i Women'. In Margaret W. Fer-
Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers
the Renaissance: The Discourse of
in Early Modern Europe (pp.
o: University of Chicago Press.
985). *Rhetoric, Prudence, and
Renaissance.* Cornell: Cornell

(1976). 'Did Women Have
In Renate Bridenthal and
eds), *Becoming Visible: Women
'ory* (pp. 139–64). Boston:
l.

965). *English Humanists and
under Henry VIII and Edward*
d University Press.
Ramus, Rhetoric, and the Decay
idge, MA: Harvard Univer-

(1975). *The Machiavellian
Political Thought at the
n Tradition.* Princeton:
y Press.
'88). *Renaissance Humanism:
nd Legacy, Vol 2: Humanism*
ladelphia: University of

*Close Readers: Humanism
Modern England.* Princeton:
Press.
). *Humanism in England
entury.* Oxford: Blackwell.

3

English Reformations

Patrick Collinson

I

The pluralization of 'Reformation', a departure from the traditional concept of '*the*
English Reformation', a major watershed in national history, is a recent historio-
graphical development, as in a survey by Christopher Haigh which insists that the
Reformation must be 'broken up, or deconstructed'.[1] His 'English Reformations'
implies that the process of Protestantization occurred in irregular and inconsistent
stages and was not coincident with a state reformation consisting of piecemeal mea-
sures to reconstruct the church institutionally and constitutionally; and that both the
official restoration of Catholicism under Mary I (1553–8) and unofficial efforts to
sustain and reinvent English Catholicism in the ensuing reigns of Elizabeth I and
her Stuart successors were episodes and movements which also deserve to be called
'reformations' in their own right. Replacement of the term 'Marian Reaction' by
'Marian Reformation' is equally indicative of a shift in historical perspective away
from the Protestant, or 'Whig', assumption that the old religion was a doomed cause,
with England almost predestined to assume its modern greatness in the world as a
Protestant nation. But it is important that revisionism should not be taken too far.
The English Reformation, in the traditional sense, did happen. One of the most
Catholic countries in western Europe did become, within a hundred years, if not one
of the most Protestant nations, culturally and politically profoundly anti-Catholic, an
alteration of global significance.

All this is reflected in the religious literature of this age of reformations. The first
point to be established is that there was a lot of it. 'Religious books' is almost an
anachronism, a category hard to define exactly or to measure with statistical preci-
sion, for religious and moral values and intentions pervaded a great many literary
genres, just as 'religion' itself was not a discrete phenomenon but something which
permeated virtually all areas of early modern culture. Politics in particular was insepa-
rable from religion. When a lawyer called John Stubbes wrote a bold and even sedi-

tious book attacking the proposed marriage between Queen Elizabeth I and the Duke of Anjou it was obvious that the author was motivated by his ardent Protestantism. It would be not so much political folly as 'a sin, a great and mighty sin', 'to couple a Christian lady, a member of Christ, to a prince and good son of Rome, that anti-Christian mother city'.[2] Even the cheap broadsheets and pamphlets conveying 'true' reports of the latest hideous murder or monstrous birth claimed a religious motivation. But taking a more conventional view of what constituted a religious book, it appears that religion was the great staple of the sixteenth-century book trade, making up roughly half its total output.[3] Much of this huge output, for example some hundreds of different catechisms and other didactic works, lie beyond the scope of this literary and cultural survey.[4]

Protestantism, it has been assumed, was a religion of the book, its devotees people of the book in a sense that Catholicism never was. Martin Luther called printing 'God's ultimate and greatest gift', through which He would instruct 'the whole world' in 'the roots of true religion', and the English martyrologist John Foxe said similar things. 'God hath opened the press to preach, whose mouth the Pope is never able to stop with all the puissance of his triple crown.'[5]

There was much in this. Pre-Reformation Catholicism was a religion of orality and visuality, polemically caricatured by Protestants as a contrivance to keep the people in a state of ignorance, 'the mother of devotion'. If the English Reformation was nothing else, it was a massive onslaught on the concrete apparatus of that kind of religion, an iconoclastic holocaust of imagery.[6] Luther's principle of *sola scriptura*, the Bible replacing the church as the only authority for doctrine and for life, put a premium on the printed word, to the extent that more radical reformers would regularly accuse the Protestants of having made a 'paper pope'. In Germany, if print made Protestantism possible, Protestantism made the fortune of many printers, a benign symbiosis.

If we want to explain how it was that in England Protestantism took firm root in the sixteenth century, whereas the Wycliffite heresy of the fourteenth century, the religion of the so-called Lollards, had proved a premature and abortive reformation, it may be sufficient to point to the mass production of printed New Testaments in English within ten years of the first copy coming off the press in Worms in 1526. For these were not religiously neutral publications. Efforts to suppress William Tyndale's Testament, smuggled into England and sold at about three shillings a copy, were futile. When the authorities bought up copies in order to burn them, good money was thrown after bad, to pay for more. In a liberal age we say that if you can't beat them you must join them. But two generations would pass before English Catholics would overcome their resistance to the principle of scripture in the vernacular to the extent of printing their own New Testament (Rheims, 1582), hedged about with health warnings.

