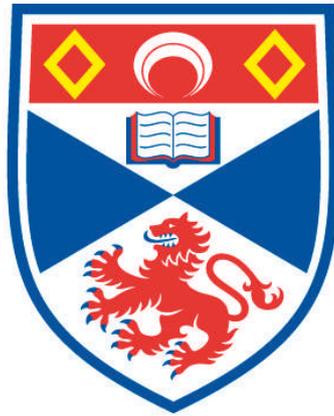


**PROTESTANT POLEMIC AND THE NATURE OF
EVANGELICAL DISSENT, 1538-1553**

Christopher J. Bradshaw

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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Protestant Polemic and the Nature of Evangelical Dissent,
1538-1553.



Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. by Christopher J. Bradshaw
University of St Andrews
1997.

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Finally the indebtedness of this study to my parents must be noted. They first encouraged me to pursue research and have consistently supported me in this decision in many ways over the last few years. The merits of this work are as much due to their influence as to my abilities. Thus it is most fitting that this present study should be dedicated to them.

Abstract

This study explores how Protestant writers during the period 1538-1553 dealt with the threats and opportunities that were offered to Protestant reform in England by the Royal Supremacy.

Though initially propagandists for Henry VIII's new authority as Supreme Head of the English church, many polemicists were forced into religious and political marginalisation by the king's imposition of a theologically Catholic settlement of the English church in 1539. As a result during the later Henrician period, Protestant writers constructed an alternative ecclesiology for the Protestant community. This offered historical justifications for their own theological creeds. Just as importantly, this new ecclesiology legitimised the status of Protestant dissidents as a separate church from the king's official church. In addition Protestant writers constructed a biblical rhetoric within which they concealed and discussed the precise relationship of their theological creeds to the political authority that had rejected them. This ideology redefined both the nature of kingship and the king's religious role according to a series of biblical images. These images encapsulated and conveyed to the reader a series of associative ideas.

The ideological assumptions behind these typological images were formative influences upon the nature of official religious reform during the Edwardian period (1547-53). The basis of this ideological sympathy was a close patron-client relationship between Edward's government and the Protestant writers. This allowed an iconoclastic destruction of traditional mediaeval religion but it also enabled the construction of a positive theological alternative to the Roman Catholic sacramental system. Protestant polemicists were at the centre of the formation of this new theological identity for the English church, and of the campaign which imposed it.

However by the early 1550s the alliance of the governing elite and the Protestant polemicists began to break down. The means used to destroy the Catholic

religious system had been acceptable to both oligarchy and Protestant writers, but it became obvious that their ends, unlike their means, did not agree. As a result the polemical heritage of criticism, that had been used against their Catholic opponents, was turned by Protestant writers against their ostensibly Protestant patrons. In the final part of the work the way that the polemicists' anti-government criticism influenced their providential explanations for the succession of Queen Mary is traced, and the greater significance of the polemical heritage of this period is assessed.

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p. 191

Abbreviations

Bindoff	<u>House of Commons 1509-1558</u> (3 vols., London, 1982).
BL	British Library
<u>CSPD</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series for the Reign of Edward the Sixth</u> , ed. C.S. Knighton (HMSO, 1992).
<u>CWTM</u>	<u>The Complete Works of Sir Thomas More</u> (Yale edn., New Haven and London, 1963 ff.)
<u>DNB</u>	Dictionary of National Biography
<u>EETS</u>	<u>Early English Text Society</u>
<u>HR</u>	<u>Historical Research</u>
<u>JEH</u>	<u>Journal Of Ecclesiastical History</u>
<u>JTS</u>	<u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>
OBS	Oxford Bibliographical Society
PS	Parker Society
T. Cranmer, <u>PS I</u> .	<u>Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer</u> , ed. J. Cox (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1846).
T. Cranmer, <u>PS II</u> .	<u>Writings and Disputations relative to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper</u> , ed. J. Cox (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844).
<u>RETS</u>	<u>Renaissance English Text Society</u>
<u>RQ</u>	<u>Renaissance Quarterly</u>
<u>R&R</u>	<u>Renaissance and Reformation</u>
<u>SCJ</u>	<u>Sixteenth Century Journal</u>
STC	<u>A Short title Catalogue of Books printed in England Scotland, & Ireland, and of English books printed Abroad 1475-1640</u> , eds. A. W. Pollard and G. Redgrave, rev. W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson and completed by K. F. Pantzer (2nd ed., London Bibliographical Society, 3 vols., 1976-1991).
<u>OL</u>	<u>Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation</u> , ed. H. Robinson (2 vols., Parker Society, Cambridge, 1846-7).

