the "*Armour of God*" to godliness.

Kyte tackles the dichotomy between war and faith, as well as the morality of reconciling the two. He confidently asserts his own conscience in preaching to soldiers, stating "since we are entered into a just and necessary War, it behoves us to acquit ourselves like Men; and therefore I shall think myself excusable...[pointing] out some of those methods which may enable us to acquire and deserve success."²¹¹ Kyte's statement informs his audience that, from a faith perspective, war can be just and necessary, and is therefore not a condemning activity for soldiers. Furthermore, Kyte suggests that the pulpit may be used to help soldiers achieve victory by supporting their faith. He contextualizes this when he argues that these "methods" of success "may enable us to lay the foundations of an honourable Peace, and give bounds to the Sword, that is over-running our Land."²¹² This sounds similar to the idea that "the end justifies the means" – the "end" (in this case) being a peace that has been brought on through righteous "means."²¹³

Kyte's introduction makes his position clear: soldiers can adhere to the Anglican faith and, what is more, they should be good Christians in order to be more effective soldiers. He elaborates on this with his sermon points which also address the theme of reconciling violence and death. In his first point, Kyte stresses the need for soldiers to keep their sinful desires and temptations under control in order to stay focused on dangers in the field of battle.²¹⁴ If soldiers maintain their spiritual life, he argues, they will be able to cope with the threat of death and the need to engage in killing:

Tho' Death and Destruction stare him in the face, and the horrors of blood and slaughter are round about him; his mind will be animated with such invincible thoughts, and guarded with such noble considerations, that no outward force will be able to approach it.²¹⁵

Kyte does not end there. He warns that those who are "Wicked" will lack the "Calm Serenity" that comes from "Innocence and Virtue," which leaves them without "prospect of Safety."²¹⁶ He suggests that "Wicked" soldiers are not just the enemy combatants, but also those British soldiers without true religion. Kyte tells his audience that when these soldiers face battle, they are left "without assistance from Reason, without hope from Religion," and the sinful nature that

²¹¹ Kyte, *True Religion*, 2.

²¹² Kyte, *True Religion*, 2–3.

²¹³ Alejandro Barcenas, *Machiavelli's Art of Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 42–43. Machiavelli alluded to a similar concept in *The Prince* and his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*.

²¹⁴ Kyte, *True Religion*, 3.

²¹⁵ Kyte, *True Religion*, 4.

²¹⁶ Kyte, *True Religion*, 4.

they rely upon turns into distress as they despair of the torment of condemnation should they fall in battle.²¹⁷

There is no direct evidence how the soldiers received this point. They might have quietly scoffed at Kyte's zeal and rhetoric, or they might have felt inspired by faith that would steel their minds and resolve in battle. The evidence does show that at least some soldiers felt the latter, because the sermon was published "At the Request of the Guard Then Present" in the hopes that it would encourage other soldiers.²¹⁸ This is also true for Kyte's following point.

For his second sermon point, Kyte follows the same format, but he focuses on the hardships and the elements that the soldiers have to endure rather than the horrors of war. He urges the soldiers

To consider the necessity of being early accustomed to endure difficulties and inconveniences; to be inured to heat and cold, watchings and fastings...[which] harden and corroborate the constitution and temper of mind, and inspire courageous principles; by calling into action every generous and manly Virtue.²¹⁹

Kyte warns that weakness in adverse conditions stems from indulging in sinful pleasures which erode a soldier's resolve. Kyte elaborates that this resolve is fortified "by the Exercise of Temperance and severe Virtue" and that throughout history weak nations have risen to great power only to fall to ruin due to "Vice and luxury."²²⁰ He then contrasts the righteous and wicked characters to leave the soldiers who are listening in no doubt as to what type of conduct will lead to which of these characters.²²¹ Addressing the conditions and the elements soldiers had to endure was a wise move on Kyte's part, as it would not have been lost on soldiers that the leading cause of death in the military was not from combat, but from disease.²²² Virtuous living would give soldiers a certain amount of control over the threat of disease where their martial training could offer no protection. The terrible conditions of war, Kyte suggests, also had their benefits because they would help to "harden" the soldiers' mental fortitude, a reference to the ability to show courage and not give in to cowardice. Similar benefits apply to Christians who endure hardships as a refining fire to strengthen their faith.²²³ Kyte's acknowledgment of the awful conditions soldiers endure is a credit to his understanding of soldiers' lives; at the very least, it is a more inspirational spin on their otherwise demoralizing conditions. Broughton's sermon contains a similar

²¹⁷ Kyte, *True Religion*, 4.

²¹⁸ Kyte, *True Religion*, ii. The "Guard" is a reference to officers and soldiers present from the Horse and Grenadier Guards.

²¹⁹ Kyte, *True Religion*, 5.

²²⁰ Kyte, *True Religion*, 5–6.

²²¹ Kyte, *True Religion*, 6–8.

²²² George Yagi Jr., "Beating the 'Bloody' – Meet the 18th-Century Army Doctor Who Waged War on Dysentery," *Military History Now*, March 2, 2016, [online](#).

²²³ See 1 Peter 1:7.

argument: "Watchings, Labours, and Pains, which in the Order of Providence you undergo... may, in the End, turn to your own great and everlasting Good."²²⁴ The argument that bad conditions could lead to spiritual gain allowed soldiers to control their mindset and let their faith dictate their courage in combat.²²⁵

Kyte's third point is designed to ease soldiers' consciences by justifying their cause on the basis of Scripture. He encourages soldiers to "weigh and consider well the nature of our actions; and not dare to put our hands to the execution of any thing, that upon examination may appear unlawful or unjustifiable."²²⁶ This is a key point in support of the argument that courage and resoluteness can aid Christian soldiers. A faithful soldier will have "the full consent and approbation of his mind" for his righteous actions, while a soldier without the guiding principles of faith will act "with a misgiving mind...[and who]...knows not how to direct his trembling steps; and is in continual dread...[leading to] every manly courageous principle...dissolved and melted away."²²⁷ Kyte's point here is simple: courage stems from faith, and it will guide the soldier's steps in battle; those who tremble in fear should take stock of their faith. Combined with Kyte's comments concerning death and combat conditions, this conveys the message that a soldier can conduct himself confidently and does not have to doubt his actions and experiences. Fears that arise from danger and doubt can be diminished by knowing God better, following His commands, and "sincerely relinquishing the work of iniquity."²²⁸

Kyte uses his fourth and final point to tie in the concern of death. Like Broughton, Kyte is aware that soldiers need to be ready to face death,²²⁹ but unlike Broughton who addresses this topic to emphasize the need to repent, Kyte focuses on the reward that is awaiting the faithful. Kyte argues that "nothing can be a greater incentive to virtuous actions" than "the hope and expectation of a future reward."²³⁰ His perspective on death reinforces a Christian soldier's ability to excel in his duties. Without the weight of fear, which is brought on by fear of judgment, good men are unhampered in their potential to achieve and are driven by the knowledge that their "services in this life will entitle [them] to a glorious immortality in the life to come."²³¹ Kyte's appeal to focus on the Heavenly reward simultaneously affirms that death is an ever-present danger but also offers hope that it is not to be feared. As Kyte puts it,

²²⁴ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 23.

²²⁵ Kyte, *True Religion*, 11.

²²⁶ Kyte, *True Religion*, 9.

²²⁷ Kyte, *True Religion*, 9, used Ephesians 6:14 (breastplate of righteousness) to make this point.

²²⁸ Kyte, *True Religion*, 15.

²²⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 16-18; Kyte, *True Religion*, 16.

²³⁰ Kyte, *True Religion*, 11.

²³¹ Kyte, *True Religion*, 11-12.

The Soul of such a Man is secure of its existence; and therefore smiles at the approach of Danger. Death is so far from bringing terrors to the righteous Man, that it opens a pleasant scene of blissful futurity: armed and inspired with such a prospect, he can charge through the deepest ranks of his Enemies with undaunted resolution.²³²

This ideology of courage and faith would fit the societal ideal of a soldier.²³³ Kyte, like Broughton, realizes the impact that the officers' example can have on their men and the public, which is why he tells them: "You are a body of Men, whose bad or good Conduct of yourselves is of very great importance to the Publick; it is from your Discipline, all other Corps will take their Military Stamp and Impression; from your Manners will form their Department."²³⁴ In this respect, Kyte's audience was ideal, as the Horse Guards and Grenadier Guards were elite units within the army and society.²³⁵ The Horse Guards were composed entirely of commissioned officers of the gentry class, and the Grenadier Guards were handpicked for their strength and ability.²³⁶ Therefore, these soldiers enjoyed both elite status and military clout. Kyte did not exaggerate the potential impact these soldiers could have in shaping public opinion and promoting discipline within the army, since his public sermon and its subsequent printing acted as a form of accountability to soldiers' behavior.²³⁷

II.3. Conduct and Faith

The themes of death, violence, and conduct reverberate in another sermon that was delivered over a decade later. Rev. Sidney Swinney's sermon is an excellent illustration of how soldierly conduct can be aligned with Christian conduct. Swinney was a military chaplain who traveled with the army. His perspective is valuable because he delivered his sermon as a dedication to a former commander of the British Forces and to the soldiers who had served in Germany during the Seven Years' War.²³⁸ His perspective is also unique in that he published his sermon after serving as a chaplain in the army during their campaigns in Germany, which gave him time to reflect on the war and the commander under whom he had served. Swinney's convictions concerning Christian soldiers align with those of other chaplains, such as Broughton and Kyte, who did not see combat.