But some revisionary adjustment to this conventional scenario is called for. On the one hand, Protestantism as propaganda, polemic and evangelism was by no means limited to the printed page. Oral communication in the form of the sermon (admit-

Elizabeth I and the Duke
iis ardent Protestantism.
1 mighty sin', 'to couple
son of Rome, that anti-
nphlets conveying 'true'
med a religious motiva-
ited a religious book, it
tury book trade, making
for example some hun-
)eyond the scope of this

ook, its devotees people
er called printing 'God's
ct 'the whole world' in
John Foxe said similar
he Pope is never able to

a religion of orality and
nce to keep the people
glish Reformation was
.tus of that kind of reli-
le of *sola scriptura*, the
ne and for life, put a
reformers would regu-
3ermany, if print made
any printers, a benign

tism took firm root in
eenth century, the reli-
)ortive reformation, it
1 New Testaments in
1 Worms in 1526. For
·ess William Tyndale's
;hillings a copy, were
·n them, good money
that if you can't beat
ore English Catholics
the vernacular to the
, hedged about with

) is called for. On the
;m was by no means
f the sermon (admit-

tedly a Bible-based sermon) was primary. Many Protestants even insisted that it was *only* through hearing the Word preached, not through 'bare reading', that saving faith could be obtained, for St Paul had decreed: 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Romans 10:17). The 2,300 sermons which John Calvin is known to have preached in Geneva were not intended for publication, and some of the most celebrated of the English preachers of the age never appeared in print. Nor was the sermon the only medium through which the Protestant message was communicated, especially to the illiterate majority. Psalms and so-called 'scripture songs' (often songs of anti-Catholic protest), pictures, stage plays and street demonstrations were all exploited. Some of these 'popular' media were more typical of the culture of Lutheran Germany than of the kind of Protestantism which came to prevail in late sixteenth-century England, but metrical psalm-singing endured as a powerful and popular religious affirmation.[7]

On the other hand, Catholicism proved that it too could be a religion of the book. This was not new. Long before Luther and Foxe, churchmen had recognized the value of print, and the press had been used on a large scale for all kinds of religious purposes, including the production of indulgences, lists of relics and reports of miracles at shrines of pilgrimage, but also the encouragement of lay devotion. This was an established tradition which the Reformation could be said to have hijacked. In England, the Bridgetin monk Richard Whitford was the first popular spiritual writer to exploit the medium of print, in *A Work for Householders* and other handbooks of practical divinity published in the 1530s.

With the political entrenchment of Protestantism, printed books for English Catholics became a simple necessity. Protestantism as the state religion enjoyed all the resources of an established and relatively well-endowed church, including its pulpits, whereas Catholicism was a proscribed and clandestine faith, its human agents thin on the ground and living under cover. To a considerable extent, books took their place. Secret presses operated in England, and large quantities of printed books were smuggled into the country from abroad, including an English version of the little book by St Charles Borromeo called *The Last Will of the Soul*, to which Shakespeare's father put his name before concealing it in the roof of his house in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon.[8] This was an enterprise on a larger and more highly organized scale than the better publicized activities of dissident Protestants. A catalogue of Catholic imprints between 1558 and 1640 lists 932 items in English and no fewer than 1,619 in other languages.[9]

II

We may locate the spirit of all Protestant literature in the principle which Janel Mueller has called 'scripturalism'.[10] And we may further define scripturalism as a religious and literary aesthetic of the plain, literal and open sense; but also, almost conversely, as a bottomless well of metaphor and allegory on which the entire range of

human emotion and experience could draw. John Donne wrote: 'There are not so elo-
quent books in the world as the Scriptures.' Barbara Lewalski provides examples from
seventeenth-century religious poetry of some of the Bible's 'richly tentacular tropes':
sin as sickness, Christ as physician; sin as darkness or blindness, Christ as light; human
life as warfare, pilgrimage, childlikeness; the tropes of sheep and shepherding; of the
husbandry of seed, plant, figure tree, vine; the metaphors of marriage, the body, the
temple, the heart.[11]

The beginnings of the scripturalist imperative are to be found in the activities of
the translators of the fourteenth-century Wycliffite Bible. Nicholas Purvey (in about
1395) declared his purpose 'to make the sentence as true and open in English as it is
in Latin, either [or rather] more true and more open than it is in Latin.'[12] The claim
which Mueller makes on Purvey's behalf is audacious: that the preference for an 'open',
sense-determined version of the Bible was almost the same thing as an instinct for
a natural, truly vernacular English as the proper mode for written as well as oral
expression. There was to be a long unfulfilled appetite for religion to be enjoyed and
expressed in these accessible terms, since in England (and the situation was not the
same in Germany and the Low Countries) the association of translated scripture with
heresy held back the publication of a vernacular Bible long after the invention of
printing, until the advent of Tyndale.

Tyndale was the fulfilment of what Purvey had promised, a man heaven-bent to
make the Bible freely available to lay readers and hearers, driven by the urgent and
Protestant conviction that the Bible contained what he called 'the pith of all that per-
tains to the Christian faith', which was faith itself, 'a living thing, mighty in working,
valiant and strong, ever doing, ever fruitful'.[13] Sir Thomas More took exception to his
tendentious translation of certain key scriptural terms ('all these Christian words',
which, as someone else complained, were lost in his translation): 'congregation' rather
than 'church' for *ecclesia*, *presbyteros* no longer 'priest' but 'elder', *metanoia* not 'do
penance' but 'repent'. To suggest 'that all England should go to school with Tyndale
to learn English is a very frantic folly'.[14]

More chose to miss the point that Tyndale had himself gone to school with all
England to learn the language of his translation, which is essentially the language
which we use today. How it was that a native of the remote hill country of the Forest
of Dean, where presumably an impenetrable dialect was spoken, should have discov-
ered our language will always remain a mystery.[15] But it is relevant that Tyndale was
a precocious classical philologist, not only an expert Grecian but learned enough in
Hebrew to be able to detect the Hebrew implied in New Testament Greek; and that
he was convinced, at least at first, of the perfect affinity of both Hebrew and Greek
with English. 'The manner of speaking is both one. So that in a thousand places thou
needest not but to translate it into English, word for word.' (Later, as he grappled
with the Old Testament, much of it almost untranslatable, Tyndale was not so sure.)
For the typical word order of the original biblical languages was a significant source
for what would become standard English syntax.[16]

wrote: 'There are not so elo-
ski provides examples from
's 'richly tentacular tropes':
ness, Christ as light; human
ep and shepherding; of the
of marriage, the body, the

found in the activities of
Nicholas Purvey (in about
nd open in English as it is
it is in Latin.'[12] The claim
he preference for an 'open',
e thing as an instinct for
or written as well as oral
eligion to be enjoyed and
the situation was not the
translated scripture with
ig after the invention of

d, a man heaven-bent to
riven by the urgent and
'the pith of all that per-
ing, mighty in working,
ore took exception to his
these Christian words',
n): 'congregation' rather
elder', *metanoia* not 'do
to school with Tyndale

one to school with all
ssentially the language
ll country of the Forest
n, should have discov-
evant that Tyndale was
but learned enough in
ıment Greek; and that
th Hebrew and Greek
ı thousand places thou
(Later, as he grappled
idale was not so sure.)
ıs a significant source