Chapter 1

Introduction

Protestant polemic

'Protestant polemic', in mid-Tudor England is broadly definable as writings that dealt with issues of political or religious controversy. Protestant writers had two aims in producing this work; to discredit an enemy's ideological position and to champion their own. The present study has restricted its attention to works dealing with specific religious debates during the period 1538-1553. There is no attempt here to address two issues of religious debate that have already been studied at length in the work of other scholars. One is the propaganda response mounted by Edward VI's government against the Anabaptist threat. The other is the question of ecclesiastical discipline. The response provoked by both of these issues among Protestant writers have already been explored in the work of Catherine Davies and Jane Facey.¹

The focus of this study is how Protestant polemicists reacted to the threats and opportunities that were posed by the religious authority of the king as Supreme head of the English church. The changing response of Protestant writers was due to the changing political circumstances that they experienced. A close scrutiny of polemic written by Protestants in exile (1540-1548) demonstrates how these writers dealt with the threat that the Supremacy posed when its authority was used to endorse a Catholic theology in the English church. Protestants had to redefine both their own ecclesiastical identity and the nature of the king's religious role in order to legitimise their dissent from his Catholic settlement. By contrast the Edwardian period (1547-1553) showed an appreciation by Protestant polemicists of the reforms that could be achieved by allying with Edward VI's Protestant regime. These achievements were to

¹ See C. Davies and J. Facey, 'A Reformation dilemma: John Foxe and the problem of discipline', *JEH*, 39 (1989), pp. 37-65. C. Davies, "'Poor persecuted little flock" or "Commonwealth of Christians": Edwardian Protestant conceptions of the church', in P. Lake and M. Dowling (eds.), *Protestantism and the national church in sixteenth-century England* (London, Croom Helm, 1987). C. Davies, 'Towards a godly commonwealth: The public ideology of Protestantism, c. 1546-1553' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1988).

be both destructive and constructive in nature. The ideology of the Protestant writers demanded the destruction of the machinery of traditional Catholic religion in England. It was an objective Edward's government shared. Yet Protestant writers also expounded a new theological system for the church, demonstrated in a new Eucharistic theology. This was reflected in the official Eucharistic liturgy of the Edwardian church, the Book of Common Prayer (1549). Yet during the later years of Edward's reign polemicists became aware once again of the threat that the Supremacy could pose to the cause of religious reform. However in this instance the Protestant writers turned their criticism from their traditional Catholic opponents and employed it against their nominally Protestant governors.

Protestant defences of their ideological position in all these instances were articulated through a wide variety of literary genres. This study will include evidence from verse ballads, prose tracts, biblical commentaries, plays, sermons and dialogues. Printed works that dealt purely with doctrinal instruction or personal devotion, such as primers and catechisms, will not be included here, except where they refer directly to a contemporary trend in works of religious controversy. Similarly, the church's formularies of faith have been cited in those instances where they are relevant to the polemical debate overall. The importance of these official texts is two fold. During the exile period (1540-1548) official pronouncements of the church's doctrine encapsulated the theological position against which Protestant writers were arguing. The later formularies of faith (1548-1552), are cited to prove the essential similarities between the government's reform objectives and the polemicists' religious aims. This comparison reinforces a general theme of the work as a whole; namely the central place of polemical literature in the formation of a new identity for the church in Edwardian England.

Protestant polemicists: a definition

The collective term 'Protestant polemicists' is not used in this study to denote a collection of individuals who derived their identity from their vocation as writers of polemic. Protestant writers came from a wide range of occupations and in some cases their work as writers of religious polemic formed only a small part of their overall career. The writer William Turner was a botanist, a physician, a member of the House of Commons and a priest.² This was even more true of Thomas Cranmer whose works written during the Edwardian controversy concerning the Eucharist (1548-1553) formed a minute part of a career of over twenty years as Archbishop of all England. Other writers of polemic had, to a lesser extent, similarly multi-faceted careers. William Baldwin was a corrector of press in a print shop, a schoolmaster and finally a priest. Luke Shepherd was a London physician.³ Catholic writers, like their Protestant contemporaries, often pursued other careers as well as writing. The polemicist Miles Hogarde was a hosier in London.⁴

It is virtually impossible to identify writers of polemic with any one profession, except their production of written defences of Protestant ideology. Yet it was not as polemicists that these writers would have described themselves, nor is there any evidence that such a self definition was the basis upon which one writer of polemic identified himself with another. On the contrary the identification of one Protestant writer with another was achieved primarily through a recognition of shared religious doctrines. It was in these terms that one of the most famous polemicists of mid-Tudor England identified with his literary contemporaries. In his *Index* (1548) and *Catalogus* (1557-9) John Bale listed all the British writers in history including

² W. R. Jones, William Turner, Tudor Naturalist, Physician and Divine (London and New York, 1988).