Rev. Sidney Swinney was born in 1721 in Pontefract, Yorkshire, and educated first at Eton College and then at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was awarded

²³² Kyte, *True Religion*, 12.

²³³ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 217-219; Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics, and Society, 1793-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 17-19.

²³⁴ Kyte, *True Religion*, 16.

²³⁵ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 88, 103.

²³⁶ Holmes, *Redcoat*, 103; Sylvanus Urban, "Regimental Distinctions, Traditions, and Anecdotes," *The Gentleman's Magazine* 241 (July-December 1877): 225-226.

²³⁷ Conway, *History*, 10, 98; Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 121-122.

²³⁸ Swinney, *Sermon*, 1-2.

a Bachelor of Arts (1744), a Master of Arts (1749), and a Doctor of Divinity (1763).²³⁹ He was ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1745 and appointed curate of Swillington, Yorkshire, within three months.²⁴⁰ Swinney's father, Matthew Swinney, was a major in the British army, and his distinguished career was rewarded by procuring an army chaplaincy for his son Sidney.²⁴¹ After the Seven Years' War, Swinney followed his passion for archaeology and ancient art;²⁴² he took a post in Constantinople, serving as the chaplain to the British Embassy, and published a wide range of works, including the epic poem, *The Battle of Minden*.²⁴³ He was a fellow of the Royal Society (1764) and the Antiquarian Society (1767) and the rector of Barton-le-Street (1775).²⁴⁴ Swinney died in 1783 in Scarborough, and he was remembered as a preacher, a poet, and a "gentleman of uncommon generosity and benevolence."²⁴⁵

Swinney opens his sermon with the familiar verse from Luke 3:14 which, based on the interaction between John the Baptist and soldiers, suggests that military service as such is not an issue.²⁴⁶ He elaborates on the meaning of John's instruction to the soldiers to "do no violence" by tying it to the sin of extortion and the threat of violence for personal gain, but not to the kind of violence that soldiers exhibit during combat.²⁴⁷ His sermon advises soldiers to be mindful of violence; Swinney warns them to "be cautious how you use the sword, and do not wantonly sport with that dangerous weapon" when responding to riots.²⁴⁸ He emphasizes that the army and its officers show upright behavior, are above reproach, and would not act maliciously against their fellow citizens.²⁴⁹ This assertion both praises the audience and holds them to a high standard, which will become public knowledge due to the sermon's print publication. Swinney elevates this standard even more by instructing the soldiers to "be as cautious as possible" in dealing with the public, who will hold them accountable.²⁵⁰ Swinney's message to the

²³⁹ Henry Colin Gray Matthew and Brian Harrison, "Swinney, Sidney (1721-1783)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: In Association with the British Academy: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, vol. 53, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 508.

²⁴⁰ Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508.

²⁴¹ Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508.

²⁴² Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508.

²⁴³ Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508; Sidney Swinney, *The Battle of Minden, a Poem, in Three Books* [...] (London: Printed for Mr. Dodsley in Pall-Mall [and seven others], 1769). Swinney was an observer of the battle, and his poem is considered a valuable firsthand account.

²⁴⁴ Swinney, *Battle of Minden*, i; Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508.

²⁴⁵ Matthew and Harrison, "Swinney," 508.

²⁴⁶ Swinney, *Sermon*, 7-9.

²⁴⁷ Swinney, *Sermon*, 10-11.

²⁴⁸ Swinney, *Sermon*, 12-13. At this time, Great Britain was at peace, so the army was used for domestic peacekeeping.

²⁴⁹ Swinney, *Sermon*, 13

²⁵⁰ Swinney, *Sermon*, 13.

soldiers is to show restraint with regard to violence and not get too excited, thorough, or reckless when carrying it out.

Swinney then points to the "innocence" of soldiers who are required to use violence, thereby allowing them to reconcile their faith with their professional obligation to engage in violence:

[If the Civil Magistrate] ordering you to fire in consequence of [their] commands; it is then, and not till then, your absolute duty to obey: and whatsoever damage shall be done, or whatsoever blood (innocent or guilty blood) shall be spilt, through your obedience to orders received, I will venture (without being a casuist) to pronounce you innocent of that blood.²⁵¹

However, if the soldiers feel that orders are given out of personal grievance, then it is their duty to hesitate in order to grant time for the order to be countermanded.²⁵² This again shows Swinney's support of restraint with regard to violence and killing as a way for soldiers to remain sensitive to the use of force.²⁵³ Swinney also reminds soldiers of their respective function: he asserts that their primary role for committing violence is "for the defence of his Royal Person, Family, and Government, against the open assaults and attacks of his enemies; and, secondarily, for the suppression of all disturbers of the public peace and safety."²⁵⁴ Swinney's use of the word "defence" underscores that soldiers are not the perpetrators of attacks or initiators of violence, thereby establishing that even their offensive actions are part of the greater defense of their country.

Swinney then transitions to the soldiers' conduct with regard to their enemy. He continues his advocacy for restraint and encourages soldiers to treat their enemies in accordance with the "Golden Rule."²⁵⁵ He reminds the soldiers that the French "are a generous enemy, and a grateful people, [who] have already given numberless instances of their gratitude to the British soldiers, for their humanity towards them, when in their hands."²⁵⁶ Therefore, soldiers should show leniency and compassion toward their enemies, especially prisoners, as their situation could easily be reversed.

Swinney then explains how soldiers should conduct themselves while in other countries. Whether marching through or while quartered in other countries (including those of the enemy) they should abstain from un-Christian conduct toward the inhabitants.²⁵⁷ This position not only emphasizes the (expected)

²⁵¹ Swinney, *Sermon*, 13–14.

²⁵² Swinney, *Sermon*, 14.

²⁵³ For another example of the theme of mercy to prevent the soldier from becoming callous and inhumane, see James Moore, *A Sermon Preached in St. Mary's Church, Huntingdon, April 15, 1795, before the Loyal Essex Regiment of Fencible Infantry, on the Consecration of Their Colours [...]* (Huntingdon: Printed and Sold by Jenkinson [and four others], [1795?]), 10–11.

²⁵⁴ Swinney, *Sermon*, 15.

²⁵⁵ See Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

²⁵⁶ Swinney, *Sermon*, 15.

²⁵⁷ Swinney, *Sermon*, 16.

Christian conduct of soldiers, but also points to the importance of guarding their reputation toward both allies and enemies. This would have been especially important for Swinney's audience who had firsthand experience of campaigning in Germany and fighting the French. Swinney's sermon expresses the chaplain's conviction that it is better and easier to uphold righteousness than to find oneself forced to rebuild it; as he puts it, "a sword, once unsheathed, may much sooner be stained with [the] blood of victims, than washed from its stains."²⁵⁸

Swinney's sermon concludes with a call to loyalty to the king who provides so much for his soldiers. He also bookends his message by reiterating John the Baptist's response to the soldiers in the opening Scripture (Luke 3:14): "Do violence to no man; accuse not any falsely, and be content with your wages."²⁵⁹ Swinney's sermon shows that this single verse can be used effectively to address how Christians should conduct themselves as soldiers. His warnings and advice demonstrate how failure in any of the three commands given in Luke 3:14 compromise a Christian soldier's conduct and ability to reconcile his faith with death and violence. Contentment with their wages directly relates to the soldiers' conduct – with the faithful ones being content and patient in the assurance of their Heavenly reward, and the unfaithful ones pursuing reparation by sinful means.²⁶⁰

The sermons discussed in this part are representative of many others that address the soldiers' conscience, courage, and conduct in light of the Christian faith. Some sermons highlight one theme more than others: for example, Rev. William Agar spoke frequently about soldiers having to face death with Christian conduct, arguing that "when a Soldier has once entered upon his Prince's Service, taken the Oaths by Articles of War of defending and exerting his Skill and Strength for his Nation and Religion...it has ever been judged the highest Honour to die in such a Cause."²⁶¹ Another of Agar's military sermons solely focuses on the theme of death, elaborating that "unnatural cruel Deaths are sweetened by the Smiles of Conscience...[of] the true resigning *Christian*."²⁶² The sermons delivered by Broughton, Kyte, and Swinney illustrate that their authors all shared the Anglican notion that soldiers could reconcile their faith with their profession by being mindful of a Christian attitude toward violence, death, and suitable conduct.

²⁵⁸ Swinney, *Sermon*, 16.

²⁵⁹ Swinney, *Sermon*, 7,17.

²⁶⁰ Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 12.

²⁶¹ William Agar, "Sermon IV: On the Horrid Crime of Perjury by Desertion, Cowardice or Mutiny," in *Military Devotion: Or, the Soldier's Duty to God, His Prince and His Country* [...] (London: Printed for the Author, and Sold by P. Brindley in Bond-Street [and five others], 1758), 76.

²⁶² William Agar, "Sermon II: On the Desire of all Men to Die the Death of the Righteous, whether in the Field, the Waves, or on their Pillows," in *Military Devotion: Or, the Soldier's Duty to God, His Prince and His Country* [...] (London: Printed for the Author, and Sold by P. Brindley in Bond-Street [and five others], 1758), 44.

