

# JOHN LANSETER OF BURY

By A. L. MORTON

John Lanseter is an almost forgotten Bury worthy whose name seems worth preserving, first because he was the principal founder of an Independent Church which has had more than 300 years of continuous life in the town, second as the central figure of a curious episode in Bury history—the Christmas riot of 1646—and finally as the author of *Lanseters Lance*, an extremely interesting Suffolk contribution to the most celebrated pamphlet war of its time, that which centred around Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena*. Some account of Edwards and this controversy is necessary as a preliminary in order to place Lanseter in his true historical setting.

## THE GANGRAENA CONTROVERSY

Thomas Edwards (1593–1647) was important to his generation as the most outspoken and persistent Presbyterian opponent of the Sects and of religious toleration. He is important to historians because his work is easily the most comprehensive contemporary account of the 'Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices' which flourished in his time. The three parts of *Gangraena*, published at intervals during 1646, contain more than 270 such 'errors', listed and numbered, in addition to a wide collection of anecdotes to the discredit of Independent and other opponents, named and unnamed.

Edwards was educated at Queens College, Cambridge, where he became University Preacher. On April 6th, 1628 he was forced to recant some of the doctrines he had been teaching. In the next year he left Cambridge for St. Botolph's, Aldgate, and in 1640 he was again in trouble with the authorities, being brought before the Court of High Commission and deprived. This persecution he was the better able to bear as he had married a rich wife and so did not depend on the income from his benefice. With the meeting of the Long Parliament he was in a much stronger position and in August 1641 he published the first of his controversial works.<sup>1</sup> A second<sup>2</sup> appeared in 1644 and was so successful that, according to Baillie 'all the ministers of London, at least more than a hundred of them', agreed to set up a weekly lecture for him

<sup>1</sup> *Reasons against Independant Government of particular Congregations.*

<sup>2</sup> *Antapologia: or a full answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr. Goodwin (and others), Members of the Assembly of Divines.*

at Christ Church in Newgate Street, 'where he may handle these questions, and nothing else, before all that will come to hear'.<sup>3</sup>

These books, though harsh and aggressive in tone, were still works of theological controversy on a theoretical level and have been long forgotten. With the publication of the First Part of *Gangraena*<sup>4</sup> in February 1646 the emphasis shifted to personal attacks and the deliberate collection of scandal against theological opponents. It is, indeed, its very abandonment of the decencies of controversy that makes it so useful to the historian. A Second Part of *Gangraena* appeared in May and a Third<sup>5</sup> in the last days of December. To some extent they may be considered as a single work, though the direction of Edward's attack changes considerably in the course of the year.

For Edwards the grand error and the source of all confusion was:

The great opinion of an universall Toleration [which] tends to the laying all waste, and dissolution of all Religion and good manners.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, one of his charges against Walwyn was that

he spake on behalf of *Paul Best* for his blasphemy;<sup>7</sup> saying, that if we could not convince his conscience, we ought not to punish his body.<sup>8</sup>

Scarcely less dangerous in the estimation of Presbyterians were the widely spread views which tended to place the congregation on an equality with, or even above, the Minister. Edwards regarded with horror the idea that 'Shoemakers, Cobblers, Weavers, or Sope boylers and the like',<sup>9</sup> or even women,<sup>10</sup> had as good a right to preach, if they felt moved to do so, as regularly ordained and university trained Ministers, or that tithes were unlawful.<sup>11</sup> And, as usual, he is able to quote such fantastic but significant developments of the same ideas as the heresy

That Christians in receiving the Lords Supper should receive with their hats on, with their heads covered, but

<sup>3</sup> William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*, 226.

<sup>4</sup> *Gangraena: or A Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time, vented and acted in England in these four last years.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Second Part of Gangraena: Or A fresh and further Discovery etc. The third Part of Gangraena; Or A new and higher Discovery etc.*

<sup>6</sup> *Gangraena*, i, Epistle Dedicatory.

<sup>7</sup> Best was an anti-trinitarian, then in prison for his views.

<sup>8</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 27.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 30.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

the Ministers should administer it with their hats off, uncovered.<sup>12</sup>

A third group of 'errors' undermined the doctrine of election, declaring

That many shall be actually saved who are not elected; and they who preach none shall be saved but the elect and predestinate, are notable lyars.<sup>13</sup>

and that Christ died not only for all men<sup>14</sup> but for the devils in hell<sup>15</sup> and even 'for kine and horses and all other creatures, as well as for men'.<sup>16</sup>

These and many other theological matters occupy the bulk of all three parts of *Gangraena* and are, almost exclusively, the subject of the First Part. But as 1646 went on the situation changed. The last Royalist strongholds were reduced, the remains of their armies were beaten out of the field, quite early it was evident that the Civil War was virtually over. With its ending new problems arose—conflicts between the Army and Parliament, between the Parliamentary parties over the next steps to be taken, between English and Scots. The question of sovereignty, of where did supreme power really rest, began to be raised, republican and democratic ideas spread rapidly. In March one of the first Leveller manifestos, *The Last Warning to all the Inhabitants of London*, appeared. As Walwyn, Overton and others came to the defence of the imprisoned Lilburne, the Levellers began to emerge as a clearly defined political party with their own press and programme. Edwards rightly saw a close connection between their ideas and those of the Sects, and, in Part II, and still more in Part III, we can see a shift in emphasis towards an attempt to counter the political consequences of the Independent and Sectarian doctrines.<sup>17</sup> Walwyn<sup>18</sup> and Lilburne,<sup>19</sup> who were barely mentioned in Part I now receive special attention. Overton<sup>20</sup> and Rainborough<sup>21</sup> are also attacked.

<sup>12</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 11.

<sup>17</sup> e.g. *Gangraena*, iii, p. 23 for Army and Ireland, p. 74 hatred of the Scots.

<sup>18</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 25–30.

<sup>19</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 104; and iii, 194–218.

<sup>20</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 148–151.

<sup>21</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 132.