Tyndale's one-eyed resolve to put the Bible into the hands of the people had huge historical importance. Whereas Erasmus of Rotterdam had said 'would that' (*utinam*) the farmer at the plough and the weaver at his loom should know the New Testament (and had said it in Latin, in the Preface to an edition in Latin and Greek), Tyndale boasted (his famous 'vaunt') that he would cause the ploughboy to know scripture better than the ignorant clergy.[17] But as an exile from Henry VIII's England, about to be kidnapped, imprisoned and executed, he had conveyed to his king the message that if he would only make the Bible available to his subjects, printed in their own language, he would be content 'never to write more', as it were to cease to exist.[18] This is what happened. Tyndale's name was all but forgotten, but 80 or 90 per cent of the words in versions of the English Bible for a hundred years were his, for the New Testament and those parts of the Old Testament which he was given time to translate. It was Tyndale who gave us 'the burden and heat of the day', 'filthy lucre', 'God forbid', 'the salt of the earth', 'the powers that be'. Tyndale's English is actually more English, more demotic, than the so-called Authorized Version of 1611, where a committee has smoothed over many rough edges to produce something safer and more ecclesiastical: once again 'charity' in 1 Corinthians 13, rather than Tyndale's 'love'.

As for the effect on English civilization of the direct exposure to scripturalism which Tyndale made possible, it is sufficient to quote from the official Homily of the Reformed Church of England, 'On the Scripture': the reader who will profit the most is the one who is 'turned into it, that is . . . in his heart and life altered and changed into that which he readeth'.

Tyndale was also the inaugurator of the torrents of religious polemic which were to accompany every stage of the English Reformations. His most notable controversial work was *The obedience of a Christian man and how Christian Rulers ought to Govern* (1528). The full title is of some importance. Henry VIII, reading perhaps only the first half of the book, duly noted the assertion that the prince is in this world without law and may 'at his lust' do as he pleases without correction. This, said Henry, was a book for all Christian princes to read, an ideological cornerstone, we might say, for royal supremacy. But if the king had read on he would have found Tyndale instructing him, publicly and in print, in what rulers ought to do, and this pointed forward to the critique of monarchy which would be mounted by religious writers from both sides of the Reformation debate, whenever they disagreed with official policy. Christopher Goodman's home thoughts from abroad, *How Superior Powers ought to be Obeyed of their Subjects* (Geneva, 1558), written against the Marian regime, seems to have a 'not' missing from its title.

The first major battle of the books of the English Reformation pitted Tyndale against Sir Thomas More. More opened fire in *A Dialogue concerning Heresies, or Dialogue against Luther and Tyndale* (1529), a modest 175,000 words; to which Tyndale responded in the mere 80,000 words of his *Answer unto Sir Thomas More* (1531), which provoked the interminable *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532), weighing in at half

a million words.[19] Both men were outstanding English stylists, and what was at stake was the right language in which to express the religion of the English people as much as the theological rights and wrongs of the matters in dispute. More began gracefully, deploying the rhetorical art of *concessio* by telling scandalous and even dirty stories about ecclesiastical abuses to show that he was not unaware of the need for religious reform. Tyndale, who was not amused, defended his corner with the plain dignity which was his trademark. But in the *Confutation* More lost it, at least to the satisfaction of Janel Mueller, who writes that his efforts to domesticate an authoritative Latinate manner of expression in English was a failure. He was now resorting to intimidation rather than persuasion.

> It is hard to avoid the conclusion that More deliberately resigns to Tyndale and the Protestants generally the exercise of native resources for prose composition. He is conceding that the open, vernacular style is a suitable mode for undermining the authority of the Church, not for defending it.[20]

Presently this would apply equally to the prose styles deployed by Puritans in their attacks on the church, when the established church was Protestant, and by their opponents. Authority tended to rely upon authority rather than on the cut and thrust of vernacular argument; although it has to be said that, towards the end of the century, the decorous polemic of Richard Hooker made a huge difference in this respect.[21]

The adoption of a plain English vernacular as the appropriate medium for religious expression, even in the very words with which Almighty God was to be addressed in worship, was powerfully reinforced by the *Book of Common Prayer*, a text as inexorably linked with the name of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer as the Bible was with Tyndale. Cranmer's Prayer Book, in the first version of 1549 and even in the more radically reformed recension of 1552, was not an original composition but a skilful reworking of an inherited liturgical tradition, leaving a deep and permanent mark on English religious experience in the slender economy of the short prayers known as 'collects': 'Lighten our darkness we beseech thee, Oh Lord, and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night.' But Cranmer combined, uniquely, the instincts of a liturgist with the Tyndale-like conviction that everything said and done in worship should be 'understanded of the people', who were also given a significant participatory role in the 'responses' which punctuated the two new and standard services of Morning and Evening Prayer. The minister was to face the congregation and to read 'distinctly, with a loud voice, that the people may hear'. When parts of the service were sung, a 'plain tune' was to be used, 'after the manner of distinct reading'. However, Cranmer thought it appropriate that for such solemn purposes plain English should be weighed down with 'doublings', which for the purpose of sense were strictly redundant, such as 'devices and desires', 'sins and wickednesses', 'all good counsels and all just works'.[22]