³ DNB, vol. III. For mention of Luke Shepherd, see Narratives of the Reformation, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Society, 77, 1859), p. 171.

⁴ J. Foxe, The Acts and monuments, eds. G. Townsend and J. Cattley (8 vols. London, 1837-41), vol. VII. p. 757.

himself and his sixteenth-century contemporaries.⁵ Paradoxically these listings were not primarily intended to describe a community of writers. Bale's catalogues were meant to be read as a historical record of the division of the two churches. However much Bale might admire the literary ability of a writer like Thomas More, he did not consider himself as part of the same community as More, who had been in Antichrist's false church. Contrarily Bale could identify with William Turner, Luke Shepherd and Thomas Cranmer, because like him they were members of Christ's true church and shared its doctrine. This reflected the doctrinal definition of the Protestant church community that was used by every Protestant writer of polemic. Bale's work demonstrated how all considerations of literary ability and style were subjected to questions of religious affiliation. It was primarily as co-religionists not as writers that Bale saw his fellow polemicists and in this sense that he perceived them to be a community.

In a similar way the term 'Protestant polemicists' when used in this study will not describe either the professional occupation of the author, or a specific style of writing. 'Protestant polemic' will include works of different lengths and formats. The term will be used to denote those works which were unified by a common theology or the religious objectives resulting from this theology. In chapter 5, for instance, the Edwardian debate concerning the Eucharist is explored in detail by using the writings of Cranmer and Shepherd. Cranmer's works were long scholarly books which expounded in great detail a theological alternative to the Catholic mass. Shepherd's works, however, were short verse satires which used crude invective to convince readers that they should not believe in the doctrines of the Catholic mass. These works fulfilled different roles in the Eucharistic debate. Nevertheless each role was complementary, since both Shepherd's and Cranmer's writings had the same aim, namely the destruction of the mass and its replacement with a new Eucharistic rite.

⁵ J. Bale, *Illustrium maioris Brytanniae scriptorum summarium* ['Gippeswici' (Wesel, D. Van der Straten), 1548], STC 1295. *Scriptorium illustrium maioris Brytannie Catalogus* [Apud I. Oporinum, Basel, 1557-9].

Despite the variance in literary style and polemical role between the works of these two authors, both were part of one Protestant tradition of religious writing in Edwardian England.

Protestant polemic and the English Government

A contextual introduction: 1520-1540

Until the 1530s the English Crown was irreproachably Roman Catholic in its sympathies. The late 1520s witnessed a campaign of persecution against the indigenous opponents of the Catholic church, both Lollard and Lutheran, with the full backing of the secular power.⁶ When the English Lutheran William Tyndale tried to import his vernacular translation of the New Testament into England in 1526, he was faced with the determined opposition of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Henry VIII's bishops sought out and destroyed the texts with such efficiency that out of a print run of three to six thousand only three copies now survive. Of these three copies only two are complete imprints of the 1526 edition.⁷ The bishops had full royal backing for their actions. The attitude of the English king to 'heresy' was graphically demonstrated in the 1520s by his patronage of Catholic polemicists. During the 1520s England played a central role in a pan-European campaign of polemical propaganda against Luther and the continental reformers. At the centre of this initiative was Henry himself who in July 1521 contributed a book to the campaign under his own name.⁸ Any progress that Protestantism made in England in the 1520s was made against the opposition of the king and his church.⁹ Progress was likely to

⁶ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars (Yale and New Haven, 1992), p. 379.

⁷ D. Daniell, William Tyndale. A Biography (Yale and New Haven, 1994), p. 134. One of the three surviving copies of Tyndale's 1526 New Testament is incomplete. This copy is now housed in St Paul's Cathedral library. The other two copies, both complete, are in Stuttgart and the British Library in London. On the recent discovery of the Stuttgart copy see, M. Janetta, 'Good News from Stuttgart: A Previously Unrecorded Copy of the 1526 Worms Edition of William Tyndale's New Testament Translation', Reformation, vol. 2 (1997), pp. 1-6.