A larger proportion of the 'errors' are now political and social:

That Kingly Government among Nations and Commonwealths is unlawful, and that for Kings it cannot be said to what use they serve, or that there is any use of them, except to debauch and vex a people.<sup>22</sup>

Instead of Legall Rights and the Laws and Customes of this Nation, the Sectaries talk of, and plead for naturall Rights and Liberties, such as men have from *Adam* by birth, and in many of their Pamphlets they still speak of being governed by Right reason.<sup>23</sup>

or, finally,

That Pigeons in Dove Houses are common to all men to take and eat them, as well as those who are owners of those Dove Houses, because Pigeons are fowls of the aire, and so common to the sons of men.<sup>24</sup>

Since Edwards attacked not only the ideas but the lives of individual opponents, his books created an immediate sensation and provoked many rejoinders. Some of those he attacked were obscure 'tub preachers', but others were among the most experienced controversialists of the time, and these were not slow to reply. Among the better known of the answers to *Gangraena* were pamphlets by Thomas Goodwin,<sup>25</sup> John Saltmarsh,<sup>26</sup> William Walwyn,<sup>27</sup> Jeremiah Burroughes,<sup>28</sup> John Lilburne,<sup>29</sup> and, possibly, Richard

<sup>22</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 9. The right to keep a dovecot was a feudal privilege still generally exercised. Fuller, *The Worthies of England*, p. 424 in the edition of 1952, quotes Hartlib as estimating that there were in 1651 26,000 dove-houses in England and Wales with an average of 1,000 birds to the house.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Goodwin, *Cretensis: Or A Brief Answer to an ulcerous Treatise, lately published by Mr. Thomas Edwards*, (March 1646).

<sup>26</sup> John Saltmarsh, *Groanes For Liberty . . . Also some Quaeres For the better understanding of Mr. Edwards last Book called Gangraena*, (March). *Reasons For Unittie, Peace and Love. With an Answer . . . to Master Edwards his Second Part, called Gangraena, directed to me*, (June).

<sup>27</sup> William Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare of Mr. Thomas Edwards Minister*, (March). *An Antidote Against Master Edwards His Old And New Poyson*, (June). *A Prediction of Master Edwards His Conversion and Recantation*, (August). And others.

<sup>28</sup> Jeremiah Burroughes. *A Vindication of Mr. Burroughes Against Mr. Edwards . . . with a Brief Declaration What the Independents would have*, (July). Burroughes was at one time preacher in Bury as assistant to Edmund Calamy.

<sup>29</sup> John Lilburne, *The oppressed Mans Oppression declared . . . As also there is thrown unto Tho. Edwards the Author of the 3 Ulcerous Gangraenes, a bone or two to pick*, (Jan. 1647).

Overton.<sup>30</sup> Milton himself, whose doctrine of divorce is Error 154 in the First Part of *Gangraena*, retaliated with a passing reference in one of his occasional poems.<sup>31</sup> In the Second and Third Parts of *Gangraena* Edwards replied to those pamphlets that had appeared, and he was supported by other Presbyterian writers of whom John Vickars<sup>32</sup> is perhaps the best known.

The result of all this is a vast confusion of charges, rebuttals and counter-charges, from which it is impossible, in many cases, to establish the truth with any certainty. But since *Gangraena* and the *Gangraena* controversy are among our main sources of knowledge about the growth of the Sects and the battle of ideas in the seventeenth century, it is important to try to estimate the value of Edwards' work as evidence. Here it is possible to distinguish. In his lists of 'Errours, Heresies and Blasphemies' a large proportion are taken from published works, and for these he gives precise and sufficiently accurate references. Others are from hearsay reports of sermons, or even of statements made in conversation, and here we are on less certain ground. Nevertheless it can be said that very few of them are out of key, and for the great majority parallels can be found in the pamphlet literature of the period. So many things were being said and written which seemed profoundly shocking to Edwards that he had little need to invent; I think it can be taken in general that what he tells us was said was really being said; how widespread and how typical these ideas were is another matter.

When we pass from ideas to personalities our difficulties increase. Obviously, Edwards was bitterly prejudiced. He was ready to believe the worst of his opponents and did not take much pains to check the correctness of tales to their discredit. Much of his information is second-hand and most of it anonymous. When challenged, as by Thomas Goodwin,<sup>33</sup> to name his witnesses and to bring specific rather than loose and general charges he often failed to do so. A passage by Walwyn not unfairly describes his controversial method:

<sup>30</sup> It has never been suggested that Overton is the author of the anonymous *A Letter to Mr Tho Edwards*, (Feb. 1647), but it is exactly in his style. For example, it is addressed to Edwards 'At his dwelling in *Club Court*, between the *Pope* and the *Prelate*, a little on this side of the *Fagot* in *Smithfield*'. Compare the fictitious address on Overton's earlier pamphlet *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution*, in which Edwards is also attacked: 'Printed by *Martin Clawclergie*, Printer to the *Reverend Assembly of Divines* and are to be sold at his *Shop* in *Toleration Street*, at the *Signe* of the *Subjects Liberty*, right opposite to *Persecuting Court*'.

<sup>31</sup> 'shallow Edwards' in *On the new forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament*.

<sup>32</sup> John Vickars, *The Schismatick Sifted. Or the picture of Independents freshly and fairly washt-over again*, (June).

<sup>33</sup> *Cretensis*, 28-9.

If you observe any man to be of a publique and active spirit, (though he be no Independent or Separatist) he can never be friend to you in your work, and therefore you are to give him out, to be strongly suspected of whoredom, or drunkenness, prophaneness, an irreligious person or an Atheist, and that by Godly and religious persons he was seen and heard blaspheming the holy Scriptures, and making a mock of the Ordinances of Christ, or say he is suspected to hold intelligences with Oxford, or anything no matter what, some what will be believed, you cannot be ignorant how much this hath prevailed against divers able persons.

If you see any such man but once talking with a Papist, or (though not) you may give out that very honest men suspect him to be a Jesuit: if any one but demand of you or any other, how you know the Scriptures to be the word of God, give it out for certain he denieth them, or if any put questions concerning God or Christ or the *Trinity*, you have more than enough to lay accusations upon them, that shall stick by them as long as they live.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, Edwards does sometimes seem to attempt to estimate the value of his evidence, as when he writes that in Lincolnshire 'there is a woman preacher who preaches (its certain) and 'tis reported also she baptizeth, but that's not so certain'.<sup>35</sup> Edwards invariably puts the worst construction on the actions of his opponents and is frequently careless and inaccurate about details, but I have not found any case in which, where his version of events can be compared with others, his charges seem absolutely without foundation. In this respect Walwyn's estimate is extremely shrewd; Edwards' method is to mix truth and falsehood in such a way that the true lends colour to the false, yet I think this is more often the outcome of prejudice and carelessness than of deliberate fabrication. In a paper on Laurence Clarkson I gave some examples of his methods as applied to Hanserd Knollys and others,<sup>36</sup> and we shall see that *Lanseters Lance* is of special interest for the light it throws on Edwards' mind and methods. I will therefore give only one further example, from the dispute between him and Goodwin.

Edwards alleged in very general terms that Goodwin and members of his congregation were addicted to playing cards and

<sup>34</sup> *Antidote*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Gangreana*, i, 84.