The demotic inclusiveness of these new services was compromised, at least in the perception of a more liberal age, by their uncompromisingly compulsory nature. Uni-

ylists, and what was at stake
the English people as much
ute. More began gracefully,
ilous and even dirty stories
are of the need for religious
ner with the plain dignity
it it, at least to the satisfac-
mesticate an authoritative
le was now resorting to in-

esigns to Tyndale and the
e composition. He is con-
undermining the author-

loyed by Puritans in their
testant, and by their oppo-
n on the cut and thrust of
ds the end of the century,
erence in this respect.[21]
riate medium for religious
od was to be addressed in
rayer, a text as inexorably
e Bible was with Tyndale.
ven in the more radically
n but a skilful reworking
manent mark on English
ayers known as 'collects':
ly great mercy defend us
combined, uniquely, the
everything said and done
e also given a significant
vo new and standard ser-
ice the congregation and
near'. When parts of the
nner of distinct reading'.
n purposes plain English
ose of sense were strictly
sses', 'all good counsels

promised, at least in the
ompulsory nature. Uni-

formity was the name of the game, and successive parliamentary acts of uniformity (the last of these, in 1559, achieving virtual perpetuity) both required the regular attendance of the entire population and made illegal even the slightest departure from the text of the Prayer Book and its 'rubrics' (or stage directions). For centuries to come it would be possible to check one's watch at 11.08 on a Sunday morning, and to be certain that at that moment everyone in the land was intoning the psalm known as the *Venite*.

Bible and Prayer Book were the foundations for the Protestant 'plain style' which, as Nicholas Udall explained, was preferable to 'elegancy of speech', out of 'a special regard to be had to the rude and unlettered people'. But 'plain' is deceptive. Udall also insisted that if divinity 'loveth no cloaking' it did not necessarily 'refuse eloquence'. Roger Ascham repeated an Aristotelian dictum: 'speak as the common people do', 'think as wise men do'. Some of the best examples of the Protestant plain style will be found in the sermons of Bishop Hugh Latimer, full of homely imagery, loose and anecdotal in structure, and printed in the 'black letter' preferred by relatively illiterate readers: which in the very appearance of the thing was to put a populist spin on the content. The Word of God was not strawberries 'that come but once a year, and tarry not long but are soon gone.' It was 'meat, . . . no dainties'. Lurking in the arras, as it were, was the living ghost of *Piers Plowman*, who was accorded honorary Protestant status and printed for the first time in 1550 by the evangelical publicist Robert Crowley. And *Piers Plowman* was behind Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*.[23]

III

Soon the history of the events we call the Reformation became in itself a major bone of contention, with each side presenting its own version of the story in the context of two radically different understandings of the nature and destiny of the church. The Protestants got in first, with a potent mixture of martyrology and the apocalyptic vision of the meaning of time and its end which we find in the mind-blowing imagery of the last book of the Bible. A former Carmelite monk, John Bale, led the way in the exploration of these genres. *The Image of both Churches, after the Revelation of Saint John* (1545?) created for English Protestants a radically dualistic ecclesiology, Christ against Antichrist, True Church in historic contention with False Church, ostensibly almighty but destined to fall. 'Babylon is fallen, that great city' – which, of course, was Rome. And Bale's edited accounts of the trials and execution of Anne Askew, a Lincolnshire gentlewoman burned at the stake in the dying days of Henry VIII's regime, was the overture to a whole opera of English martyrology. The witty, incorrigible Askew was presented as the author of her own testament, but the second of these books, *The Latter Examination of Anne Askew* acknowledged *The Elucidation of J. Bale* (1547). Askew's sex was significant, and not only to modern feminists and historians of 'gender'. Bale's 'elucidation' identified her with the second-century

martyr Blandina, a type of the church itself, the spouse of Christ, an apocalyptic image.[24]

Bale's lead was followed by his friend John Foxe in one of the most stupendous literary achievements of the age, *Acts and Monuments or The Ecclesiastical History*, known to generations of readers as 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs', a book which grew through four successive editions published in Foxe's lifetime (1563, 1570, 1576, 1583) into a vast but skilfully constructed compilation of some millions of words.[25] It is significant that an Exeter worthy of the early seventeenth century whose daily spiritual diet was a chapter of the Bible and a chunk of Foxe had, after some years, read the Bible twenty times over, but Foxe, which was altogether more demanding, a mere seven times.[26] Foxe's engraved title page turned into virtual reality Bale's 'image of both churches', an adaptation of the medieval doom painting, with Christ in glory. On his left hand, devils, with the shaven tonsures of Catholic ecclesiastics, are cast down to hell; on his right, the martyrs, tied to their stakes but wearing crowns, are praising him with trumpets. On earth, the Catholics are depicted in their fond religious exertions; while the godly Protestants sit quietly with open Bibles under a pulpit occupied by a grave and bearded divine. Through apocalyptic spectacles, this was the scenario spelt out through the entire history of the church, but thickening in texture and detail as the chronology approached the events of Foxe's own time and that of his readers. Foxe was a scrupulous historian and editor, faithfully reproducing his sources, whether the contents of a bishop's register or the eye-witness account of the burning of Ridley and Latimer at Oxford. But this was also history as propaganda, with much inconvenient evidence airbrushed out of sight, and stunning woodcuts deployed to dramatize events in themselves sufficiently dramatic.

Large assumptions have been made about Foxe's impact. He is justifiably regarded as a major progenitor of the virulent Anti-Catholicism which was the most powerful political ideology of the seventeenth and even the eighteenth centuries, fuelling a sense of xenophobic exceptionalism. If it was never Foxe's intention to elevate England to the rank of a uniquely favoured, elect nation, he cannot be held responsible for the effect of his book on generations of readers. However, the serious, unprejudiced, study of the reception of Foxe has only just begun. On the one hand, it can be demonstrated that such a large and expensive book, with restricted print runs in all its editions, cannot have been as widely promulgated as it has been conventional to suggest. But on the other the 'Book of Martyrs' generated many 'little foxes', slim, ephemeral, debased but culturally significant bastard sons of the majestic original.[27]