⁸ R. Rex, 'The English campaign against Luther', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, 39 (1989), pp. 85-106.

⁹ The first recorded use of the term 'Protestants' by the English is recorded in the OED as 1539 and was used to describe Lutherans. The use of the term to describe English dissenters in the 1520s is, strictly speaking, anachronistic. However where the term 'Protestant' is used in this present study it is

be slow and limited in its effect. Protestant polemicists were either marginalised or in exile upon the continent.

During the succeeding decade this situation was to alter drastically. A new direction in royal policy caused Henry to favour those whose religious opinions he had considered anathema during the 1520s. From 1533 onwards in a series of Parliamentary statutes Henry VIII supplanted papal primacy over the English church with his own authority as Supreme Head, a title he enforced by a treason act. The Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) and the Act of Supremacy (1534) subjected all ecclesiastical authority in England to the Crown and resolutely denied papal jurisdiction in England. In this way the religious orthodoxies of the 1520s became the treasons of the 1530s. Two who refused to admit that the king's new authority was binding were Sir Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher of Rochester. Their dissent ultimately resulted in their execution for treason in 1535. More and Fisher had been the most prominent Catholic apologists for the Papacy and the church during the 1520s.¹⁰ Their crime was to remain loyal to the Catholic orthodoxy they had defended in the 1520s, when the king did not. Their deaths proved the impossibility of influencing the direction of religious policy in England in opposition to the Supremacy. Those wishing to influence Henry's religious policy in the 1530s and 1540s did so by using the authority of the Supremacy to further their own religious agenda.¹¹

The first priority of Henry's Crown was no longer the support of a full Catholic doctrinal orthodoxy, but the promotion of the Supremacy. Those who were willing to preach obedience to the Supremacy received official encouragement and even patronage. This change in priorities was vital for English evangelicals. Unlike the Crown's previous policy of allegiance to Rome, the new policy could be exploited

taken to describe all those who dissented from the authority of the Roman Catholic church and asserted the sole authority of Scripture in deciding matters of doctrine.

¹⁰ For Fisher's place as a Catholic polemicist of European standing see R. Rex, The theology of John Fisher (Cambridge, 1991).

¹¹ Rex Pogson cites this as a probable reason for Gardiner's accommodation with the Supremacy in the 1530s. R. Pogson, 'God's law and man's Stephen Gardiner and the problem of loyalty', in C. Cross, D. Loades, and J. Scarisbrick (eds.), Law and government under the Tudors (Cambridge, 1988), p. 73.

as easily by evangelicals as by English Catholics. The vociferous defence of the Supremacy by men such as Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Shaxton propelled them to ecclesiastical preferment on the bench of bishops. Once in positions of influence these men and others like them used their episcopal authority to promote a private reform agenda that was deliberately antagonistic to many aspects of traditional Catholic religion. The dioceses ruled by Latimer and Shaxton became safe havens for Protestant preachers who used this protection to preach against relics, images, shrines and the doctrine of purgatory.¹² Preachers attacked the authority of the church to sanction extra-biblical rites and doctrines and justified their attacks by citing the pre-eminent authority of God's Word as revealed in Scripture. The united front of the English church against the Protestants had been breached. The same was true in the king's administration. The king's Vice-gerent in spiritual affairs, Thomas Cromwell, headed a group of writers who produced works in defence of the Supremacy, and reviling the Pope. But Cromwell also protected writers whose theology was far more radical than anything Henry's official religion yet allowed. One of these was the converted Carmelite and antiquary John Bale. Bale was arrested twice in 1536 and 1538 by the Catholic authorities for his preaching, which had attacked clerical celibacy and the mass. On both occasions Cromwell secured his release, his motive being that he had read Bale's plays. Bale was set to work writing plays in defence of the Supremacy. The most famous of these works was Kynge Johan, a history play in which Bale justified Henry VIII's Supremacy on the grounds of historical precedent. But Bale's status as a propagandist for the state enabled him to use Kynge Johan and his other plays to pursue his own agenda of reform against clerical celibacy and the mass, under the guise of preaching obedience to the king's new authority.¹³ In this way the Supremacy became a Trojan horse by which polemical writers like Bale

¹² For an example of an evangelical bishop protecting Protestant preachers in his diocese from prosecution see, S. Wabuda, 'Setting forth the Word of God: Archbishop Cranmer's early patronage of preachers'. In P. Ayris and D. Selwyn (eds.), Thomas Cranmer, Churchman and Scholar (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 75-88.