III. Sinner

As we have seen so far, sermons dealing with conduct mostly address the soldiers' military profession or Christian service. However, a significant number of sermons devote their attention to sinful behavior, which merits its own thematic analysis. There are three aspects to this theme: sins that are common to everyone but especially prevalent with soldiers; sins that are specific to the military; and sins that may jeopardize God's granting of military success. None of these sin-related themes were new in the eighteenth century. Common sins that were also rampant in the military encompassed drunkenness and cursing.²⁶³ Sins specific to the military manifested themselves in the violation of laws and codes of conduct, as well as biblical commandments and teachings, and these included mutiny, cowardice, and desertion. Yet, while "common sins" and "military sins" constituted the individual soldiers' failings, some sins—labeled below as "consequent sins"—were deemed to threaten military success by causing God to withhold His favor.

III.1. Common Sin

Sins prevalent in the military were also common throughout British society, which made them a recurrent sermon topic throughout the eighteenth century regardless of the target audience or their profession.²⁶⁴ Drunkenness, cursing, and sexual immorality were among the most common ones,²⁶⁵ and since these sins were also problematic for the military, they were a welcome sermon topic from the perspective of officers who were hoping that their men would heed religious correction of their immoral behavior.²⁶⁶ Generally speaking, the British opinion of soldiers—for much of the century—was "that Religion is not to be looked for in a British Soldier."²⁶⁷

The approach chaplains took to address sin varied. Some referred to sin in general terms, while others considered a more direct, specific, and even graphic approach as the suitable way to get through to their audience. Shame and judgment (public and divine) were tactics often employed to dissuade sinful behavior. The term "sin" might even be set aside in favor of words like "crime" or

²⁶³ Cursing, as in using offensive, profane language (not hexing).

²⁶⁴ Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 404.

²⁶⁵ Paul E. Kopperman, "'The Cheapest Pay': Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army," *The Journal of Military History* 60, no. 3 (July 1996): 445–446. Galatians 5:19–21 lists multiple sins ("works of the flesh), including drunkenness.

²⁶⁶ Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 402. Kopperman questions the sermons' impact due to religious apathy within the army.

²⁶⁷ George Walker, *The Duty and Character of a National Soldier, Represented in a Sermon Preached, January 2, 1779: At the High Church in Hull, before the Nottinghamshire Militia, Commanded by Lord George Sutton, on the Delivery of the Colours to the Regiment* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1779), 10. See also Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 3–4, 12.

"irregularities"²⁶⁸ to appeal to the soldiers' sense of righteousness and piety. Another way to promote godliness was by reminding soldiers of their quality as British citizens, soldiers, and Christians. We shall now explore how chaplains addressed soldiers' common sin in their sermons.

One of Rev. George Walker's sermons exemplifies how sin can be addressed through general references and by appealing to the standards that soldiers are expected to maintain. Walker urges each member of the Nottinghamshire Militia to "be prepared every moment to pass into his [Maker's] presence; and not by abandoning himself to all profligacy."²⁶⁹ He points his audience both to the danger of their profession and to their ultimate judgment before God in order to remind them of their sins. If there is any doubt how they should "be prepared," he explains that they should avoid "profligacy." His sermon also applies some social pressure on the soldiers: "You are supposed to be taken from the better and soberer classes of the People, with no brand of infamy...It is yours to redeem the honour of a soldier, which ought never to have been disgraced by the allowed character of impiety."²⁷⁰ Walker raises the (rhetorical) question whether soldiers could be deemed worthy of their social class and status if they embrace sin. Those who sin, he posits, disgrace themselves and the social class they represent. Furthermore, the same applies to their profession, which they should not disgrace through "impiety;" rather, they should "redeem the honour" through devotion. He returns to this latter point at the end of his sermon: "But if a British Soldier will, alas! Still think that some irregularities are pardonable in his profession; I pray you, add not public to private crime: make the best atonement by...venerating the religion."²⁷¹

Throughout his sermon, Walker does not refer to the soldiers' "infamy," "impiety," or "crime" as sin, nor does he ever specify what he means by these failings. By remaining ambiguous on the subject, Walker allows his listeners to fill in their own details. This approach also eliminates any chance of someone thinking that the sermon is not directed at him personally because he does not commit or struggle with a specific sin (e.g., adultery).

In a 1778 sermon addressed to a regiment of militia and a company of artillery, Rev. Thomas Bateman points to the officers to help keep their men away from sin.²⁷² But he also recognizes that it is ultimately up to the individual soldier to abstain from sin. He acknowledges that a soldier is "daily [met] with...Temptations...[of] indulging himself in Vices for which he is not

²⁶⁸ Walker, *Duty and Character*, 37–38.

²⁶⁹ Walker, *Duty and Character*, 13.

²⁷⁰ Walker, *Duty and Character*, 12.

²⁷¹ Walker, *Duty and Character*, 37–38.

²⁷² Thomas Bateman, *The Necessity and Advantage of Religious Principles in the Soldierly: A Military Sermon, Preached before Sir George Savile's Regiment of Yorkshire Militia, and a Company of the Royal Regiment of Artillery [...]* (London: Printed, and Sold by Richardson and Urquhart, in Pater-Noster-Row [and two others], 1778), 15–16.

accountable to his Officer."²⁷³ Therefore, Bateman advises soldiers to evaluate their "Behaviour, and consider of how much consequence [it] is."²⁷⁴ While officers are, to a certain extent, accountable for their men's "Behaviour," each soldier has to assess his own sinful nature and the strength of his faith. Like Bateman, Walker emphasizes the soldier's personal accountability, when he states, "your own persons must suffer the punishment of your own negligence and wickedness."²⁷⁵

Some sermons contain a short discourse that mentions sin with regard to the soldiers or their regiment. Such discourse is usually found at the beginning of the sermon or as a closing remark and not part of the sermon's main points. One of Rev. John Jackson's sermons mentions what is prohibited in Christianity and how soldiers are to improve their conduct; he inserts this after his opening Scripture and before his sermon's main points (which focus on submission to governing authorities), reminding the men that their "private independent Conduct and Behavior" is "accountable to God" and that the "Prohibitions and Commandments of the Gospel" only forbid sins that debase and dishonor their nature.²⁷⁶ Like Bateman and Walker, Jackson emphasizes the personal accountability of each individual soldier.

For a more candid approach to common sin, we return to Rev. Thomas Broughton's *Christian Soldier*. His style and bluntness give us a clear sense of the sins deemed most problematic and how to deal with them from the pulpit. In his *Christian Soldier*, Broughton compares the character of Cornelius to the conduct and behavior of British soldiers,²⁷⁷ and he especially draws attention to the areas where the latter are falling short. Broughton's assessment of the soldiers' behavior is pointed and contrasted with Cornelius' conduct based on the centurion's description in Acts 10. To begin, Broughton acknowledges that "the notorious Vices of Swearing, Drunkenness, Lewdness, and many more abominable Sins, are habitual to the military Profession."²⁷⁸ Broughton makes it clear that he takes no pleasure in exposing these "Vices...to which the Army is so much addicted," but he considers it an "ungrateful Necessity to do" so.²⁷⁹ He recognizes that the said sins are not specific to the military, but common throughout humanity. He admits that "we have too great Reason to lament and say, that *we are all gone out of the way, and are become abominable...* [including] every...Quality or Occupation soever."²⁸⁰ Broughton affirms that sinful men are not a unique feature of the military

²⁷³ Bateman, *Necessity and Advantage*, 16.

²⁷⁴ Bateman, *Necessity and Advantage*, 17.

²⁷⁵ Walker, *Duty and Character*, 27.

²⁷⁶ Jackson, *Duty of Subjects*, 3–4.

²⁷⁷ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 10.

²⁷⁸ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 3.

²⁷⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 4.

²⁸⁰ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 4. The italicized words are quoted from Romans 3:12.

profession; rather, every profession has its sinful men. On the basis of this premise, Broughton then proceeds to make sin one of his central sermon topics.

The first sin he addresses is the soldiers' lack of sobriety. Lamentingly, he asks,

Alas! my Friends, what Strangers, nay, what Enemies are most of you to a sober, temperate way of Life? How frequently do you, the meaner Sort especially, thro' Excess of Liquor, *reel to and fro, and stagger and lie in the Streets like dead Men!* How insatiable is your Thirst of Drink, as if the Gratification of the beastly Appetite was a Joy unspeakable, and full of Comfort! To this Purpose you...waste your Health, Money and Time.²⁸¹

Broughton asserts that the soldiers' drinking problem is so bad as to render them not simply "Strangers" but "Enemies" of sobriety. This phrasing, along with the next line, suggests that the soldiers are drinking both to excess (quantity) and often (frequency). It is hard to determine exactly how "frequently" some of the "meaner Sort" had been found to be publicly intoxicated and passing out "*in the Streets like dead Men,*" but the mere mentioning of this from the pulpit indicates that this behavior had become both problematic and commonly known within the community. Broughton reminds the men that this sin is costing them their "Health, Money, and Time," making it an absolutely fruitless endeavor by secular standards. He then observes that their drunkenness into the late hours of the night ushers in "the Morning Watch, not with Hymns and Psalms, as David did, but with blasphemous Rant and obscene songs. My Brethren, *Cornelius* did not so."²⁸² This short statement, "*Cornelius* did not so," implies how *Cornelius* would have reacted to this kind of behavior.