Catholic historical polemicists were not slow to catch up. Already, before Foxe, the reign of Mary had seen the construction of a version of recent events interpreted in terms of disorder, corruption and social upheaval, with their roots in Henry VIII's carnal lust for Anne Boleyn. For heresy itself was a false harlot. An anonymous *Life of John Fisher*, the bishop whom Henry had executed, exploited to the full the imagery of filthy carnality. Henry VIII 'in ripping the bowels of his mother, the holy Church and very spouse of Christ upon earth', had torn her in pieces, monstrously taking it upon him to be her supreme head. It was fitting that when his own body accidentally

of Christ, an apocalyptic

the most stupendous lit-
·lesiastical History, known
which grew through four
, 1576, 1583) into a vast
·ds.[25] It is significant that
aily spiritual diet was a
·s, read the Bible twenty
g, a mere seven times.[26]
·mage of both churches',
glory. On his left hand,
:ast down to hell; on his
, are praising him with
:ligious exertions; while
lpit occupied by a grave.
s the scenario spelt out
exture and detail as the
hat of his readers. Foxe
·iis sources, whether the
: burning of Ridley and
·ith much inconvenient
·yed to dramatize events

e is justifiably regarded
was the most powerful
·h centuries, fuelling a
tion to elevate England
·ield responsible for the
·is, unprejudiced, study
it can be demonstrated
·uns in all its editions,
·itional to suggest. But
·xes', slim, ephemeral,
original.[27]
ready, before Foxe, the
· events interpreted in
roots in Henry VIII's
·t. An anonymous *Life*
:o the full the imagery
·ther, the holy Church
monstrously taking it
·iwn body accidentally

fell to the floor while being prepared for burial, there issued forth 'such a quantity of horrible and stinking filthy blood and matter'. Another writer exclaimed: 'What a restless evil heresy is!' It was common ground for both Catholic and Protestant historical polemicists to smother their opponents in more than metaphorical ordure and to credit them with gross physical deformities, while the very language they were made to utter was suggestive of radical disorder.[28]

John Foxe did not have to wait long to be answered by Catholic controversialists, and at appropriate length. Nicholas Harpsfield, who in Mary's reign had played an active role in the making of Foxe's martyrs, led the way in attacking *'Joannis Foxi mendacia'* in his *Dialogi sex contra . . . oppugnatores et pseudomartyres* (Antwerp, 1566), a work of formidable scholarship which might be better known if it had not remained untranslated, followed a generation later by the Jesuit Robert Persons's *Treatise of three conversions of England* (1603–4). The aim of all this industry was to prove Foxe a liar. Persons claimed to have found no less than 120 lies in less than three pages. While the 'Book of Martyrs' was officially and conventionally regarded as virtually infallible, 'a book of credit' second in status only to the Bible itself, its author was sensitive and responsive to this criticism, often correcting his mistakes, to the extent that his detractors may be counted paradoxically among his collaborators.[29] But some of the most telling criticism was of a more subtle order. In the Preface to his translation of the Venerable Bede, *The History of the Church of England* (1565), the learned Thomas Stapleton asked why Foxe should take such exception to the legends of Catholic miracles, since his own martyr stories were full of miraculous and improbable happenings. Some modern commentators on Foxe, who have exaggerated the extent to which his work was part of the 'disenchantment of the world', would do well to pay attention to Stapleton, for Foxe's Protestant world was very much a world of wonders.[30]

IV

Meanwhile, the first decade of Elizabeth's reign had witnessed what has been called 'The Great Controversy' between more or less official spokesmen for the church of the Elizabethan Settlement, and especially John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, and some leading Catholics who, like the Protestant cadres in the reign of Mary, had now departed into continental exile.[31] In a sermon preached from the national pulpit of Paul's Cross on 29 November 1559, Jewel appealed to history, turning on its head the familiar Catholic taunt: where was your church before Luther? He challenged the Catholics to demonstrate that four principal articles of their belief and practice had been known in the first six Christian centuries: communion in one kind, prayers in a language unknown to the people, the papacy and transubstantiation. If they could prove their credentials on these terms, he undertook to 'give over'. Thomas Harding, whose career, until they had divided confessionally, had curiously shadowed Jewel's own, responded in an *Answer to Master Jewel's Challenge* (Antwerp, 1564), which met with *A Reply* from Jewel (1565), duly provoking Hardings's *A Rejoinder to Master*

Jewel's Reply (1566). As if this were not enough, a parallel debate between the same authors was set in motion by Jewel's all but official *Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae* (1562), which the mother of Francis Bacon translated into impeccable English. Harding published a *Confutation* of the *Apology*, to which Jewel responded. No fewer than sixty-four distinct books were perpetrated in the course of this controversy. Their literary merits, consisting to a modern eye of a depressing mixture of scholastic tedium and vulgar abuse, is conveyed in Harding's denunciation of Jewel for his 'impudency in lying', 'his continual scoffing', 'his immoderate bragging'; and in Jewel's more icy plea: 'If ye shall happen to write hereafter, send us fewer words and more learning.'[32]

This was only the beginning. The confutation of Catholicism became a major industry in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, the life work of such university men as John Rainolds in Oxford and William Fulke and William Whitacre in Cambridge, and, eventually, it was institutionalized, not very successfully, in a College of Controversy at Chelsea. Andrew Willett's *Synopsis papismi* (1592) addressed itself to 'three hundreds of popish errors'. These became 400 in the second edition (1594) and 500 in the third (1600). Peter Milward in his *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age* (1978) lists 764 titles. Of these no fewer than 526 were engagements across the Catholic–Protestant divide.

Even these figures conceal the full extent of the Catholic polemical input, since many ostensibly devotional works had a hidden, controversial purpose.[33] And the Catholic exiles, especially the brilliant publicist Richard Verstegan, living on a generous Spanish pension in Antwerp, produced their own martyrologies, with illustrations which surpassed Foxe's woodcuts in making visual what Verstegan called the *Theatrum crudelitatum*, a book published in Latin and French, for the European Counter-Reformation. After all, death by hanging, drawing and quartering, the fate of Catholic clergy and their supporters convicted of treason under the Elizabethan penal laws, provided opportunities even more voyeuristic and pornographic than incineration.