<sup>36</sup> *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxvi, 164-5.

were 'loose on the Sabbath day'.<sup>37</sup> Goodwin replied that such vague accusations were meaningless, challenged Edwards to bring more specific charges and admitted that on one occasion—in company with members of Edwards' own congregation—he had played at bowls for a short time on the evening of the day appointed for thanksgiving for the victory at Naseby. He invited Edwards to produce 'some law either of God or man' to prohibit such harmless recreation.<sup>38</sup> Edwards in replying made no attempt to meet the question of principle raised. Instead he insisted that Goodwin, after preaching on the morning of the Naseby thanksgiving day, attended no place of worship in the afternoon but played at bowls two whole hours in the evening. If Presbyterians also played, they were to blame, but this did not excuse Goodwin who, as a Minister, should have been setting them a good example instead of leading them into sin. He added that the Presbyterians might have been at church in the afternoon.<sup>39</sup> The very triviality of the issue makes it, I think, an instructive example of Edwards' method.

*Gangraena*, then, is a document of first-rate historical value, but it must be read with special care and, to extract its full value, should be taken not alone but with some at least of the many replies which it provoked. If, at the end, we are not always in a position to be able to be certain of the truth in detail we shall have vastly extended our understanding of the points of view which were contending for mastery at the time. For this reason an examination of *Lanseters Lance* can have a more than local importance.

#### "LANSETERS LANCE"

After the publication of the First Part of *Gangraena* Edwards began to receive letters from Presbyterian Ministers all over the country with accounts of the misdeeds of the Separatists. One such came from Clare in Suffolk, dated March 30th, 1646:

The true copie of a Letter written to me from a worthy and godly Minister in *Suffolk*,<sup>40</sup> in the name, and by consent and agreement of other Ministers of the County at a meeting of theirs and sent up by the hands of a godly Minister in those parts, who delivered it to me.

<sup>37</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 73.

<sup>38</sup> *Cretensis*, 28-33.

<sup>39</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 76-8.

<sup>40</sup> The Presbyterian Minister at Clare was Roger Cooke.

This letter, among other matters, referred to one

*Lancaster*, of *Bury*, a Pedler and of his opening the whole book of *Ezra* at a private meeting, instead of opening his pack, and of the prayer that followed his Exercise etc.<sup>41</sup>

On the same page Edwards continues,

One *Lancaster* in a private meeting at *Bury*, condemned all the Ministers of *England* for *Sanballats* and *Tobiahs* of this time, and the sectaries to those who build the Temple, but it was withstood by Ministers who hindered it: At that meeting there was a plain godly man, a solid old Christian of Master *Faircloths* congregation<sup>42</sup> who opposed him, and God was so mightily with him that it turned to the reproach and shame of this *Lancaster*, and those who adhered to him.

In September Lanseter replied, after having tried without success, as we shall see, to obtain any kind of satisfaction or correction from Edwards, with

Lanseters Lance,  
FOR  
Edwards'es Gangrene:  
or

A ripping up, and laying open some rotten, pūtrified, corrupt, stinking matter in Mr. *Thomas Edwards* his Gangren, or Book intituled, *The second part of Gangrena*. Wherein, among others, he hath abused and belied Mr. *John Lanceter*, calling him Pedler, and saying, that he opened the whole book of *Ezra* at a privat meeting instead of opening his Pack, which is proved false, and other things also.

So that in consideration of the particulars, judicious men may well conceive the cause of his *Gangren* to be his blind ignorance of the truth, and his mad malice against the well-affected conscientious people.

NEHEM. 6. 8.

*Then I sent unto him, saying, There are not such things done as thou sayest, but thou fainest them out of thine own heart.*

2 TIM. 2. 16. 17.

*Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodlinesse, and their word will eate as doth a Canker. [or, Gangren].*

*Published according to Order.*

LONDON,  
Printed in the Year, 1646.

# Lanſeters Lance, <sup>17</sup>

FOR  
 Edwards's Gangrene:

OR,  
 A ripping up, and laying open ſome rotten, putrified,  
 corrupt, ſtinking Matter in Mr. Thomas Edwards his Gangren,  
 or book intituled, *The ſecond part of Gangrenæ.*

Wherein, amongſt others, he hath abuſed and belied Mr. John  
*Lanceter*, calling him Pedler, and ſaying, that he opened the  
 whole book of *Ezra* at a privat meeting in ſtead of  
 opening his Pack, which is proved falſe,  
 and other things alſo.

So that in conſideration of the particulars, judicious men may  
 well conceive the cauſe of his *Gangren* to be his blind igno-  
 rance of the truth, and his mad malice againſt the wel-  
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2 TIM. 2. 16. 17.

*Shin prophane and vain babblings: for they will increaſe unto more  
 ungoalineſſe, and their word will eate as doth a Canker, [or, Gan-  
 gren.]*

Published according to Order.

Sept: 21

LONDON,  
 Printed in the Yeare, 1646.

In a foreword Lanseter went out of his way to pay a tribute to Katharine Chidley, with whom, and her son Samuel, he had been closely associated in Bury:

When Mr *Thomas Edwards* his book against *Independencie* and *Toleration*, came forth, about foure years agoe, O what boasting there was then among the Prelaticall party, and Temporizers, as if the day had been their own! But when the woman<sup>43</sup> came and strook the naile of *Independency* into the head of his *Sisera*,<sup>44</sup> with the Hammer of Gods holy word; then their sport was spoyled and quasht, the effects whereof appeareth: for since that time he could never set forth anything but *Gangraena*, or such like stuff (as his *Antipologia* before it, which the same party answered and presented as a new-years gift, that he might break off his old sins, etc.<sup>45</sup> And what is *Gangrena* (or the *Gangren*?). It is a putrified, rotten, dead insensible soare, whose nature is to fret, to the mortifying of that member that hath it growing upon him. Therefore is that which he produceth, rightly called by him *Gangrena*: for the ripping up and opening of which, this *Lance* was made, whereby the Christian Reader may see that the bitter effects of persecution (or want of publick toleration of true religion) causeth nothing but corruption and putrefaction tending to utter destruction. But happy is he that is forewarned by other mens harm.

Having quoted the passages referring to himself in *Gangraena* Lanseter continued:

This being so in *Mr Edwards*'es book, *Mr Lanseter* thought it meet to cleare himselfe as publicly as he had aspersed him, yet determined first to go to *Mr Edwards* to speake unto him about this in a peaceable way, which Hee did accordingly, before he went out of *London* upon *June* the 29,

Footnotes from previous page.

<sup>41</sup> *Gangraena*, ii, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Samuel Faircloth (Fairclough) was Minister at Kedington. He published *The Troublers troubled . . . A Sermon preached before the House of Commons*, (1641); and *The Prisoners Praises . . . In a Sermon preached at Rumsford*, (1648, after the surrender of Colchester). A biography of Fairclough is included in Samuel Clarke's *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age*, 1683. The same work has a life by Fairclough of his patron Sir Nathaniel Barnadiston.