¹³ J. Bale, Kynge Johan: A play in two parts, ed. P. Happe, The Complete Plays of John Bale, (2 vols., Bury-St-Edmunds, 1985), vol. 1. For a more detailed discussion of these matters see chapter 2 below.

could insinuate their theology into the English church in a way that had never been possible in the 1520s.

Yet the radical nature of Bale's reform brought dangers. When Cromwell fell Bale was compelled to flee to the continent. The decision of Henry VIII to reimpose a measure of Catholic doctrinal conformity over the English church was set out in the Act of Six Articles (1539). This was endorsed in the Act for the Enforcement of True Religion and the King's Book in 1543. Despite this doctrinal reaction, many of the ideological definitions of the king's religious role that had been promulgated as part of the legitimisation of the Supremacy in the 1530s still remained. In addition, the definition of orthodoxy was still in practice, if not in theory, the prerogative of the Supreme Head and not of the Pope. The church of 1539 did not return to the position of the 1520s. There continued to be room within the king's church for those who manifested obedience to the king's Supremacy even if the Catholicity of their orthodoxy was often highly questionable. In this way Protestant dissent survived in Henry's Privy Chamber and upon his bench of bishops.

Protestant polemic and the historiography of the Reformation

Recent historical research has increasingly emphasised the importance of the propaganda justifications of the Supremacy in understanding the religious policy of the Henrician regime and the Edwardian reform which followed. Propaganda for the Supremacy showed a consistent desire to present Henry VIII as an Old Testament king. A vital part of these images was their concomitant associations of a destruction of idolatry and a return of God's law to the people. Nor were these images merely cynical attempts to manipulate biblical precedents to support royal Caesaro-papism. The work of J. N. King strongly suggests that Henry VIII personally identified with the roles performed by the Old Testament kings to which his propaganda compared him.¹⁴ Since the Supremacy allowed official reform in the English church to express

¹⁴ J. N. King, 'Henry VIII as David' in P. C. Hermann, (ed.), Rethinking the Henrician era (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1994).

the royal will this identification was potentially crucial in motivating religious policy. Richard Rex has convincingly argued that this was the case: that Old Testament exemplars became not only justifications for royal policy but the ideological basis upon which they were formulated.¹⁵ The evidence is certainly highly suggestive. The same official injunctions of 1536 and 1538 which ordered the destruction of relics and abused images also demanded that every parish buy a copy of the Great Bible so that God's law could be read by the people. The title-page of the Great Bible depicted Henry VIII handing the Scriptures to his subjects.¹⁶ These reform aspirations showed a marked similarity to the biblical accounts of the reign of King Josiah. 2 Kings 22 and 23 and 2 Chronicles 34 and 35 recounted how Josiah had read the newly rediscovered Mosaic law to his people, and had thereafter pursued a religious reformation in accordance with this law. The Passover was refounded and objects associated with false religion, including shrines and idols, had been utterly destroyed. Both the Coverdale Bible (1535) and the Matthew's Bible (1537) explicitly compared Henry VIII to king Josiah.¹⁷ Henry's enactment of both iconoclasm and the printing of the English Bible remained a consistent feature of his religious policy, even after the Catholic theological reaction of the Six Articles (1539). This formed a distinct separation from the traditional Catholic piety which Henry VIII had shown in the 1520s, and it was never reversed.¹⁸ The change was due to the king's new self image as an Old Testament king.

Yet as the work of Seymour Baker House demonstrates, biblical imagery could be manipulated by Protestant reformers during the 1530s, as well as by Henry's

¹⁵ R. Rex, *The Henrician Reformation*, pp. 173-5.

¹⁶ *The byble in Englyshe, [...] with a prologe by Thomas [Cranmer] archbyshop of Cantorbury* [E. Whytchurche or R. Grafton, 1540], title-page. STC 2070.

¹⁷ *The Byble: that is the holy Scrypture of the Olde and New Testament faythfully translated into Englyshe. MDXXXV.* [by M. Coverdale], [Southwark, J. Nicolson, 1535], Epistle unto the Kyngs Hyghnesse, fol. 3v. STC 2063.3. *The Byble whyche is is all the holy Scrypture in which is contayned the Olde and Newe Testament truly and purely translated into Englyshe by Thomas Matthew* [ie. M. Coverdale and W. Tyndale], 4pts., [Antwerp and London, 1537], dedicatory preface, fol., 6r and 6v.