Meanwhile, what one Elizabethan called 'civil wars of the Church of God'[34] were productive of parallel controversies between critics of a Protestant Settlement condemned as both deficient and defective – people who were beginning to be labelled 'Puritans' – and its defenders, the bishops and their subalterns. The opening salvoes contested what on the surface appeared to be trivial matters, such as the costume prescribed for the clergy in their ministrations, a white linen surplice, and the head covering for outdoors known to later generations as a mortar board. Hence what church historians call, awkwardly, 'the Vestiarian Controversy'.[35] But not only were these items of attire, which no one supposed to have any doctrinal significance, symbols of the old order, signifiers of a 'popish' priesthood, but their compulsory retention was intended to blur the distinction between sheep and goats in a church which one contemporary defined as 'a constrained union of protestants and papists'.[36] A number of obstreperous London 'gospellers', veterans of the underground congregation which

debate between the same
ecclesiae anglicanae (1562),
:ccable English. Harding
:sponded. No fewer than
)f this controversy. Their
ng mixture of scholastic
iciation of Jewel for his
lerate bragging'; and in
send us fewer words and

olicism became a major
< of such university men
Whitacre in Cambridge,
ly, in a College of Con-
addressed itself to 'three
edition (1594) and 500
rsies of the Jacobean Age
:ngagements across the

polemical input, since
ial purpose.[33] And the
tegan, living on a gen-
'rologies, with illustra-
it Verstegan called the
ich, for the European
nd quartering, the fate
under the Elizabethan
nd pornographic than

:hurch of God'[34] were
stant Settlement con-
3inning to be labelled
. The opening salvoes
:h as the costume pre-
ice, and the head cov-
l. Hence what church
not only were these
:nificance, symbols of
)ulsory retention was
iurch which one con-
)ists'.[36] A number of
congregation which

had functioned in Mary's reign and now reluctant to remain in parish churches where something looking like the mass was still celebrated, assured their judges in 1567 that there was still 'a great company of papists' in the city 'whom you do allow to be preachers and ministers'. As for surplices and caps, 'it belongeth to the papists, therefore throw it to them'.[37]

The year 1566 saw what we may call the first printed Puritan manifesto, *A brief Discourse against the Outward Apparel of the Popish Church*, to which a conformist, who may have been none other than Archbishop Matthew Parker, promptly responded in *A Brief Examination for the Time*. The manifesto was the work of the printer preacher Robert Crowley, editor of *Piers Plowman*, but assisted, or so it was said, by 'the whole multitude of London ministers', evidence of how far Puritanism was already a movement, with a sense of being a 'church within the Church', a voice of its own, and a programme.[38]

However, the next major manifesto, which announced an escalation of the programme, spoke for a more extreme, and younger element, from which some of the original nonconformists were careful to distance themselves. This proclaimed itself *An Admonition to the Parliament*, although the title was a thin cover for what was in reality a populist appeal to the public at large. The authors were two young London preachers, Thomas Wilcox and John Field, who in his letters to one of the veterans of nonconformity, Anthony Gilby, complained that his seniors had limited their concern to 'shells and chippings of popery', neglecting matters which were fundamental. These were the Prayer Book, not merely in a rubric or a ceremony here and there but in something like its structural entirety, 'an unperfect book, culled and picked out of that popish dunghill the mass-book, full of all abominations'; and the retention of an episcopal and essentially popish hierarchy with all its attendant offices, institutions and laws. To apply a word not yet invented, these were some of the first Presbyterians. In his portion of the pamphlet, Wilcox declared, soberly, that England was so far from having a church rightly reformed, 'according to the prescript of God's word' that as yet it had not come 'to the outward face of the same'. (As an afterthought 'not' was prudently altered to 'scarce', a better indication of the marker which Puritans, who were not Separatists, put on the Elizabethan church. 'Scarce' kept them inside the tent, if only just.)

Field's contribution, a 'View of popish abuses yet remaining in the English Church' was more witty and vituperative, a landmark in the history of English satire. Caricaturing Sunday worship in the Church of the Elizabethan Settlement, he wrote that 'they toss the Psalms in most places like tennis-balls', 'the people some standing, some walking, some talking, some reading, some praying by themselves'. When Jesus was named, 'then off goeth the cap and down goeth the knees, with such a scraping on the ground that they cannot hear a good while after'. Field was proud to take responsibility for 'the bitterness of the style'.[39]

The immediate literary sequel to the *Admonition* was not more satire, although the subversive potential for that was never far distant, but another tedious exchange of

weighty tomes rivalling the Jewel–Harding exchanges, the so-called 'Admonition Controversy'. It was John Whitgift, master of Trinity College Cambridge and a future archbishop, who assumed the mantle of Jewel and wrote an *Answer to a certain Libel*, a large hammer to crack a chestnut. The academic ideologue of Presbyterianism, Thomas Cartwright, whom Whitgift was in the course of expelling from Trinity and Cambridge, wrote *A reply to an Answer*, to which Whitgift responded in *The Defence of the Answer*, which invited from Cartwright not only *The Second Reply*, but *The Rest of the Second Reply*, itself a fat little book of some hundreds of pages. No one now reads the Admonition Controversy, but it is different from Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (first four books published 1593), a still living work sufficiently philosophical and magisterial to persuade generations of Anglicans, quite incorrectly, that Hooker had the last word in the ongoing debate with Puritanism.[40]

In the Armada year, 1588, the satirical potential bottled up in the Puritan movement finally exploded in the series of pamphlets published in the name of a pseudonymous and clown-like figure, Martin Marprelate.[41] In his own way, 'Martin' did have the last word on so much tedious religious controversy. The conformist tome to which he was ostensibly replying, John Bridges' *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England*, was 'a very portable book, a horse may carry it if be not weak'. Although contemporaries may have enjoyed Martin's jokes at the expense of the bishops as much as we do, in the eyes of officialdom the tracts were seditious and criminal. That they were published at all is an indication of desperation among radical Puritans whose literary and political efforts to bring about 'further reformation' had come to nothing, thanks above all to Queen Elizabeth, and they have been compared to the use of chemical weapons in warfare. Poison gas is liable to blow back in the faces of those who use it, and Martin invited not only the heavy hand of the law but a spate of anti-Martinist tracts, written 'in the same vein' by Thomas Nashe, John Lyly as well as other less talented writers, and even anti-Martinist jigs performed in the public theatres.