<sup>43</sup> Katharine Chidley.

<sup>44</sup> In *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ*, 1641.

<sup>45</sup> *A New-Yeares-Gift, or a Brief Exhortation to Mr. Thomas Edwards*, (Jan. 1645).

and tooke Mr *Edwards* his book with him; who coming to Mr *Edwards* his house, and a friend or two more with him to be as Testimonies, Hee asked him saying: Sir, doe you know me? No, saith Mr *Edwards*, I doe not know you; Sir (saith hee) my name is *Lanseter*, and I come from *Bury*, and you have mentioned me in your book; I have so, saith *Edwards*: Sir, saith *Lanseter*, do you know that those things are truths which you have written here of me? They are none of mine saith *Edwards* but the relation of others. *Lanseter*: that's all one, seeing you are the divulger thereof, and this book is yours: Sir, saith *Lanseter*, what if these things be proved false: how then? Saith *Edwards* it will not lye upon me, but upon those from whom I had the relation: Sir, saith *Lanseter* I pray you tell me their names. I will send, saith *Edwards*, first to those from whom I had the relation, and I believe that they are able to make it good. Well, saith Mr *Lanseter*, I pray you tell me their names, or show me the letter; I know not where to finde it, saith *Edwards*, but I will (when I have time) look for it.

Sir, saith Mr *Lanseter*, I am able to prove that there was not such things as you have related here.

It may be, saith *Edwards*, you are not the man; Then it was testified that there was no other such name in *Bury*, beside him, and therefore he was the man that they meant. Moreover (saith one present) Mr. *Edwards*, if one should write false things of you, and then say he did not mean you, he meant another, would that excuse him? and if he be not the man, who is?

Then, saith Mr. *Edwards* No, it may be you are not the man, neither is your name so, but you come in his name; for I have been served so by divers before now? Saith Mr. *Lanseter*: Sir it may be you have: but my name is *Lanseter*, and I dwell in *Bury*, and I am the man, and there is no other of that name;

How shall I know that? (saith *Edwards*:) another that stood by, said, I know the man and his name is *Lanseter* and he dwells in *Bury*, and moreover I know the man to be an honest man, and he tels you his name, but you have set no name to the relation, and I have ground to believe that which Mr. *Lanseter* saith is true; but therefore in the meane while your letter that hath no name, will go under the notion of a Libel.

You say here, I am a pedler. Its well known I am no pedler, but I served my Master a *Mercer* 11. years and a halfe, and do keep shop in *Bury*; but let that passe, saith *Lanseter*: you say that I opened the whole book of *Ezra* at

a private meeting, in stead of opening my pack; Sir this is untrue also: as those that were present can justifie.

Saith one by, what a base abuse is this, that you should call him a pedler in such a disgraceful manner? [I know him to be a shopkeeper in Bury;] And to say he opened the whole book of *Ezra* at a private meeting instead of opening his pack, what should his pack do at the private meeting?

Then said *Lanseter*, you say that I condemned all the Ministers of the Church of *England* for Sanballats and Tobiases of this time. Sir, I did not, this is false also: but suppose (saith *Lanseter*) that I had; what evil had I done?

Then you had done very wickedly (saith *Edwards*) and deserved to be called in question for it, and its the Sectaries that hindered reformation and not the Ministers of the Church of *England*.

Said another that stood by: what was Sanballat and Tobias? Were they not hinderers of the blessed work? And what are the Ministers of the Church of *England*, are they not hinderers also of the blessed work of reformation? And had Sanballat and Tobias any calling? And what calling have these, any at all? Yea, saith *Edwards*, that they have, You must go to Roome for it then, saith the party. No, not so, saith *Edwards*: yea but you must, saith the party, or else you will have no calling at all; did you ever read Mr. *Samuel Rutherfords* book, there he fetcheth his Church and Ministry from Rome.<sup>46</sup> Then *Edwards* refused to reason with him about it. Neither have you speld my name right; for it should not be *Lansister* but *Lanseter*.<sup>47</sup>

*Lanseter*: If these things which you have here related, be false, which I am able to prove to be so, I pray you vindicate me in your next fruits that you set forth. But Mr. *Edwards* would not assent unto that, then said one by to Mr. *Lanseter*: Mr. *Lanseter* seeing that Mr. *Edwards* will not vindicate you in his next fruits upon your proving the relations to him to be false, which is a very reasonable request of yours; Now you know what you have to do, even to publish your own vindication to the world, as publicly as he hath cast aspertions upon you.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Rutherford wrote a number of theological works. The one probably meant here is *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, (1644).

<sup>47</sup> No one, including *Lanseter* himself, seems to have been very sure how to spell his name. At least six variants exist.

After that Mr. *Lanseter* went to his own Country againe, and sent his vindication, and the observations that he raised from some parts of the first Chapter of *Ezra*, at a private meeting, that so reasonable men may judge whether these things therein are truth or no. Then some of his friends went again on the 27. of *July* to Mr. *Edwards* to know his resolution whether he would deliver up the names of the parties from whom he had the relation, and the name of the messenger that brought it? but in stead of doing it, he shewed himself agrieved, that the party demanding it came with 2. or 3. witnesses, and fell a rayling on them, saying, you bring here 2. or 3. witnesses, I know your way of lying. Then said the party, Tax us if you can with lying in the least, yea, in the least with any one lye, if you can: Then saith he, I desire to talk no more with you, nor to have any thing to do with you, you may be gone, I will not have anything to do with you, not do I desire to meddle any more with you. But saith another to Mr. *Edwards*: we will have to do with you as a lyer and a slanderer.<sup>48</sup>

The next seven pages contain 'the substance of what Mr. *Lanseter* spake from *Ezra* Chap. 1. verse 1. at the private meeting'. On pages 14 and 15 he replied to what *Edwards* had said about the 'solid old Christian' of Mr. *Faircloth's* congregation:

Note that whereas Mr. *Edwards* hath set down, in his second part of *Gangraena*, that at this meeting one of Mr. *Faircloths* congregation opposed Mr. *Lanseter*, and that God was so mightily with him that it turned out to the shame and reproach of this *Lanseter*, and those who adhered to him, This is very false; and Mr. *Lanseter* spoke since with the two men of Mr. *Faircloths* congregation, whose testimonies concerning the matter, are sufficient to disprove Mr. *Edwards* his relation in the sight of the Sun;

The testimonies, then quoted, add little of interest, nor do the remaining eight pages which contain 'Several observations gathered from some observable expressions in Mr. *Edwards* book called the Second Part of *Gangraena*'.