¹⁸ M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 211, 238.

government.¹⁹ However no full length study exists of the Protestant use of the Supremacy rhetoric during the period of the Catholic doctrinal reaction in the English church (1539-1547). Chapter two in this study explores how Protestant polemicists in exile took the biblical imagery upon which the Supremacy was based and manipulated it for their own ends. These images were used by Protestant writers such as Bale, Joye and Turner, to justify their religious dissent from Henry's church. Biblical imagery had been used by the Henrician authorities to ensure obedience to the royal reforms by demonstrating authoritative precedents for them from the Bible. Protestant writers took this imagery and subverted the government's intention by using it to articulate an ideology of dissent from royal reform. Part of this realignment of biblical interpretation was the use of Bible images to limit as well as define the religious authority of the Crown. This use of the Bible was to prove vital in Edward VI's reign (1547-1553).

Henry VIII's religious policy had largely been an expression of the king's will, and the manipulation of images of kingship reflected Henry's personal beliefs. Though Henry VIII might see himself as Josiah, his definition of what was idolatrous was restrained by a measure of Catholic doctrinal orthodoxy. Henry VIII would destroy images which he believed had been made into idols by having godly worship offered to them. But he did not consider all images to be idols. The King's Book (1543) proved this much. The King's Book was an official statement of the doctrinal orthodoxy of the English church in 1543. Not only was it approved by royal authority, but Henry VIII had personally defined the book's theological position on religious imagery. Religious images were defended as aids to devotion, and could legitimately be venerated as such. There was a distinction drawn between this veneration and the illegal worship tendered to an image which made it into an idol. This attitude, set out in the King's Book, was in marked contrast to reformers who considered all images had been forbidden by scriptural law. The King's book

¹⁹ S. B. House, 'Cromwell's message to the regulars: The biblical trilogy of John Bale, 1537', *R&R*, (Canada) new series, 15 (1991).

delineated one division between Henry himself and Protestant reformers such as Bale, Turner, and Thomas Cranmer.²⁰ The accession of a minor to the throne in January 1547 altered this situation drastically. Edward VI's youth made him malleable to the religious education suggested by those around him. This allowed Protestant reformers to define the Supremacy for Edward by using the same terminology as his father, but with a different emphasis. The young king was told to be a fully iconoclastic king and the objects of his wrath were increased to include all visible aspects of traditional Catholic religion.

An understanding of the implications of this propaganda imagery is central to comprehending the reform aims of Edward's government. Recent work by Diarmaid MacCulloch and Eamon Duffy has drawn attention to the use of Josiah by Cranmer in 1547 and have suggested its significance for the formation of religious policy during the first months of the new reign.²¹ Margaret Aston goes further, noting how the Josiah exemplar was in common use among the reformers in England and abroad as a way of describing Edward VI.²² A close study of the polemical texts that the Edwardian reformers wrote allows the modern historian to explore in greater detail the implications of such imagery in forming the Protestants' attitude towards the system of traditional religion in England. In many respects the polemicists' stress on the utter destruction of the entire system of traditional religion endorses much of what Duffy argues about the nature of Edwardian Reform in his book, The Stripping of the Altars. Duffy detects a theological determinism in the execution of Edwardian religious reform precisely because he appreciates the nature of the Catholic religious system that the reformers were trying to destroy. The theological coherence of late mediaeval religion was expressed in the visual rites of the church. These were enacted by the whole church community through rituals. Theology thus became a tangible quantity through its embodiment in the religious life of the church. The early

²⁰ M. Aston, England's Iconoclasts, pp. 240-41.

²¹ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer: A Life (Yale and New Haven, 1996), pp. 364-5. E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 448-9.