Much of the scholarly literature devoted to the Marprelate tracts has concerned, as with other anonymous serial publications, the problem of authorship, which is the least interesting thing to ask about them (The principal author seems to have been a Warwickshire squire and outspoken MP, Job Throckmorton.[42]) What the tracts tell us about is the interaction of print with the living street culture of Elizabethan England, in which it was common practice to pursue private and public quarrels by means of defamatory libels or 'ballads', 'cast abroad' or stuck up in public places. They are also evidence of the interplay of reality and polemically distorted perceptions of reality, theatre and life. For the anti-Martinist reaction served to create the stock figure of the stage puritan which we encounter in Ben Jonson or, through the Shakespearean prism, in the character of Malvolio. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Martinist affair created the idea and image of the hypocritical Puritan and gave it half a century and more of life, reaching a kind of climax in the 1650 in Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*. 'Marry,' says one actor to another in a jest-book by Thomas Dekker, 'I have so naturally played the Puritan that many took me to be one.'[43]

he so-called 'Admonition
ge Cambridge and a future
1 *Answer to a certain Libel*,
ogue of Presbyterianism,
xpelling from Trinity and
responded in *The Defence*
Second Reply, but *The Rest*
pages. No one now reads
d Hooker's *Of the Laws of*
living work sufficiently
glicans, quite incorrectly,
Puritanism.[40]

up in the Puritan move-
n the name of a pseudo-
rn way, 'Martin' did have
onformist tome to which
ernment Established in the
carry it if be not weak'.
; at the expense of the
acts were seditious and
speration among radical
urther reformation' had
ney have been compared
ole to blow back in the
ivy hand of the law but
y Thomas Nashe, John
:inist jigs performed in

tracts has concerned, as
thorship, which is the
or seems to have been a
²) What the tracts tell
culture of Elizabethan
and public quarrels by
in public places. They
storted perceptions of
create the stock figure
ugh the Shakespearean
n to say that the Mar-
tan and gave it half a
50 in Samuel Butler's
nomas Dekker, 'I have
3

VI

By now the reader may want to know what the religious literature of this age of Reformations had to offer by way of spiritual nourishment. Was it a case of the hungry sheep looking up unfed? The first generation of Protestants growing up under Elizabeth was perhaps rather poorly nourished. But its grandchildren would reap a bountiful harvest of 'practical divinity' in best-sellers like the Essex preacher Richard Rogers's *Seven Treatises* (five editions between 1602 and 1629, and six abridgements of what was a large and expensive book), the enormously popular works of applied theological learning by the prince of English Calvinist theologians, William Perkins, and the more modest *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* (1601, twenty-five editions by 1640) by another Essex preacher, Arthur Dent, which prefigured *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The seed had been sown in the letters of spiritual comfort addressed to the distressed consciences of individuals familiar to all readers of Foxe and of a companion text, *Letters of the Martyrs* (1564), gathered and edited by Foxe's collaborator Henry Bull and published under the name of Bishop Miles Coverdale. *Certain Godly and very Comfortable Letters* by the exemplary Puritan divine Edward Dering, posthumously published in 1590, were mostly addressed to religiously troubled gentlewomen. What did it mean to write 'comfortably'? Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway* was written, or so says its title, in order that every man may clearly see whether he shall be saved or damned. But practical divinity was about much more than that simple, if odious, Calvinist distinction, with predestination looming less large than many have supposed. To know that one was on the pathway to salvation was not to press a magic switch but to engage in unremitting spiritual endeavour, guided by these practical and increasingly systematic manuals. Salvation was not so much an event as a process.[44]

But when it came to books which actually nurtured the pious practice of religion, it was the Catholics who were in the van, especially writers touched by the circumstantial spirituality of the Society of Jesus and its founder, Ignatius Loyola. Here was instruction in how to pray, how to confess, how to receive the sacrament. English Protestant religion was a native plant, its 'practical' divines internationally acknowledged in the seventeenth century as an unusual religious resource. But English Catholics were part of a pan-European book culture, to which they made a significant contribution. Edmund Campion's *Rationes decem*, first clandestinely printed at Stonor Park in Oxfordshire in 1581, ran to no fewer than forty-five editions in the original Latin, with translations into Czech, Dutch, Flemish, French, German, Hungarian and Polish.[45] Ignatian spirituality was given notable lyrical expression in the poems of the English Jesuit Robert Southwell, written in the course of a mission which was to end on the scaffold and the source of a tradition which has been called English Catholic baroque, which Southwell bequeathed to one of the most neglected poets of the age, Richard Crashaw.[46]

The best evidence of the quality of the spiritual sustenance offered by the English Counter-Reformation was its appropriation by Protestants, and the most celebrated example of cross-confessional cross-fertilization was *The First Book of the Christian Exer-*

cise, an adaptation by Robert Persons of an Italian Jesuit text. In 1584, a Protestant minister in Yorkshire, Edmund Bunny, published a version of Persons which removed all references to such distinctively Catholic doctrines as purgatory, but still retained 90 per cent of the original. Bunny's bowdlerized version went through many more versions than the original, and by 1623 the ratio was 24:1. The fact that no fewer than sixteen editions of Bunny / Persons were published in the single year 1585 suggests that the most generous springs of Christian spirituality were still Catholic, even if they were made to pass through a Protestant filter.[47] There were, of course, paths between the religious traditions which were rougher and more painful. John Donne wrote in 'Satire III':

> On a huge hill,
> Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
> Reach her, about must, and about must go.

But truth and falsehood were 'near twins', and what we regard as Donne's apostasy was also a kind of fulfilment and dénouement.

NOTES

1   See Haigh.

2   Lloyd E. Berry, ed., *John Stubbs's Gaping Gulf* (1579) (Charlottesville, 1968), especially p. 6.

3   See Klotz. See also Maureen Bell's statistical analysis of STC imprints in John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, eds, *A History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4 (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.) For the wider scope of 'religious' print, see Walsham, (1999).