It is the dialogue already quoted from the earlier part of the pamphlet which is indeed quite unique in the literature of the *Gangraena* controversy for its fresh and personal style and the light it throws upon *Edwards's* character and methods. It is clear that once he has made a statement nothing will persuade him to admit himself wrong, even when, as in this case, he was obviously

<sup>48</sup> *Lanseters Lance*, 4-7.

so in important respects. In the Third Part of *Gangraena*, far from retracting, he repeated and amplified his charges, and would probably have done so in any case. There was, however, a special reason for his obstinacy here, namely, the friendship between Lanseter and Katharine and Samuel Chidley, of which I suspect he was unaware when he wrote the Second Part, but which he must have found out once he began to concern himself more closely with Lanseter.

The Chidleys were objects of his special dislike. He hated woman preachers, and Katharine was perhaps the most prominent of these. Further, her replies to his *Reasons against Independent Government* and *Antapologia* had been effective and damaging. Finally, Samuel Chidley was not only a Separatist but a close associate of Lilburne, Walwyn and the new Leveller party whom more and more he saw as the main danger. He had already mentioned Katharine Chidley with something more than his usual venom.<sup>49</sup> and he must have been delighted to find that in replying to Lanseter he could also hit at the Chidleys. So he wrote, obviously retailing the result of fresh enquiries at Bury:

There is one *Katherine Chidley*, an old Brownist, and her sonne a young Brownist; a pragmaticall fellow, who not content with spreading their poyson in and about London goe down into the Countrey to gather people to them, and among other places have been this Summer at *Bury in Suffolk*, to set up and gather a Church there, where (as I have it from good hands) they have gathered about seven persons, and kept their Conventicles together; who being one night very late about their Church-affairs, a mad woman breaking from her keepers and running out of the house she was kept in, happened to light upon the house where this company was, and stood up in the entry of the house; they being upon dissolving their meeting, and going to their severall homes, as they were going out, there stood this woman in her smock in the entry speaking never a word, which when they saw, they ran over one another for fear of this white devill, some one way, some another, almost frighted out of the little wit they had. Gaffer *Lanseter of Bury* (for so he was, unlesse he hath commenced Master by preaching) whom I have spoke of in the Second Part of *Gangraena*, was a great man with *Katherine Chidley* and her sonne, and is left Preacher to that company of Sectaries in their room; and I have great reason to think by the Epistle to the Reader that *Katherine Chidley* and her son

<sup>49</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 79.

made that book call'd *Lanseters Lance*, because *Katherine Chidley* and her sons Books (for the mother and son made them together, one inditing and the other writing) are highly magnified, and the brazen-faced audacious old woman resembled unto Jael; but as for *Lanseters Lance* for my *Gangraena*, I shall show it to be made not of iron or steele, in no sort able or useful to lance or enter the *Gangraena*, but a lance of brown painted paper, fit for children to play with; and to assure the Reader of it I received this last week a message to this purpose, from one of the Ministers who gave me intelligence about *Lanseter*, that he was perfecting the proofs and particulars about *Lanseters* businesse, and I should shortly hear from him; and within this two or three days a godly understanding man who was present at the meeting when *Lanseter* preached upon *Ezra*, gave me an account of the businesse, of the truth of the whole, and hath put me in a way, whereby, under the hands of persons present at the meeting, I may have it confirmed; and so among the confutations of some other pamphlets, I shall insert this of *Lanseters*.<sup>50</sup>

This further confutation never appeared:

As for that Pamphlet called *Lanceters Lance for Edwards Gangraena*, I have lately received from two godly Ministers in *Suffolk* a large relation by way of justification and prooffe of what in my Second Part of *Gangraena* was written of *Lanceter*, as also some other passages related in those papers concerning *Lanceter*, one *Chidley*, and *Barrowe*,<sup>51</sup> but they containing a whole sheet of paper are too much to be put in a Postscript, and must be reserved for the Fourth Part; and I am of the minde when *Lanceter* shall come to reade them, he will wish he had beene opening his Pack when he was writing his Pamphlet.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 170–1. There is nothing to support Edwards' view that the Chidleys wrote *Lanseters Lance*. The references to their books are much more like those of an enthusiastic admirer than of an author trying to work in a surreptitious puff. And the direct, personal style is quite unlike that of their avowed works and much more like that of the honestly indignant shop-keeper. The Chidleys were professional and competent theological and polemical writers and for them to have gone so far outside their usual manner and to have entered so far into the skin of the Bury Drapier would, if done deliberately, argue a little of the peculiar genius of Swift, of which they certainly show no trace elsewhere. This is not to say they may not have helped *Lanseter*.

<sup>51</sup> John and Anne Barrow are among those signing the Covenant of 1646. See below.

<sup>52</sup> *Gangraena*, iii, 291.

Part Four was never written, and it is clear that in 1646 Edwards was a sick, desperate and fear-ridden man. So much appears in the Preface to his last published work:<sup>53</sup>

I proposed to have added to this *Part* further proofs out of the New Testament against Toleration and for the Magistrates power: but these Preparatives and Additionals amounting to about some ten sheets (the reviewing, perfecting, and printing thereof would take up at least twenty days) and not knowing what a Day might bring forth, the Storm comming on so fast, I thought it best, for fear this Book might be suppressed at the Presse and never see the Sun, to send it forth as it was, that the Church of God at home and abroad might have the benefit of it, and to reserve the rest for a second Part (if God spare life and liberty).

This impression is confirmed by other writers. Thus John Saltmarsh:

Poor soul . . . Are you not in the *gall of bitterness* and *bond of iniquity*? Is not your *spirit* flying, where none pursues you? Are not your *dreams* of the *everlasting burning*, and of the *worm* that never dies? Have you no *gnawings*, no *flashings*, no *lightenings*? I am afraid of you. Your face and complexion shews a most sadly *parched, burnt* and *withered spirit*. Methought when I called to you the other day in the *street*, and challenged you for your unanswerable Crime against me, in the third page of the last *Gangraena*, in setting my name against all the *Heresies* you reckon, which your *soul* and the *world* can witness to be none of *mine*, and your own confession to me when I challenged you: How were you troubled in *spirit* and *language*? Your sin was, as I thought, upon you, scourging you, checking you, as I spoke. I told you at parting, I hoped we should overcome you by *prayer*. I believe we shall pray you either into *Repentence*, or *Shame*, or *Judgement*, ere we have done with you. But Oh might it be *Repentencé* rather, till Master Edwards smite upon his thigh, and say *What have I done?*<sup>54</sup>

Soon after the publication of *The Casting Down of the last and Strongest hold of Satan* in June 1647 Edwards retired to Holland

<sup>53</sup> *The Casting Down of the last and strongest hold of Satan. Or A Treatise Against Toleration and pretended Liberty of Conscience.*

<sup>54</sup> *Reasons for Unitie*, pp. 46-7. Compare Walwyn, *Prediction*, pp. 1-2, and John Maddocks and Henry Pinnell, *Gangraenachrestum or, A Plaister to Allay the tumor, and prevent the spread of a pernicious Ulcer*, (Sept. 1646), p. 8.