The second sin Broughton elects to discuss is sexual immorality. He calls the soldiers out for their lack of chastity, and he does so with such confidence that it can safely be assumed that they had earned a reputation in this regard. Perhaps Broughton had received specific information about this particular regiment, or he is simply aware of the pervasiveness of this issue on the basis of his own observations. Whatever the case may be, Broughton states: "Your Offences in Point of *Chasity*, are very scandalous, and too notorious to be denied; insomuch that the bare Sight of you is suspicious and painful to the modest Part of the Daughters of our Land."²⁸³ This suggests a considerable notoriety of the soldiers' sexual promiscuity, which is further supported by the health issues related to this sin. Broughton knows that the evidence is all "too manifest, from the numerous and melancholy Instances among you of putrify'd Bodies and rotten Bones."²⁸⁴ In the eighteenth century, terms like "melancholy" and "rotten bones" were used to describe the symptoms of venereal diseases, especially syphilis.²⁸⁵ If the evidence

²⁸¹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 10. The italicized words are from Psalm 107:27.

²⁸² Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 10-11.

²⁸³ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 11.

²⁸⁴ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 11.

²⁸⁵ Linda E. Merians, ed., *The Secret Malady: Venereal Disease in Eighteenth-century Britain and France* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 72, 105, 110.

for sexually transmitted diseases was "manifest," the "modest...Daughters of our Land" had every reason to be "suspicious" of them and pain the "bare Sight of [them]." Broughton contextualizes his exhortation against sexual immorality by referencing 2 Peter 2:14: not just their personal sins are to be lamented; they are also leading others into sin.²⁸⁶

Broughton then turns to another sin prevalent in the 2nd Regiment, namely, blaspheming and cursing. He argues that when the soldiers take the Lord's name in vain, they are expressing that they have no reverence for God. Their cursing makes them "wax bold in Wickedness, and grow hardy and courageous in Vice. With great swelling Words you bid Defiance to the Almighty, and continually *blaspheme that holy Name by which you are called*. My Friends, *Cornelius* did not so."²⁸⁷ Broughton insists that sin begets more sin, as they "wax" and "grow" in their sin which emboldens them to sin (i.e., curse) even more. Indeed, the soldiers' cursing is not just sinful, it is "Defiance to the Almighty." While they "are called" to be faithful Christians, their cursing and blaspheming shows that the soldiers disregard the power of God and their faith. Broughton's remedy for the soldiers is not just to stop, but to replace their sinful language with prayer—both for their sakes and for the sake of others: "if you did accustom yourselves to pray, the Ears of good Christians would not be so often stunn'd with the horrible Din of Blasphemy nor shock'd with the bitter Oaths, Curses, and ungodly Speeches, which daily and hourly come from your Lips."²⁸⁸

Broughton then leans even further into this point by arguing that cursing and blaspheming diminishes them, that it is indicative of emptiness, and that it creates false perceptions. And he issues a warning:

Do you imagine that it adds Grace to your Speech, or Manliness to your Looks? Or do you fancy that it resembles the roaring of a Lion, and renders your Presence terrible? Alas! vain Men! no wise and good Man looks upon a Swearer to be a Hero, or a courageous Person, because he is a profane and wicked one. Do ye remember the History of *Goliath* and *David*? The former was of gigantick Stature, proud of his Strength and Armour, and blasphem'd the great GOD of *Israel*. The other was a young Man, humble and devout...[and] slew that vain-glorious blaspheming Giant, and smote off his Head. I leave you to make the Application.²⁸⁹

Broughton's prose here is forthright and impactful. He dismisses the notion that cursing adds in any way to the soldiers' "Grace," "Manliness," or "Presence." He implies that those who curse are "vain" fools and heroes to no one. To support this point, he mentions David, a military hero from the Old Testament, and contrasts the devout David with the blaspheming Goliath. The story would have been known well enough to spare Broughton the trouble of having to elaborate any

²⁸⁶ 2 Peter 2:14: "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children."

²⁸⁷ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 11. The Scripture cited (italicized) is James 2:7.

²⁸⁸ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 12.

²⁸⁹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 13–14, with a reference to 1 Samuel 17 (David and Goliath).

further (David slays Goliath), and the analogy probably hit home for another reason: at the time of this story, David was a mere shepherd boy (albeit blessed by God), while Goliath, the blasphemer, was a soldier.

It is not Broughton's intention to dwell on condemnation; in fact, as he points out in his sermon, he takes "no delight to reprove [them] in this publick Manner."²⁹⁰ Rather, he seizes the opportunity to appeal to them to repent. According to this sermon (and others), it was no secret that soldiers had a proclivity to sin. In the case of the 2nd Regiment of Foot-Guards, Broughton had become convinced by the evidence and by their public reputation. This makes Broughton's specific discourse concerning the soldiers' sins an attempt to apply social pressure and shame to encourage their repentance (to which we shall return later). It is reminiscent of the way Broughton addresses the officers at the end of his sermon (quoted earlier in this article): his preaching identifies sin, condemns it, and then appeals to the sinner to repent. Considering the audience present when this kind of sermon was delivered, as well as the subsequent publication of such sermons, the soldiers' accountability for their sins was evident.²⁹¹

III.2. Military Sin

The second sin-related theme to be discussed here is military sin. The respective sermons were mostly addressed to soldiers. Some sermons mentioned military sins in addition to other common sins or contrasted them with gentlemanly conduct; Swinney, for example, reminded soldiers to "abstain, equally, from all acts of open violence, and private pilfering and marauding."²⁹² He also spoke about discontent with wages as a segue to desertion.²⁹³ In other cases, the theme was the exclusive focus of the message given, as will be shown in a sermon by Rev. William Agar.

Rev. William Agar was a military chaplain during the Seven Years' War and dedicated many sermons to individual topics and themes. Agar was born in 1709 or 1710 in Redcar, Yorkshire, to a farming family.²⁹⁴ He was admitted to St. John's College in Cambridge in 1729 as a sizar and completed his Bachelor of Arts in 1732.²⁹⁵ It appears that he was seeking to obtain a Master of Arts degree but was

²⁹⁰ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 13.

²⁹¹ There is no indication whether the intended effect was achieved.

²⁹² Swinney, *Sermon*, 16. This was in reference to their behavior during foreign deployment and while on campaign.

²⁹³ Swinney, *Sermon*, 17.

²⁹⁴ Robert Forsyth Scott, ed., *Admissions to the College of St John the Evangelist in the University of Cambridge, Part III, July 1715-1767* (Cambridge: Printed for the College at the University Press, 1903), 61; pages 61 and 179 misspell his name as "Agur", which is corrected by the editor on page 423; Otto Lohrenz, "William Agar, Anglican Minister of Eighteenth-Century England and Virginia," *The Early America Review* 15, no. 2 (2011), [online](#).

²⁹⁵ Scott, *Admissions*, 61, 179, 423. A "sizar" was a student who performed formal menial duties for the college in exchange for financial aid.

not able to do so due to a scandal: he had falsified his baptismal record in order to make himself eligible for a Master of Arts scholarship, but the forgery was discovered, and a college tribunal decreed that his name be stricken from the college's records.²⁹⁶ Given that his father was a farmer and that he had served as a sizar during his undergraduate years, it is likely that he did not have the financial means to pursue a Master's degree without this scholarship.

Agar's subsequent advancement within the Anglican Church suggests that this scandal did not tarnish his reputation beyond redemption. In 1733, he was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln as deacon and curate of Potton, Bedfordshire, and in 1735, was ordained as priest and curate of Wragby, Lincolnshire.²⁹⁷ On February 10, 1737, he was appointed as both rector of Biscathorpe and vicar of North Kelsey in Lincolnshire.²⁹⁸ In addition to these posts, he was chosen to be the rector of South Kelsey in 1743, and he kept all three positions until 1755 when he resigned from North Kelsey.²⁹⁹ The evidence indicates that Agar was dedicated in his ministerial work, especially as chaplain to the 20th Regiment of Foot during the Seven Years' War.³⁰⁰ From 1765 until 1773, Agar resided in the North American Colonies (while maintaining his rectorships in Britain), but marital issues forced him back to England to settle a divorce.³⁰¹ Agar died in September 1776 in his hometown of Redcar.³⁰² His published sermons were selected from the sermons he had delivered to the 20th Regiment of Foot while fighting in Europe.³⁰³

Agar's sermon on the theme of military sin is titled "On the Horrid Crime of Perjury by Desertion, Cowardice or Mutiny."³⁰⁴ It offers excellent examples of sins that are specific to the military, and in this case, the entire text focuses on them. Agar opens his sermon with Matthew 5:34–35, which concerns the taking of

²⁹⁶ Scott, *Admissions*, 423. The formal sentence decreed for his name to be expunged from the college's records: "Decretum est a Magistro et Senioribus, ut ejusdem G. Agar nomen e tabulis Collegii statim expungeretur."

²⁹⁷ Scott, *Admissions*, 423. It is also possible that his appointment as deacon was in 1734.

²⁹⁸ Scott, *Admissions*, 423. It may also have been February 10, 1738.

²⁹⁹ Scott, *Admissions*, 423. He retained the other positions until his death.

³⁰⁰ Lohrenz, "William Agar," online; William Agar, *Military Devotion: Or, the Soldier's Duty to God, His Prince and His Country. Containing Fourteen Sermons Preached [...] to His Majesty's Twentieth Regiment of Foot [...]* (London: Printed for the Author, and Sold by P. Brindley in Bond-Street [and five others], 1758), i–xxxii. The appendix to Agar's sermons shows his concern to provide soldiers with the means to have a strong prayer life, complete with a calendar built around their deployment schedules, as well as practical examples.