²² M. Aston, England's Iconoclasts, pp. 246-277.

moves of Edward's government to dismantle these rituals were part of a more general aim to dismantle the whole theological structure of late mediaeval religion and replace it with another. Reform of ceremonials and doctrine thus became two parts of the same programme of change, and equally important. This conclusion allows Duffy to detect radical intents at the heart of the Edwardian reform programme, even in the early months of the reign.²³ This is a perceptive and convincing study of the period, and it is not my intention to disagree with it in fundamentals. However Duffy's case does have certain limitations. Duffy's work does not seriously address the Protestant motivations for their religious policies. He derives his appraisal of Protestant motives from the effects that Protestant reform had upon traditional religion. Since this was predominantly destructive, Protestant motivations became similarly negative. Such an appraisal does not sufficiently explain the deliberate thoroughness and violence of Protestant iconoclastic reform. This study to some extent makes good this deficiency by a consideration of the Protestant ideology which underpinned iconoclastic reform (Chapter 4). The conclusion is that the reform process was derived from a literal interpretation of the biblical proscriptions for achieving reform. A study of polemical literature enables the historian to understand the driving force behind iconoclastic reform in a more comprehensive way than merely that of obliterating the religious past.

An appreciation of the biblical determinism which drove the iconoclastic reforms of 1547-9 must cast serious doubt upon the validity of some modern historical interpretations of the Edwardian Reformation. In his book English Reformations Dr Christopher Haigh argues that the early reforming measures of 1547-8 were 'no deliberate first stages of an earnest Reformation'.²⁴ Rather they were short term solutions by Edward's government to domestic unrest in England. This unrest was provoked by the importunate demands for religious change that were made by a noisy Protestant minority. Somerset's primary concern was the war in

²³ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 448, 449.

²⁴ C. Haigh, English Reformations (Oxford, 1993), p. 170.

Scotland. Religious reforms during 1547-9 were geared to serve this war by addressing internal religious divisions in England, and by allowing a liquidation of church revenue in order to fund Somerset's Scottish campaign. Thus in Haigh's view Somerset's 'first determined strike' against traditional religion was the Chantries Act of December 1547, a measure motivated by financial need and not religious belief.²⁵ Implicit within this argument is the assumption that the reforms of church ritual and ceremonial were a series of compromises that eschewed the important issue of theological reform in favour of a reform of externals. There is no attempt here to take account of Duffy's argument; that traditional religion by its very nature identified the visible machinery of Catholic worship with the theological belief system of mediaeval Catholic religion. The biblical imagery that was used by Edward VI's contemporaries to define the Supremacy and its reform role is not even mentioned in Haigh's account. Both these considerations make it extremely difficult to see the reform of ceremonials during 1547-9 as anything other than the first stages of an earnest reformation of religion in England. Haigh argues that the Edwardian Reformation was not planned, but was a period that was characterised by 'confusion and compromise'. This conclusion is derived from his failure to take full account of the religious agendas that guided the decisions of sixteenth-century men and women. In effect the Edwardian Reformation appears to be unplanned, because the religious strategy which directed it has been largely excluded.

Haigh's exposition of the period 1547-9 also relies heavily upon his identification of Somerset as a *politique*, whose religious policy was motivated by his political ambition. Historians have long realised the central role played by the Lord Protector in the formation of English religious policy during his hegemony. W. K. Jordan in his exhaustive treatment of the Edwardian period, sought to describe the nature of Edwardian religious reform by arguing that it was an expression of Somerset's personal character. In Jordan's view Somerset was 'an undoubted

²⁵ C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp. 168-83.

Protestant of moderate and Erastian persuasion'. His 'steady and unemotional lay Protestantism', was the governing factor that set the tone and pace of religious policy during the early years of Edward's reign. This policy was one of slow reform by stages, primarily of church abuses, and was tempered by Somerset's own belief in religious toleration. Jordan distanced Somerset from those he considered religious radicals such as Knox and Calvin, whose natural intolerance made them unappreciative of Somerset's moderation in religious matters.²⁶

M. L. Bush revised this picture of Somerset drastically. While Bush did not disagree with Jordan's appraisal of the nature of religious reform under Somerset he considered it to be a result not of Somerset's personal moderation, but of Somerset's foreign policy. The Lord Protector held up the advance of theological reform in England in order to prevent domestic unrest in England, and to placate his Catholic ally Charles V, both considerations stemmed from his desire to pursue the war in Scotland.²⁷ Bush admitted that Somerset was closely associated with many Protestant reformers. This was an indication of the Lord Protector's own personal religious beliefs. However Bush denied that Somerset's religious policy was a reflection of his personal beliefs: 'Somerset's responsibility for the settlement is undeniable but the settlement did not bear much relationship to his religious views.'²⁸

Like both Jordan and Bush, Dr Haigh endeavours to distance Somerset from those religious minorities which he believes were pushing for reform in 1547-8. Those changes which were enacted were caused by the interaction between Somerset's 'reticent reform' and 'the minority clamour for radicalism'. The result was that religious reforms did not occur as a result of official policy, but happened almost by accident. An example of this is the case of the 1547 Injunctions. Haigh argues that the injunction against shrines and images was 'loosely drafted.' This lack of clear directives from the government allowed disputes between radicals and

²⁶ W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The young king* (London, 1968), pp. 125-8.