'tradition says for fear of the resentment he had roused',<sup>55</sup> and certainly convinced that the Presbyterian cause was lost. On August 24th of that year he died there.

#### THE CHRISTMAS RIOT IN BURY, 1646

Walwyn had remarked that the worst danger from Edwards' intolerance was that it divided Presbyterians from Independents in a way which could only benefit the Royalists:

Whosoever doth, or shall endeavour to perswade the godly and honest Presbyters to abandon, discourage or molest their faithfull, helpfull valiant and assured friends of other judgements (whom Mr. Edwards would have to be used worse than dogs) they are at the best, but Wolves, or Wolves friends, and seek the destruction of all honest people, of what judgements soever.<sup>56</sup>

The truth of this appeared on a large scale with the renewal of the Civil War in 1648 but it was perhaps apparent earlier in a smaller way in such events as the Christmas Riot at Bury in 1646.

In few respects did Puritan rule run more completely counter to popular feeling than in the attempts to suppress the celebration of Christmas, and in the public controversy which developed over this issue they were at an obvious disadvantage. They might argue convincingly in serious theological treatises that Christmas was pagan, popish, unscriptural, derogatory to the respect due to the Sabbath and attended in practice with all sorts of abuses and inconveniences<sup>57</sup> but such arguments can have had little weight except among their own already convinced supporters. Their opponents replied at times in a similar vein,<sup>58</sup> but more often and more effectively took different ground. There are a number of lively, satirical pamphlets which ridicule the saints and defend the right of the plain man to enjoy his traditional holiday in the traditional way.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Haller, *op. cit.*, 229.

<sup>56</sup> Walwyn, *Antidote*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> See Joseph Heming, *Certain Quaeries Touching The Rise and Observation of Christmas*, (1648); and Richard Tomlin, *Responsoria ad Erratica Piscatoris*, (1653).

<sup>58</sup> See George Palmer, *The Lawfulness of the Celebration of Christs Birth-day debated*, (1648); and Edward Fisher, *A Christian Caveat to the Old and New Sabbatarians*, (1650).

<sup>59</sup> e.g. John Taylor, *The Complaint of Christmas*, (1646); and (anon.) *Women Will Have their Will: or, Give Christmas his Due*, (1648).

Behind the theological arguments and the satire lay another issue: Christmas was both attacked and defended because it helped to preserve and idealise feudal social relations:

The old use was, that the Rich relieved the Poore, the Poore had cause to pray for the Prosperity of the Rich, one Neighbour Feasted another, everyone in his degree made good cheere, for Christmas came but once a year.<sup>60</sup>

And a broadsheet ballad dealing with the subject lamented:

Our Lords and Knights, and Gentry too,  
Do mean old fashions to forgoe:  
They set a porter at the gate,  
That none may enter in thereat.  
They count it a sin  
When poor people come in.

adding that Christmas, with Charity, 'was slain at Nasbie fight'.<sup>61</sup>

Consequently, attempts to prevent Christmas being celebrated as a public holiday frequently resulted in disorders. Edwards refers to such disorders in London and some city unnamed on Christmas Day 1645.<sup>62</sup> After the ending of the war there is sufficient evidence, I think, that the popular feeling about Christmas was deliberately exploited by the Royalists. The pro-Christmas pamphlets, especially the satirical ones, are often openly Royalist. Cakes and ale are identified with kingly government. This alliance between Royalists and those who liked to be merry is indicated in the account of the Bury riot, 'complotted by the Malignant Party', but supported by 'the Prentices and divers rude deboyst Fellows'.

The same pattern can be seen in the Christmas riot at Canterbury in 1647. Royalist and Parliamentary accounts of it exist and all make it plain that a three day riot ended with the seizure of the Town Hall and a declaration 'for the restitution of his Magestie to his Crown and dignity, whereby Religion may be restored to its ancient splendour and the known Laws of the Kingdom maintained'.<sup>63</sup> Similar events took place elsewhere. A contemporary newspaper *The Kingdoms Weekly Intelligencer* (No. 241), after an account of the Canterbury riot says:

the like bold attempt was made at *Ipswich*, in *Suffolke*, and in divers other places in the Kingdome. At *Ipswicke* the

<sup>60</sup> *Complaint*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> *The World is Turned Upside Down*, (1646).

<sup>62</sup> *Gangraena*, i, 102.

<sup>63</sup> *The Declaration of many thousands of the City of Canterbury*. This is the Royalist version. Compare, *Canterbury Christmas: or A True Relation of the Insurrection in Canterbury on Christmas day last*.

contestation was so great and pursued with so much violence, that sundry men were hurt, and two persons slain outright, but the Ring-leaders of the tumult, and the most active of the Incendiaries are apprehended and are to be tryed by the Law.

The riot at Bury, then, was not an isolated outbreak, but part of a prolonged and nation-wide struggle, theological, social and political. That a considerable Royalist party always existed in Bury is indicated by the scale of the rising there during the Second Civil War in 1648. Smaller, but no less significant as showing that influential forces were continually at work below the surface, was the restoration in 1647 of Dr. Thomas Stephens, an undisguised Royalist, to the post of High Master of the Grammar School, from which he had been removed two years earlier. Nor can there be much doubt that the bitter conflict between Presbyterians and Independents encouraged the growth of Royalism and left people like Lanseter in a weak and isolated position. It seems clear, at any rate, that it was against him and his friends that the main fury of the riot was concentrated.

An account of this riot was given in a pamphlet published in London a few days later. It is short enough to be reproduced here in full:

A PERFECT  
RELATION  
OF THE

Horrible Plot, and bloody Conspiracie  
OF

The Malignant party at EDMONDBURY in  
SUFFOLK, for the Murdering of Mr. LANCETER, and  
divers other eminent and well-affected Persons, for  
opening their Shops upon *Christmas-day*.

ALSO

The number of the Conspirators, and the  
manner how they were appeased, with the losse on both  
sides. Together with a Proclamation thereupon, and  
the apprehending of the chiefe Ring-leaders,  
and how they are to be tryed the next  
SESSIONS.

JANUARY, 4. 1647

*Printed and Published and to be present-  
ed to the Wel-affected Party, through-  
out each respective County within the  
Kingdome of England.*

LONDON, Printed for I. Johnson, 1647.

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OF THE  
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SESSIONS.

JANUARY, 4. 1647!