³⁰¹ Lohrenz, "William Agar," online. At his own request, Agar was appointed to minister the parish of Nottoway (Southampton County, Virginia), by the Bishop of London.

³⁰² Lohrenz, "William Agar," online.

³⁰³ Lohrenz, "William Agar," online; Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 391. Agar's selection of sermons for soldiers was very intentional, as he had no shortage of sermons to draw from because it was ordered that Divine Service be held three times a week.

³⁰⁴ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 67–83.

oaths.³⁰⁵ According to the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*, "vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle...but...a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a Cause of Faith and Charity."³⁰⁶ This means that taking oaths imprudently was prohibited, but oaths taken attentively for one's country, king, or for the sake of Christian virtue were deemed just.³⁰⁷ Combined with the seriousness of soldiers' oaths taken in service to their king and country, this Scripture establishes the religious standard that oaths should not be taken lightly and that they are binding.

Agar continues by stating that "Our Nature...is subject to Depravity."³⁰⁸ He acknowledges that all are susceptible to sin. He elaborates that the young are swayed by "Bad Company," which produces sinful habits.³⁰⁹ Agar's stance against sin is firm, but he recognizes it as a habit that can be broken, just not so easily.³¹⁰ His position on taking oaths, however, is much more concrete: "the needless Repetition of Oaths is as well indecent as criminal...an oath...[is] only for the Advancement of Piety, Uniformity, or social Honesty in the World, and Disparagement of Violence, Extortion or Injustice."³¹¹ This last reason would have been particularly applicable to Agar's audience, as the war was viewed as a necessary defense against French aggression.³¹²

Agar continues that "Rash Swearing brings on us frequently greater Inconveniences, out of which we cannot extricate ourselves but by the black Crime of Perjury." Here, Agar is warning against oaths made in haste, which can bind oath-takers to sin. He cites the "rash" oath made by King Herod after he had been pleased with a dance, which subsequently forced him to behead John the Baptist: "Thus Murder was subsequent to his Oath."³¹³ Following this example, Agar

³⁰⁵ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 67. Matthew 5:34-35: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne; Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King."

³⁰⁶ Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer*, Article 39; Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., "The Thirty-Nine Articles," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, third ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1611. These articles were dogmatic tenets that defined the Anglican Church and were required to be upheld by clergy until the nineteenth century. The term "swear" used in this context means "to take an oath:" Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language, in Which the Words are Deduced from their Originals [...]*, vol. 2 (London: Printed by W. Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton [and four others], 1755), s.v. "swear."

³⁰⁷ These articles were not binding to the public, but clergy would reference them in sermons as Anglican standards of faith.

³⁰⁸ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 67-68.

³⁰⁹ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 67-69.

³¹⁰ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 68.

³¹¹ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 70.

³¹² Davies, *Presentation of Colours*, 11; Adam Ferguson, *A Sermon Preached in the Ersh Language to His Majesty's First Highland Regiment of Foot [...]* (London: Printed for A. Millar, Opposite Katharine-street in the Strand, 1746), 4-5, 22-23.

³¹³ Matthew 14:1-11; Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 71.

establishes that perjury is "the most detestable Sin."³¹⁴ He concisely explains the role of soldiers and of their contracted oath in defense of their country, warning that "The Soldier who swears Fidelity to his Leader, Obedience to his Commander, and a strenuous courageous Defence by his Arm, of his King and Country, is worse than the common Robber if he falsifies his Trust by Desertion or Cowardice."³¹⁵ This illustrates that a soldier's oath is multidimensional: it binds him to "Fidelity" and "Obedience" toward his officers and to the "Defence...of his King and Country;" cowardice is the dereliction of all these pledges and therefore sinful. Agar then asks his audience to "let [him] just touch upon the Act of Desertion,"³¹⁶ and while he no longer focuses on the sin of cowardice, he does describe deserting soldiers as "cowardly."

Agar shows such disdain for the sin of desertion that one is almost left with the sensation that desertion is a sin that cannot be forgiven:

That Man who has bound himself by Oath to his Prince and Leaders to hazard his Life in their Defence, and still meanly or cowardly quits his Post, is guilty of the highest Breach of Faith that Humanity can be guilty of; is accessory to Plunder, Murder, Rapine and Barbarity to his whole Country, which is the most complicated Villainy that is in the World. It has, I know not how, entered into the Minds of some Men, that the Act of Desertion in the Soldier, proceeding from Self-preservation, freeing him from Danger, Hardship or Confinement, carries with it no Shew of Vice, and therefore hard that it should even in a *Military Court* be judged Capital. But sure I am that the Act of Desertion draws along after it a Cloud of the blackest Evils that any Crime can do in an iniquitous Generation.³¹⁷

Soldiers listening to this sermon could have no doubt how, according to their chaplain, God viewed the sin of desertion. In the first part of this quotation, Agar reiterates the terms of their military oath, but then adds that abandoning their post would be the "highest Breach of Faith that Humanity can be guilty of." This means that it is the worst of sins.³¹⁸ What is more, it makes the soldier an "accessory" to heinous crimes against their "whole Country." The sin (and crime) of desertion does not just affect them, but everyone. Agar then reveals how passionately he feels about this sin: he is shocked that there are "some Men" who consider desertion as having "no Shew of Vice" and would not judge it as "Capital," which exposes his conviction that deserters deserve court martial, severe punishment, and even death.³¹⁹ There were high rates of desertion during the Seven Years' War

³¹⁴ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 72.

³¹⁵ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 74-75.

³¹⁶ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 75.

³¹⁷ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 75.

³¹⁸ Ronnie Haidar, "Desertion and Discipline: How British Soldiers Influenced the Military Justice System during the Seven Years' War" (MA thesis, University of Windsor, 2021), 3. Desertion and mutiny were deemed the worst military crimes due to their impact on manpower and morale.

³¹⁹ Thomas Agostini, "'Deserted His Majesty's Service': Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years' War," *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 970; Great Britain, *An Act for Punishing Mutiny and Desertion, and*

(and throughout the century), and it is likely that Agar had seen the repercussions of desertion firsthand.³²⁰

According to Agar, desertion, this "most grievous Perjury to God and Man...leaves those defenceless who trusted to their Protection, and thence is accessory to Cruelties, Spoil and murdering not only of Families, but Towns, Countries and Nations."³²¹ Agar makes the case that desertion is a sin that, in fact, includes murder because those whom the deserters should have protected might be slain by an unharried enemy. He insists on this point with considerable fervor and then makes it personal for soldiers who have children of their own: "Could you, Fathers watch your sons massacred, your wives and daughters violated...possessions destroyed...yourselves at last butchered? The deserting Soldier can do this."³²² He even describes the mutilation of babies who would be "slashed, stabbed, or torn to pieces before your Eyes, their Cradles reeking with Gore-blood, their mangled Carcasses [*sic*] thrown into the Street to Dogs or Vultures."³²³ Agar's graphic depiction reinforces the gravity of the sin of desertion and conveys his disdain for those who would engage in it. He leaves his audience in no doubt that the consequences of desertion are horrific.

Agar then shifts the context of this sin to its maritime impact. He had previously included sailors by declaring them responsible for any "Bloodshed" that their cowardice or desertion might cause.³²⁴ He now asks them where they would find safe harbor once their protecting "Garrisons [were] surrendered, Towns in Flames, your shatter'd Vessel burning, sinking under you."³²⁵ Agar's comments would have instilled fear in sailors who were used to placing their security in their ships and their ability to stock, dock, and harbor them from the threats of the elements and "piratic Fury of our treacherous Foes."³²⁶ The difference between desertion and mutiny is blurred in this sermon (and was loosely defined even in acts of Parliament); mutiny usually involved a demand for

for the Better Payment of the Army and their Quarters (London: Printed by Thomas Baskett, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty; and by the Assigns of Robert Baskett, 1745), 7-10, 107. Death sentences required nine officers to concur on this punishment when sentencing. The act was amended by Parliament throughout the century: Great Britain, *An Act for Punishing Mutiny and Desertion, and for the Better Payment of the Army and their Quarters* (London: Printed by Thomas Baskett; and by the Assigns of Robert Baskett, 1758), 143-145.

³²⁰ Agostini, "Deserted His Majesty's Service," 960.

³²¹ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 75-76; Haidar, "Desertion and Discipline," 44-45. Group desertion was not uncommon; the larger the group the more confidence it gave others to join.

³²² Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 77.

³²³ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 77-78.

³²⁴ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 77.

³²⁵ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 78.

³²⁶ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 78.

improved conditions and better pay,³²⁷ but, like desertion, it was a refusal to perform contracted service.