4   On catechisms, see Green.

5   See Gilmont, pp. 1–2, 266; S. R. Cattley and G. Townsend, eds, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, iii (London, 1837), 720. And see also Andrew Pettegree, 'Books, Pamphlets and Polemic', in A. Pettegree, ed., *The Reformation World* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 109–26.

6   See Duffy.

7   See Watt; Patrick Collinson, 'Protestant Culture and the Cultural Revolution' in Collinson (1988); and Temperley.

8   See Walsham, 'Domme Preachers' (2000). For John Shakespeare and Borromeo, see Samuel Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 41–6.

9   See Allison and Rogers.

10   See Mueller.

11   Lewalski: Donne quoted at p. 84.

12   Mueller, pp. 111–12.

13   For 'pith', see Henry Walter, ed., *Doctrinal Treatises by William Tyndale*, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1848), p. 507. See especially 'A Prologue Upon the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans (closely following Martin Luther)', in Schuster Duffield, pp. 119–46.

14   Pollard, p. 124; Schuster et al., pp. 206–7, 212.

15   For most aspects of Tyndale's life, see Daniell. But that his origins were not on the western scarp of the Cotswolds but west of the Severn in the Forest of Dean is a new and persuasive suggestion made by Andrew J. Brown in *William Tyndale on Priests and Preachers With New Light on his Early Career* (1996). I owe this reference to Diarmaid MacCulloch.

16   This draws on a number of papers communicated to the 1994 Oxford International

xt. In 1584, a Protestant
f Persons which removed
gatory, but still retained
ent through many more
. The fact that no fewer
he single year 1585 sug-
were still Catholic, even
'e were, of course, paths
ire painful. John Donne

ige hill,
will

rd as Donne's apostasy

(New York: Oxford Uni-
'5), pp. 41-6.
logers.

quoted at p. 84.
-12.
nry Walter, ed., *Doctrinal*
n Tyndale, Parker Society
), p. 507. See especially 'A
e Epistle of St Paul to the
ollowing Martin Luther)',
d, pp. 119-46.
huster et al., pp. 206-7,

of Tyndale's life, see
is origins were not on the
e Cotswolds but west of
rest of Dean is a new and
on made by Andrew J.
Tyndale on Priests and
Light on his Early Career
reference to Diarmaid

nber of papers commu-
4 Oxford International

Tyndale Conference and published in *Refor-mation*, 1 (1996), and on the papers read to a Tyndale Conference in Washington, DC, in 1994 and published as John T. Day, Eric Lund and Anne M. O'Donnell, eds, *Word, Church and State: Tyndale Quincentenary Essays* (Washington, DC, 1998).

17 Erasmus, Paraclesis, in J. C. Olin, ed., *Christian Humanism and the Reformation* (New York, 1965), p. 97; *Acts and Monuments of Foxe*, v. 117.

18 Daniell, p. 216.

19 Lawler; Walter and Schuster et al.

20 Mueller, pp. 220-2.

21 Brian Vickers, 'Public and Private Rhetoric in Hooker's Lawes', in A. S. McGrade, ed., *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe, AZ, 1997), pp. 95-145.

22 See MacCulloch.

23 King, ch. 3, 'Vox Populi, Vox Dei'.

24 *The first examinacyon of Anne Askew* (Wesel, 1546), *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe* (Wesel, 1547), both edited by Beilin; Betteridge, pp. 80-119; King, pp. 73-4.

25 The British Academy John Foxe Project aim to produce a modern, critical, electronic edition of the four versions, and has already published a facsimile edition of 1583 on CD-ROM (Oxford, 1999). The first two John Foxe colloquia have been published in Loades (1997) and Loades (1999).

26 Patrick Collinson, 'Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs', in Collinson (1994), p. 151.

27 Leslie M. Oliver, 'The Seventh Edition of John Foxe's "Acts and Monuments"', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 37 (1943), 243-60; Eirwen Nicholson, 'Eighteenth-century Foxe: Evidence for the Impact of the Acts and Monuments in the "Long Eighteenth Century"', in Loades (1997). See also Linda Colley, *Britons* (London, 1992).

28 Betteridge, pp. 120-60.

29 Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays*, pp. 151-2; Ceri Sullivan, '"Oppressed by the Force of Truth": Robert Persons Edits John Foxe', in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, pp. 154-66. These remarks are also reliant

on forthcoming work by Dr Thomas Freeman of the Foxe Project.

30 Walsham (1999).

31 Southern, esp. pp. 60-6; Milward (1977), ch. 1, 'Anglican Challenge'.

32 J. Ayre, ed., *The Works of John Jewel*, iv. Parker Society (Cambridge, 1850), 1,092.

33 Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'. See also Walsham (2000).

34 Patrick Collinson (1967), pp. 165-6.

35 John H. Primus, *The Vestments Controversy* (Kampen, 1960).

36 Henry Ainsworth, *Counterpoison* (Amsterdam, 1608), p. 228.

37 *A part of a register* (Middelburg, 1593), pp. 23-37.

38 Collinson (1967), pp. 77-8.

39 Ibid., pp. 101-21; Patrick Collinson, 'John Field and Elizabethan Puritanism', in Collinson (1983), pp. 332-70. *The Admonition* and associated pamphlets, including the *anonymous Second Admonition to the Parliament*, are printed in Frere and Douglas.

40 Lake; McGrade.

41 A modern, student, edition of the Marprelate Tracts is much needed. They were edited by William Pierce in 1908 as *The Marprelate Tracts*, 1588, 1589, and were printed in facsimile by the Scolar Press in 1967.

42 Carlson.

43 Patrick Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism', in John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 150-70; Patrick Collinson, 'Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: The Theatre Constructs Puritanism', in D. L. Smith, R. Strier and D. Bevington, eds, *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157-69.

44 Forthcoming work on practical divinity by Dr Jason Yiannikkou; Dr Thomas Freeman's forthcoming edition of the *Letters of the Marian Protestants* for the Church of England Record Society; Patrick Collinson, 'John Knox, the Church of England and the Women of England', in Roger A. Mason, ed., *John Knox and the British Reformations* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 74-96.