*Printed and Published, and to be present-  
ed to the Wel-affected Party, through-  
out each respective County within the  
Kingdome of England.*

*Jan 4* LONDON, Printed for J. Johnson, 1647. *1646*

Sir

The opportunity which I have embrased, and the good Tydings which I have to accompany it, hath moved me to set Pen to Paper, and to acquaint you with the horrid conspiracy and malicious Design of the Malignant Party at Edmondsby in Suffolk, against the People of God and the Members of Jesus Christ, who for their faithfulness and zeale to the Gospel of Christ, by endeavouring to maintain the purity of Religion, with the loss and hazard of both lives and fortunes, the inveterate malice and mischivous intentions of those ravening and devouring Spirits began to grow to some maturity, and to appear in a most vild and bloody shape; for these wicked Members of Sathan, and enemies to God and Religion, had so conspired together, against the people of God, that they were resolved to prosecute their Designe, in case that any of them should presume to open their shops on Christmas day, and to that end had prepared divers weapons for the executing of the same, the particulars, together with the manner of this Conspiracy, I shal here present to the view of all good Christians, as shall manifestly appear by these ensuing lines, Viz.

In Edmondsbury in Suffolk God hath delivered his people from a great and evill Designe, complotted by the Malignant Party in the Town, the manner this:

The Prentices, and divers rude deboyst Fellows of the number of a hundred and fifty, or thereabouts had listed themselves together and had gotten three Captains.

And this was their design, to get together at the Crosse (being the place appointed for to meet) on the 25 of this instant Moneth of December (commonly called Christmas Day. And their resolutions and determinations were, that whosoever should set open their Shops on the said day, they were resolved to pluck out the owners, and fire their houses, and kill them if they resisted, and pull out their goods, and lay waste and desolate those stately Buildings and Dwelling Houses which are the grace and ornament of the Town.

And the better to accomplish their Design, the Conspirators had provided great Clubs with great nailes crosse the end of each Club, every Naile weighing a pound.

But their mischievous Designs were discovered beforehand, by some Prentices, to whom the Mutineers came for their hands. And on the Wednesday some stirred about it and went to the Magistrates, and informed them thereof.

Whereupon to prevent the great danger that might thereby arise Divers of them having skil in the Law found it would bee upon themselves if they suffered such a thing to be therefore the day following they sent for divers of the conspirators, and laid the Law to them, and bound them over to the Sessions.

And on Christmas Day most of the chief Magistrates, and many Constables, and other Officers assembled together.

Afterwards there were about thirty or forty about Mr. Lanseters dore (in the place called Cook-row)<sup>64</sup> his shop being open.

And there proclamation was made, and in severall places more, that those which were not in their own houses within half an houre, should be imprisoned; and some were laid hold on, and frighted; so that there was only a little hurt done, two men being wounded beyond the horse-market towards the end of the Towne; for when the wel-affected Party began to assemble themselves together, for the appeasing of these tumultuous Villians, some of them made at them with their Clubs, and wounded these two, but it is hoped not mortal, though indeed (as yet) they seeme very dangerous, by reason of the deepness of the wounds, and the festering of them.

But after a short time, these viperous Rascals were appeased, and the streets cleansed on these Vermin; so that their bloody Designes were frustrated and mischievous and machavilian Plot discovered:

For the Great God of Heaven would not suffer his People to bee left as a prey unto the mercilesse Malignants teeth.

And it is to be minded, that above all, they aymed at Mr. Lanceter, who was not possessed with fear of them, but quietly waited upon the Lord, with the expectation of Deliverance from the hands of God, which he had, and was preserved; though he used no outward means to attain it himself. But this the Lord did to give his People more experience of his godness; and hee is able to do much more, for his hand is never shortened.

And therefore let all the Godly Saints, and praying People, according to the Direction of the Spirit of Christ,

<sup>64</sup> Now Abbeygate Street. It will be noted that this confirms Lanseter's contention that he was no pedler but a mercer owning his own shop.

from the consideration and experience of Gods former loving kindnesse, and preservations, rest upon him for future times.

Thus having given you and brief and exact Relation of the great and bloudie conspiracie complotted by the Malignant Party at Edmonby in Suffolke, I shall humbly take my leave, and remaine

*Your affectionate Servant,*

L.M.<sup>65</sup>

*Edmondsbury, Jan. 1. 1647.*

*This relation is confirmed by very good Hands, and at the request of many eminent, and wel-affected Persons printed, and presented to the publicke view of all the Free-born Subjects of England.*

#### LANSETER AND HIS FAMILY IN BURY

It will be convenient to conclude with a summary of what I have been able to discover about John Lanseter and his family from other sources. These give no information about the place or date of his birth; the fact that he was, as he told Edwards, the only man of his name in Bury suggests that he may have come to the town from elsewhere. The first Bury mention records his marriage on July 30th 1639 to a Mary Atkinson in St. James' Church.<sup>66</sup> On Oct. 25th 1640 his eldest son, John, was baptised there.<sup>67</sup> Two other children, who followed in quick succession, are not in the Baptismal Register, presumably because their father had by then separated himself from the established Church; if, as seems at least likely, the son was named Samuel after Samuel Chidley, this would indicate that Lanseter knew the Chidleys before they came to Bury. Perhaps he served his apprenticeship in London. The second child was a daughter, Mary. About 1650 Samuel was at the Bury Grammar School (in spite of its Royalist High Master!).<sup>68</sup>

Lanseter's sermon, so contemptuously handled by Edwards, must have been delivered early in 1646; there is no evidence that the Chidleys were in Bury before the summer of that year, though they may have been. If not, it seems possible that they were there

<sup>65</sup> These initials do not fit any of the known Bury Independents, unless perhaps they may stand for something like Lanseter, Mercer.

<sup>66</sup> *St. James' Parish Register, Marriages*, 35.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Baptisms, 122.

<sup>68</sup> *Bury St. Edmunds Grammar School List*, 225. The same list includes among *Foreigners* (i.e. scholars from outside the town) the name Chilœ. This may well be a corruption of Chidley, and if so this is further possible evidence for a close connection between Lanseter and the Chidleys, as there could be no other reason for them to send a relative to school at Bury.

on the invitation of Lanseter, who was clearly the leading spirit among the little group of Independents in Bury. On August 16th 1646 Lanseter and seven others<sup>69</sup> signed a Covenant setting up a gathered Church in Bury. Lanseter signed for his three children as well as for himself, and Samuel and Katharine Chidley signed as witnesses. Their statement says:

... we do therefore with our posterity, covenant to become a peculiar temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, an entire spouse of Jesus Christ our Lord of Glory, for the enjoyment of all his holy ordinances, according to his institutions, and so to walk in all his ways so far as he hath revealed unto us, or shall reveal hereafter.<sup>70</sup>

On the departure of the Chidleys, Lanseter, as we have seen, was left as Preacher to the little Church, but it evidently met with difficulties, for on Dec. 20th, 1648 a new, shorter and less flowery Covenant was made, indicating that the Church had lapsed and was now reformed. It was signed by ten persons, and of these, three—Lanseter, William Woods and John Thrower—had been among the original eight. Lanseter's was the first signature and the Covenant, which is in his writing, reads:

We whose names are here subscribed do resolve and engage by the help of the Spirit of God to walke in al the ways of God so far forth as he hath revealed or shall reveall them unto us by his word, and in all deuty of Love and watchfullness to other as become a Church of Christ.