In the next part of his sermon, Agar compares military sin to common sin. He considers a highwayman a lesser sinner than a deserter: the former risks only his own life and "takes but from a few," while the "Soldier who deserts his Colours" risks "whole Provinces to Flames and Devastation" and robs the "Multitudes."³²⁸ Along the same lines, Agar is willing to offer more grace to "the private Murderer...[who] is satisfied by taking one or two who stood in his Way [or offended him]," while the "Soldier who deserts...pours out like a Deluge the Blood of thousands...of his Countrymen."³²⁹ His comparisons suggest that there is hierarchy of sins: those whose sins impact many others are especially damnable and "justly punishable by the most ignominious Death."³³⁰ Agar's sentiments toward desertion is not uncommon when compared to other military sermons, but his advocacy for the sinner's death is. Chaplains usually emphasize the urgency of repentance or Judgment Day.³³¹

Agar lowers his intensity and graphic depictions once he returns to the sin of cowardice. Like desertion, cowardice is a sin because it violates the soldiers' military oath taken in God's name. Agar contrasts the shame of the coward with the "Reward of true Bravery," which includes public gratitude and the "Approbation of Heaven itself."³³² He does not dwell on the characteristics or consequences of cowardice – after all, he had already addressed this particular sin earlier in his sermon;³³³ he had also referred to deserters as "cowardly," making this sin a key characteristic of deserters. Instead, Agar points to the benefits of eschewing cowardice: "What is this Life without an honest and valiant Discharge of our Office in our Profession?"³³⁴ He then contrasts the sin of cowardice (and the related fear of the enemy, death, or other circumstances) with the fear of God:

Let us then lay aside every Sin that doth so easily beset us...let no Dangers daunt us, for if God be for us, who can be against us. The Fear of God is the grand Criterion of true Valour and Magnanimity; the Fear of Man is but a servile brutal Obedience; but the Man who obeys for Conscience sake, convinced by the Dictates of his Breast, that it is noble to die in the Cause of his Prince and Religion, will surmount Perils and Difficulties with true Fortitude and

³²⁷ Linch and McCormack, *Britain's Soldiers*, 97–98; "Haidar, "Desertion and Discipline," 13; Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763–1764," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2000): 771–772.

³²⁸ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 80.

³²⁹ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 80.

³³⁰ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 80.

³³¹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 16–17; Broughton warned of the judgment of sins and Hell for the unrepentant soldier. Walker, *Duty and Character*, 12; Walker preached that sinful soldiers would be met with social cruelty at home.

³³² Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 81.

³³³ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 75.

³³⁴ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 82.

Intrepidity, resting assured that if he falls in the vigorous Exertion of his Abilities, he merits Heaven, for greater Love hath no Man than that he lay down his Life for his Friend.³³⁵

Agar explains to the soldiers that the "Dangers" that beset them are not to be feared since "God is for us." The "Fear of God" will give them the courage to overcome cowardly temptations. Ultimately, this "Fear of God" and their noble cause will enable them to face death. Their willingness to die for their "Prince and Religion" will allow them to overcome "Perils and Difficulties." If they hold to their oaths, they will avoid the reprehensible sins of perjury, cowardice, and desertion. Agar ends his sermon by encouraging the soldiers to consider their oaths with a reverence to God so they can "worship him in Sincerity of Heart, and do all to the Glory of God."³³⁶

It is noteworthy that Agar had such strong convictions on the sanctity of oaths, since he himself had once falsified documents at Cambridge. This observation is not intended to question his integrity as a clergyman, as the humiliating experience at Cambridge probably had a profound impact on his convictions; it may actually help us understand him better. Over twenty-four years had passed since that incident, and Agar had seen war, death, and destruction up close for the past two years. His rhetoric effectively conveys the seriousness of military sin and its consequences for those left defenseless by soldiers' failure to keep their oaths and thereby their Christian integrity and honor. Agar's strong opinions make his sermon more personal and distinctive when compared to other sermons with similar content – and also more poetic, as he hoped that "Ghosts and Apparitions [would] fright" deserters who were "fit but for Furies and infernal Demons."³³⁷ Meanwhile, Swinney's convictions with regard to desertion, while less dramatic, certainly align with Agar's, and Swinney, too, had served as a military chaplain on campaign during the Seven Years' War:

A neglect of...[contentment of pay] has driven many an unwary wretch into the blackest and most desperate crimes; the perpetration of these has made him, with reason, despair of pardon; and that despair has driven him to the horrid sin of deserting his King and Country; which atrocious behavior is certain of bringing him...to a shameful and ignominious death.³³⁸

III.3. Consequent Sin

The third sin-related theme considers sin from a holistic perspective. The Church of England believes that all sins have consequences. Thus, I do not assert that the Anglican Church, nor the clergymen cited here, believed that there were any sins without consequences. "Consequent sin" (my term) is used here to address specifically how clergymen preached on the theme of sin as a threat to the country. "Consequent sin" implies the withdrawal of God's blessings; it reflects the belief

³³⁵ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 82. The Scripture at the end of this quotation is John 15:13.

³³⁶ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 83.

³³⁷ Agar, "Sermon IV [Perjury]," 79–80.

³³⁸ Swinney, *Sermon*, 17.

that there is a conditional, causational relationship between a nation and God, according to which the sins of the nation may result in the withdrawal of God's blessings to that nation, particularly the withholding of military victories.³³⁹ Rev. William Jarvis Abdy's sermon is representative of what many other contemporary sermons have to say to soldiers with regard to these larger repercussions of their sins. The concept is generalized and not always explicit in all sermons, however, it is frequently tied to the notion that God is blessing Great Britain and therefore Britons should be faithful.³⁴⁰ Conversely, it is also applied to the French (and other enemies of Great Britain), as God punishes them through defeats due to their sins. The concept was not new to the eighteenth century or to Great Britain, but the related rhetoric deserves attention.

Rev. William Jarvis Abdy was born on September 17, 1755, in London.³⁴¹ In 1775, he entered the University of Oxford where he received his Bachelor of Arts (c.1778) and Master of Arts (c.1781) degrees.³⁴² In 1779, he was ordained as a priest of the Church of England and became the curate of Staines, Middlesex, "an important station" because it included two neighboring parishes where Abdy held regular services.³⁴³ In 1781, he moved to London for a one-year curacy at St. Mary-le-Bow, during which he was elected to a lectureship at All Hallows on Lombard Street, which he held for twenty-two years.³⁴⁴ After his curacy had ended, Abdy was approached by parishioners from St. John Horsleydown in South London to become their curate. He accepted and served there for forty-one years, beginning in 1782.³⁴⁵ He also held a lectureship at Bow-Church, Cheapside, from 1784 until 1823.³⁴⁶ Abdy was a founding member of the Church Missionary Society, established in 1799.³⁴⁷ He died in April 1823 and his death was marked with a dedication sermon to his congregation;³⁴⁸ this sermon lauded Abdy for his

³³⁹ Some sermons warned of divine retribution against Great Britain, but they were rarely explicit when addressing soldiers. For an implicit reference, see Ferguson, *Sermon*, 3; for an explicit reference to the history of Israel, see Bateman, *Necessity and Advantage*, 9–11.

³⁴⁰ Teulié and Sterritt, *War Sermons*, 83–84.

³⁴¹ John Channing Abdy, ed., *A Selection from the Sermons of the Late Rev. William Jarvis Abdy, M.A. [...] To Which is Prefixed A Memoir of the Deceased [...]* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, Strand, 1823), ix.

³⁴² Abdy, *Selection [Memoir]*, ix.

³⁴³ Abdy, *Selection [Memoir]*, ix.

³⁴⁴ Abdy, *Selection [Memoir]*, x.

³⁴⁵ Abdy, *Selection [Memoir]*, x.

³⁴⁶ Abdy, *Selection [Memoir]*, xi.

³⁴⁷ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society, Its Environment, Its Men, and Its Work*, vol. 1 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 68–69.

³⁴⁸ Henry George Watkins, *A Sermon, on Occasion of the Decease of The Rev. W. J. Abdy, A.M., Preached in his late Parish Church of St. John, Horsleydown, Southwark, On Sunday, April 27, 1823 [...]* (London: Published by Hatchard, Piccadilly [and three others], 1823), 1.

dedication, love, willingness to serve, and biblical wisdom that begged the question "what would Mr. Abdy say, if...?"³⁴⁹

In 1798, Abdy preached a sermon for the Loyal Volunteer Corps, which was comprised of men from his parish, at their "unanimous request."³⁵⁰ Abdy's sermon was favorably received by the officers and soldiers of the corps and by the other parishioners in attendance.³⁵¹ It seems that he was surprised by the original request: he had prepared the sermon for a day of thanksgiving, but "had not the most distant idea 'till I came to Church" that the soldiers would be his primary audience.³⁵² Thus, the first two pages of his sermon address the soldiers in terms of their current military circumstances, and Abdy only then restates his opening Scripture for a second time.³⁵³ Over half of the sermon is dedicated to establishing why and how sins can have greater consequences. The sermon alludes to sin without claiming that it was pervasive among the soldiers of the corps, and its preaching style uses warnings against sin to encourage personal reflection.

Abdy begins his sermon with Exodus 15:1-2, which is a song of Moses that praises God for His victory over the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.³⁵⁴ This Scripture establishes several themes: God is the true power for deliverance from their enemies; their victories are His victories; and God is deserving of praise. After introducing this Scripture, Abdy expresses the hope that this coming year, 1799, will be as successful as the "*annus mirabilis*" (wonderful year) of 1759.³⁵⁵ Explaining that the selected Scripture is appropriate for their country's circumstances of war, he argues that, just like the Israelites had publicly praised God, they should celebrate God with the same enthusiasm they exhibit when they are applauding their victorious generals and admirals.³⁵⁶ Considering how the Israelites had given thanks to God after their deliverance from Egypt, the British should do the same in light of their recent victories, such as the Battle of the Nile

³⁴⁹ Watkins, *Sermon*, 9-10, 23-24.

³⁵⁰ Abdy, *A Sermon*, 1. The phrase "unanimous request" indicates that they were acquainted with him (but they also could have invited another clergyman or the vicar of their parish). Given his tenure at their church, the request most likely stemmed from both convenience and familiarity.

³⁵¹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 2 [?]; the second page of this publication is not paginated and is followed by the first page of the sermon body, numbered as page 5.

³⁵² Abdy, *Sermon*, 7.

³⁵³ Abdy, *Sermon*, 5-7. It is unusual that the sermon opens with the Scripture, continues with an address, and then cites the same Scripture again. It is even more unusual that the sermon's candid comments were retained for its publication; it suggests that the sermon was transcribed faithfully and implies that Abdy recontextualized it to make it relevant to his military audience.

³⁵⁴ According to the Book of Exodus, the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt until God, through Moses, freed them. Pharaoh then pursued them with an army, but he was destroyed when the Red Sea, which had parted to grant the Israelites passage, crashed upon the Egyptians.

³⁵⁵ Abdy, *Sermon*, 5-6; Holmes, *Redcoat*, 21-23. The victories won by Great Britain during this year of the Seven Years' War led to this moniker.

³⁵⁶ Abdy, *Sermon*, 8-11.

(1798).³⁵⁷ Abdy's rhetoric here appropriates the story of the Exodus for Great Britain: "such was the language of Pharaoh against Israel [referring to Exodus 15:9], and such has been the language of the Gallic Pharaohs against...British Israel...! But after all their...repeated attempts...what has been their success? Has it not, brethren, been very similar to that which the Egyptians met?"³⁵⁸

During these first points of his sermon, Abdy also introduces the theme of sin, stating that "we, indeed, are a very sinful disobedient nation."³⁵⁹ He goes on to say that, due to petitioning prayers, but especially due to the intercession of Christ, "he [i.e., God] hath hitherto spared, and not only spared and preserv'd us from confusion, from disgrace, and from destruction; but he hath even honored and exalted this little Island, above most of the other nations of the earth."³⁶⁰ Abdy asserts that, just like Moses and the Israelites, the British have "God in *our* favor."³⁶¹ This favor is not to be taken for granted because, even though Britain has its honored national military heroes (Admirals Richard Howe, John Jervis, Adam Duncan, Horatio Nelson, and John Borlase Warren), "the WHOLE GLORY must be ascribed to GOD!"³⁶² This sentiment was shared by Admiral Nelson, who gave credit to God for his victory at the Battle of the Nile.³⁶³ Abdy expresses his hope that the "religious spirit" that had spread after these God-given victories "might become a fixed and an abiding principle within us, that shall lead us, and thousands and tens of thousands of our Countrymen, to a right understanding, and a zealous profession of 'The truth as it is in Jesus'."³⁶⁴

Now that he has established his conviction that God is blessing the nation through military victories, Abdy moves to his third and main point, namely, that true religion is always opposed and persecuted. Abdy maintains that the British are adherents of the true religion and, as such, their enemies plot to thwart them with the "Republican Yoke," which some "Apostles of Sedition and Infidelity" have fallen prey to.³⁶⁵ "Apostles of Sedition" is a reference to those involved in the Irish Rebellion of 1798, which Admiral Warren had successfully ended at the Battle of Tory Island. Abdy thanks God for this, saying:

³⁵⁷ Abdy, *Sermon*, 11-14.

³⁵⁸ Abdy, *Sermon*, 13. Exodus 15:9, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them."

³⁵⁹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 11.

³⁶⁰ Abdy, *Sermon*, 12.

³⁶¹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 12.

³⁶² Abdy, *Sermon*, 14-15.

³⁶³ James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, *The Life and Services of Horatio Viscount Nelson: From His Lordship's Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 126; Abdy, *Sermon*, 15.

³⁶⁴ Abdy, *Sermon*, 15.

³⁶⁵ Abdy, *Sermon*, 16.

The infection is by no means general; nor can it be, whilst Britons are true to themselves, i.e., to those wise laws, and to that holy religion, on which the British Constitution, in Church and State, is evidently founded. 'He is my God,' should every true Briton most devoutly say, with his lips, in his heart, and by his life.³⁶⁶

This suggests that "Britons" who are "true to themselves" are true to the Church of England ("that holy religion") on which Great Britain "is evidently founded." Furthermore, all "true Briton[s]" should have a sincere faith that is obvious from the way they live their lives. Conversely, this means that if their faith is not devout, they are not being "true to themselves" or "true Briton[s]." This makes the purity of their faith not just a spiritual matter, but also a matter of their identity as Britons. Abdy subsequently uses this reasoning to dive into the sin that threatens this fabric of the "Church and State."

Abdy approaches the need to be righteous and abstain from sin on an individual level:

Religion is a personal concern...of the citizen, and of the soldier: certainly then, it is the concern of you, *Gentlemen*, in whose person these two dignified characters are blended. And it is a concern, which if it be properly regarded, will reflect additional honor on you, and render your generous services more highly beneficial both to the Church and to the State.³⁶⁷

While an individual's religion is a "personal concern" that has an impact on the individual's "honor" when "properly regarded," it also enables the individual to provide better service to both the "Church and to the State." Abdy's reference to religion as a "concern" is noteworthy. In the context of the sermon, this particular term has a warning ring to it, especially since Abdy had just spoken about the French and the Irish who had fallen prey to false ideas of liberty. "Concern" implies that failure to "properly regard" their religion will lead to dishonor and make their military service detrimental "to the Church and to the State."³⁶⁸ Disregard of the "true" religion will lead to sin and to military failure.

Abdy then praises the soldiers for their faith and profession. He does this to set up "a word of serious caution,"³⁶⁹ warning that there are many soldiers who claim to be Christians but are not:

Christianity stands a witness against many of its defenders! How many in a national struggle are ready to die for religion, who *yet* are spiritually dead to it! How many spurn at a Decade, yet profane the Sabbath! How many fathers of a Country, and bulwarks of a Church, have secured every thing in both, but their *own* souls:—defended the faith, yet perished in unbelief!—*Opposed Satan one way, been his captives in another!*"³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Abdy, *Sermon*, 16. "He is my God" here probably references Exodus 15:2.

³⁶⁷ Abdy, *Sermon*, 17-18.

³⁶⁸ Other interpretations of Abdy's intent and choice of words in this part of the sermon are conceivable; he may have implied that sin would only make their service *less* beneficial.

³⁶⁹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 18.

³⁷⁰ Abdy, *Sermon*, 19.

Abdy is very direct both in his warning and who he is directing it to. He does not question the soldiers' dedication to the war and their willingness to lay down their lives. Yet he cautions the men to be careful that they do not deceive themselves into thinking that their death "for religion" is evidence of their spiritual health; neither does their "spurning" of war increase their devotion to "the Sabbath."³⁷¹ Abdy stresses that fighting for a religion does not make you religious. This reinforces his previous point of having "concern" for their religion.

Abdy continues to reference his previous points concerning the sober judgment of one's personal religion and possible hidden sin. He reminds the soldiers of their victories in the war and how the glory for these belongs to God, but then adds that they should "improve [these victories] to the great purposes of personal godliness!"³⁷² Abdy does not explain how their godliness will improve their victories, but he does explain why. He asks the soldiers to "recollect the alarming situation we have frequently been in...during many periods of the present war," which seems to have hastened their personal reflection of their sins, before again pointing to God as their deliverer and salvation.³⁷³ Abdy asserts that these "national deliverances are...merciful and compassionate tokens in favor of his enemies...in the British nation and in the Christian church."³⁷⁴ It is Abdy's message that God has spared the British because he loves them like Israel, but this is not to be taken for granted, as Israel's continued disobedience led to their nation's defeat at the hands of their enemies.

Abdy pleads with the soldiers to not provoke God by sinning in the wake of these deliverances. He tells the soldiers to "not use our liberty for an occasion of the flesh, by rioting and drunkenness, by chambering and wantonness...[because of their] very critical situation...the nation is this moment placed."³⁷⁵ He warns them to not tip the scales of God's favor and exhorts them to pursue righteousness instead. He even tells them to consider the families of those soldiers who have died to help deliver these victories, which is a debt they can never truly repay.³⁷⁶ Abdy follows this with another warning: "think not that after you have been at Church, and contributed to the charitable Fund, the business of the Thanksgiving is then over, and you may return to the world and the flesh as usual!"³⁷⁷ Church attendance is not enough to practice true religion, nor is giving to the "charitable Fund," which was intended for the families of soldiers killed in action.³⁷⁸ This kind

³⁷¹ The War of the First Coalition lasted five years (1792-1797). Perhaps Abdy was rounding up or adding the French Revolution (1789-1799) which was seen as the catalyst for the war.

³⁷² Abdy, *Sermon*, 20.

³⁷³ Abdy, *Sermon*, 20-21.

³⁷⁴ Abdy, *Sermon*, 21. Abdy here likens Great Britain to Israel as characterized in Hosea 11.

³⁷⁵ Abdy, *Sermon*, 22. "Chambering" is a term for impure, immodest, and sexual behavior.

³⁷⁶ Abdy, *Sermon*, 22.

³⁷⁷ Abdy, *Sermon*, 23.