Mrs. Lanseter was not among the original ten (nor had she been among the eight of 1646) but about fifteen months later she subscribed, making her mark, as did a fair proportion of the members.

We next hear of Lanseter in connection with the preparations for the Nominated (Barebone's) Parliament. His name appears with 51 others 'in the name and by the appointment of several of the Churches, and many of the well-affected from all parts of the County of Suffolk', as signatories of a letter of May 19th 1653, recommending as Members for the county Jacob Caley, James Harvey, Robert Duncombe, Edward Plumpstead, Francis Brewster

<sup>69</sup> Edwards had said that the Chidleys had gathered 'about seven' persons—an indication that his information was sometimes quite reliable, even in details. The eight names include three women, an unusual feature which we can certainly attribute to the influence of Katherine Chidley. The addition of children, six in all, signed for by parents, is also unusual.

<sup>70</sup> Some information about Lanseter and his Church is in John Browne, *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*. 394—5. But for much more I am indebted to Mr. J. Duncan, for whose generous and invaluable help I want to take this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks.

and John Clarke. Others who sign include George Stannard, Thomas Caley, John Burrow (Barrow?) and James Granery (Grundy?) whose names appear in one or other of the Covenants mentioned above.<sup>71</sup>

An undated letter, evidently written slightly later, is signed by John Lampeter (*sic*) and Henry Leach 'in the name and by the appointment of the Church at Bury, and the well-affected there, and the Franchise thereof.' There is evidently some feeling in Bury that the town is not sufficiently represented in the nominations made above, as they recommend, in addition to John Clarke, two leading Bury men, Samuel Moody and Thomas Chaplin.<sup>72</sup> All three of these were frequently chosen as Commissioners for Taxes and similar offices, but Moody and Chaplin did not secure places in the Parliament, the five Suffolk places going to the men recommended in the original letter, with the exception of James Harvey.<sup>73</sup>

The Church Book, from which the Covenants given above are taken, contains no more entries till the arrival of a regular Minister, Thomas Taylor, about the beginning of 1653. (He was not formally ordained till 1655). Entries are then in his writing and tell an interesting story:

Anno Dom̄i

1653 William Woods sometimes a member of this Church and one of the foundation was delivered over into the hands of Sathan and cut off from the body in the name and by the power of the Lord Jesus for the sin of theft about the 10th day of the 2nd month commonly called Aprill in the year of Grace 1653.

Anno dom̄i

1654 John Lanseter a member of this Church one of the foundation, for divers yeares an usefull instrument for the good of the Church, afterwards falling into the heinous and beastly sins of drunkenness and uncleanness was at length with greate sorrow and lamentation when the whole Church was met together, delivered over into the hands of Sathan and cut off from the body about the 6th day of the fifth month commonly called July in the yeare of Grace 1654.

<sup>71</sup> John Nickolls, *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, 1743, 94.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>73</sup> S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii, 239. Gardiner prints a list in which Brewster and Clarke are described as 'Moderate' and Caley, Duncombe and Plumpstead as 'Advanced'.

Anno dom̄i

1655 John Thrower an unprofitable troublesome and unsavoury member of this Church, being one of the foundation, was at length after the exercise of much forbearance, for the sins of railing, tippling, living perversely and frowardly with his wife, and for despising the Church's admonition, deservedly cast out and cut off from this body and delivered over into the hands of Sathan in the name and by the power of the Lord Jesus when the Church was met together in the 4th month commonly called June, in the yeare of Grace 1655.

Thus, within quite a short time from the arrival of the new Minister every one of the original members of the Church had been expelled on grounds of moral turpitude. It is perfectly possible that Taylor's version is correct, and that the expulsions were solely for the reasons stated, yet the coincidence is considerable and one would give a good deal to have Lanseter's side of the matter. Though expelled he evidently maintained his Independent principles, for his name appears among a number of others presented by the Grand Jury at the Bury Quarter Sessions in January 1675 'for absenting themselves from divine service for three Sundays past, contrary to the Statute'. Mary Lanseter remained a member, subscribing to the Confession of Faith in the Church Book on Jan. 1st 1655, where she is said to be 'clear on all but that of infant baptism'.<sup>74</sup>

Nothing more is heard of Lanseter's eldest son, John, in Bury, but I think he must be the John Lanster who has a house with two hearths in the parish of St. Mary Tower, Ipswich in 1674. At the same date John Lancaster has a house with six hearths in St. Mary's Parish, Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>75</sup> He continued in business there with his son Samuel and a farthing token issued by *John Lanseter in Cook Row in Bury* is recorded by Golding.<sup>76</sup> In 1677 Samuel married Sarah Stannard,<sup>77</sup> and in 1689 Lanseter died. St. Mary's Register records the burial of 'John Lansetter, milliner' on March 10th.

<sup>74</sup> That is to say that like many early Independents she held some Anabaptist views. It is tempting to suppose that Mrs. Lanseter had been one of that 'great sort of people' who listened to Clarkson preaching Anabaptism from his prison window on the Angel Hill in 1645. This would be almost within earshot of her house in Cook Row. *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxvi, 170.

<sup>75</sup> *Hearth Tax Returns*, 171, 56.

<sup>76</sup> *The Coinage of Suffolk*, 36. The token is now at Moyses Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

<sup>77</sup> *St. Mary's Church Marriages, Bury Post*, 7/11/30.

Samuel and Sarah had five children, of whom only the second, also called Samuel, survived beyond infancy.<sup>78</sup> Samuel Lanseter senior prospered and joined the established Church, being a Churchwarden at St. James' in 1707. He died, according to an inscription in that Church, on Sept. 11th, 1731 at the age of 88. Samuel Lanseter junior died, unmarried so far as I can discover, in 1756 at the age of 75,<sup>79</sup> and with his death the family came to an end, at least in Bury. The Church which John helped to found has had a continuous life from 1648 and remains as the Congregational Church in Whiting Street.

<sup>78</sup> *St. James' Parish Registers, Baptisms*, 196, 198, 202, 207, 211; *Burials*, 161, 164, 173.

<sup>79</sup> Rev. Francis Haselwood, *Monumental Inscriptions at Bury St. Edmunds*, 13.