³⁷⁸ Abdy, *Sermon*, 23.

of duplicity would only serve as a "mockery and insult" to God and render their services "displeasing to Him and consequently unprofitable to ourselves."³⁷⁹ Abdy urges them to repent of these sins that threaten themselves, the Church, and the nation because "God willeth not the death of a sinner, but had rather he should turn from his sin and be saved."³⁸⁰ Only through their repentance can they hope that God will continue to give them favor and bless their nation in this war and in the future to come.³⁸¹

The theme of consequent sin in Abdy's sermon is at times direct, for example in his use of Isaiah 1:11-21 (where the prophet warns Israel against religious practices that are just for show and not from genuine repentance, obedience, and worship); this leaves little room for interpretation as it is an obvious warning. However, Abdy's rhetoric is just as intriguing in what he leaves unsaid. His conditional phrases that tie God's blessing to Great Britain's adherence to true religion leave the listener to ponder the question of what will happen if they should falter. Abdy's references to France as their "spiritual enemies" and the "Republican Yoke" that has led the French and others away from true religion are connected to the latter's military defeats. Abdy mentions Britain's recent victories in the Battle of the Nile and the Battle of Tory Island nine times during his sermon.³⁸² Each reference is a stark reminder of the cost of being an enemy of God versus the benefit of enjoying God's favor.

Abdy uses these points to indicate that God's favor toward Great Britain is not unconditional. He reminds them to not "*forget Him;*" that it is God who gives competence to their commanders; and that God's favor is a "marvellous appearance...which we now celebrate."³⁸³ This is a profound statement: Abdy claims that God's favor has not always been with Great Britain—hence its marvelous appearance, which is cause for celebration. This implies the need to abstain from sin, collectively and individually, to avoid giving cause to God to withdraw His favor. Abdy shows tact in that he refrains from propagating a cut-and-dry causal relationship between sin and favor; after all, this would cast suspicion on the men of the corps should the war take a turn for the worse. Implying the idea of consequent sin was sufficient to promote self-reflection and spiritual vigilance among the soldiers.

The danger of sin was not just personal, but national. If soldiers and fellow citizens were to be corrupted by sin, or the sinful influences of rebels and apostates, they would risk the welfare of Great Britain itself. Bateman, too, uses this in his sermon to connect the "Flows and Ebbs of Fortune...in consequence of

³⁷⁹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 23-24.

³⁸⁰ Abdy, *Sermon*, 24.

³⁸¹ Abdy, *Sermon*, 25.

³⁸² Abdy, *Sermon*, 13-16, 20-21.

³⁸³ Abdy, *Sermon*, 9, 12.

their Obedience or Disobedience to [God's] Commands."³⁸⁴ This was a common theme during times of civil unrest and civil war, usually in response to Jacobite or Irish uprisings. During such times, chaplains preached that those who were not vigilant in their faith risked turning their minds from "dutiful Regard, and respectful Subjection to their *Liege Lord*...and to draw 'em gradually into Sedition, Stubbornness and Rebellion, as we have seen in [the Jacobite Rising of 1715 and]...it will not fail to provoke GOD, sooner or later, to *pour out the bitterest Vials of his Wrath* upon their impious Heads."³⁸⁵ The theme of sin threatening the security of the country would have appealed to soldiers on the basis of both faith and profession. As for the former, sin invited discontent that could lead to rebellion against God, as for the latter, sin threatened to cause harm to fellow soldiers as it could lead to rebellion against the Crown. It was for these reasons that chaplains exhorted soldiers to be sensitive to their sins, repentant, and prayerful for those in rebellion, "that they may return to their Duty and Happiness" to both God and country.³⁸⁶

Conclusion

Anglican sermons delivered to soldiers in eighteenth-century Great Britain have not received much scholarly attention; at best, they have been given peripheral consideration in treatments of broader topics. These sermons and the chaplains who gave them are invaluable for the insights they provide into the social, religious, literary, and military history of this period. They also provide key context for the development of the Army Chaplains' Department in 1796.³⁸⁷ Interpreting these sermons has revealed that there were distinct trends in rhetoric, themes, Scripture use, and style. The analysis, comparison, and interpretation of these sermons has offered insights into how the themes of service, conduct, and admonishment against sin were addressed in order to reconcile the military profession and the Christian faith, and to encourage soldiers to uphold Christian principles. This helps us to understand what was preached, how it was preached, and why it was preached.

In the context of the eighteenth century as an ecclesiastical and literary period, it is worth noting what is present, but also what is absent in these sermons. Some of these texts use arguments that echo just-war theory, but they fail to reference Saint Augustine or the development of this theory over time up until the sixteenth century. However, this is not unexpected because Anglicans opposed Catholic tradition as an error of faith. Their respective aversion also affected their views on ecclesiastical history, which explains why eighteenth-century Anglican chaplains relied on similar scriptures to support their points (e.g., Acts 10) despite Church

³⁸⁴ Bateman, *Necessity and Advantage*, 12.

³⁸⁵ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 18–19.

³⁸⁶ Rawlins, *Great Britain's Happiness*, 19.

³⁸⁷ Snape, *Royal Army Chaplains' Department*, 26.

tradition that would make strong counterpoints (e.g., Cornelius leaving the army after his conversion to Christianity). It was only in the nineteenth century that Anglicans looked at ecclesiastical history from a more scholarly perspective. Other New Testament scriptures that address violence critically were likely overlooked in light of the sermons' target audience and their intended purpose to support the soldiers' faith (rather than encourage them to change their profession). Officers or high-ranking members of society were usually the ones who arranged for the sermons and sponsored their publication, and they would not have supported sermons that were critical of the military or Great Britain's wars.

A similar logic serves to explain the overall lack of satire in these sermons. Despite its popularity in eighteenth-century Great Britain, satire rarely makes an appearance in these sermons. When it is present, it is outwardly focused, particularly toward the enemies of Great Britain (usually the French). Meanwhile, satire directed toward the British monarchy, government, or its wars is not easily found. The sermons enjoyed the patronage of officers, their wives, or government officials, and none of the latter would have supported publications that would have reflected poorly on themselves or questioned their patriotic duty. The literary style of this period also romanticized classical antiquity. Yet, unlike in contemporary literature, Greco-Roman references seem perfunctory when they appear in the sermons. They are usually included to provide token support to Biblical analogies and characterizations, or to allow for comparisons of empires (Roman and British) or virtues (Greek and British). Overall, the relative neglect of these style elements in the sermons may be ascribed to the sermons' emphasis on Biblical references.

The eighteenth century was riddled with wars, and it witnessed the publication of nearly 15,000 sermons; thus, there is a wealth of sources that can be investigated to expand this research, which has only begun to scratch the surface.³⁸⁸ That said, sermons that specifically address soldiers are few and far between, with fewer than thirty military sermons identified between 1660 and 1783.³⁸⁹ However, there are likely sermons that have not yet been properly identified or that were preached to "mixed" audiences of soldiers from a regiment who were joining a service for a special occasion or deployment and local parishioners (e.g., Abdy's sermon). Thus, a next step would be to identify these sermons to gain additional data for further comparative analysis.

There are questions that were either not answered in this article or generated as a result of it. These questions can spark new avenues of research and ways to utilize these primary sources in further comparative analysis: What were the

³⁸⁸ Caudle, "Measures of Allegiance," 128; according to estimates, between one out of every fourteen and one out of every thirty-three publications was a sermon during this century.

³⁸⁹ John Cooke, *The Preacher's Assistant [...] Sermons and Discourses Published [...] since the Restoration to the Present Time [...]*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Printed for the Editor, at the Clarendon-Press and Sold by [many], 1783), 394. This figure is askew as there are sermons listed that are not marked as "military" and which were given to military audiences (e.g., Kyte, *True Religion*).

differences between the sermons discussed above and contemporary sermons addressed to British soldiers outside of Great Britain? What were Great Britain's enemies preaching to their soldiers? Are there significant differences between peacetime and wartime sermons? How did sermons change with the establishment of the Army Chaplains' Department going into the nineteenth century? What were the soldiers' reactions, and what was the public reception of these sermons? Are there major differences between sermons delivered to full-time, part-time, or volunteer soldiers? What did opponents and dissenting preachers have to say in their sermons, especially with regard to the themes discussed above?³⁹⁰ What was said to soldiers before and after battles?

The research potential and possible applications are immense. The latter is especially true for military chaplaincy today. Just as the battlefield is ever evolving, so too are the spiritual needs of soldiers. However, what is unique about their spiritual needs is that, although the centuries pass (or millennia in the case of Cornelius), the fundamental needs of Christian soldiers have remained the same, namely, the need to reconcile the Christian faith and the military profession, and the always present fight for righteousness. As Broughton recognized the unique difficulties faced by Christian soldiers in the opening quotation of this article, it seems fitting that he close it as well:

Can Devotion lodge in the Breast of a Soldier? Or the bloody Trade of War yield faithful Servants to the God of Peace? Yes; for with God *all things are possible*, and Cornelius has given us an Example that All This is easy to be done.³⁹¹

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³⁹⁰ Rev. John Wesley, the leader of the Methodist movement, was repeatedly turned away when he was trying to speak to soldiers; see Kopperman, "Religion and Religious Policy," 397. An excellent example of an Anglican sermon opposing Christians serving as soldiers is John Henry Williams, *War the Stumbling-Block of a Christian: Or, the Absurdity of Defending Religion by the Sword* [...] (London: Printed for G.G. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row, 1795).

³⁹¹ Broughton, *Christian Soldier*, 5. For the italicized text, see Matthew 19:26: "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."