²⁷ M. L. Bush, *The Government policy of Protector Somerset* (London, 1975)

²⁸ Bush, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

conservatives upon the extent of the iconoclasm that the government had sanctioned. The measure was implemented in different ways in different places. The resulting ban on all images in February 1548 was Somerset's attempt to resolve the confusion.²⁹

A study of the Protestant writers active during the reign of Edward VI casts serious doubt upon these perceptions of Somerset's personal religion, and its effect upon official religious policy.³⁰ The biblical images that were used to define Edward as an iconoclastic reformer were not used only by Protestant writers. The same images were used as justifications for Edward's reform policy by his Privy Council, members of his court, and by Somerset himself. In addition there were close links of patronage between Protestant writers and a number of high-ranking officials within Edward's Privy Chamber and Privy Council. The Lord Protector was actively involved in patronising polemicists whose professed religious aim was to provoke the very religious change, which according to Jordan and Bush, Somerset was eager to avoid. The picture of Somerset that emerges is not of a ruler who reacted to a religious minority clamour for religious reform. Rather Somerset was covertly promoting these calls for reform by patronising articulate members of the Protestant community. Nor was the basis of Somerset's association with his radical allies merely one of personal identification between co-religionists as Bush seems to suggest. Somerset's polemical clients and the Protestant community in general seemed to believe that Somerset's religious policies were an active reflection of his personal religious beliefs, both during Somerset's life and after his death. It seems highly unlikely that so many of Somerset's contemporaries, even those who associated with him on a personal basis, were all misled as to his character and his religious intentions. Such evidence should cause scholars to view with caution the attempts of modern studies to divide Somerset's personal religion from his public

²⁹ C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 170.

³⁰ See chapter 5.

policy. Such arguments would have made little sense to Somerset's contemporaries, least of all those who were closest to him.

At the same time as Edward's government was dismantling the visible machinery of Catholic worship religion, they were also promoting more constructive Protestant reforms of the mass rite. In a series of official measures during 1548-9 the Catholic mass was replaced by a reformed Eucharistic rite, set out in the liturgy of the First Book of Common Prayer (1549) and later the Second Book (1552). However though most scholars are agreed upon the Protestant nature of the Eucharistic rite in the Second Book, there is considerable dissent with regard to the theology that informed the 1549 Book. A. F. Pollard went so far as to argue that the First Book of Common Prayer was little more than a liturgical compromise that had deliberately avoided any theological definitions: 'It was intended as a manual of devotion, and not of Roman, Zwinglian, or any other doctrine.'³¹ G. R. Elton was only slightly more specific in his definition of the book's theology when he described it as an attempt to find a *via media* between the Catholic sacrifice of the mass and the commemorative Eucharist of 'Zwinglian' theology.³² More detailed explanations of the Book's precise theology were undertaken by C. W. Dugmore and Basil Hall.³³ Both authors used Thomas Cranmer's works of religious controversy as interpretative tools with which to interpret the theology of the First Prayer Book. Both Dugmore and Hall concluded that Cranmer's Prayer Book and his polemic argued the same Eucharistic case, that of a locative spiritual presence in the Eucharistic elements. All these studies used the 1549 Prayer Book as a theological example of the tentative nature of reform which they believed had been enacted under Somerset's rule, and they all contrasted it with the theology of the Second Prayer Book of 1552. Pollard and Elton

³¹ A. F. Pollard, The Political History of England from the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth (1547-1603), in W. Hunt and R. L. Poole (eds.), The Political History of England (12 vols. London, 1910), vol. VI. p. 24.

³² G. R. Elton, 'The Reformation 1520-1559', in The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, 1975), vol. III. p. 243.

³³ C. W. Dugmore, The Mass and the English Reformers (London, 1958). B. Hall, 'Cranmer, the Eucharist and the foreign divines in the reign of Edward VI', in P. Ayris and D. Selwyn (eds.), Thomas Cranmer: churchman and scholar (Woodbridge, 1993).

detected a more 'energetic pursuit' of the Reformation from 1550 onwards, driven by Northumberland and his allies, 'puritan spirits' like John Hooper and John Knox. Dugmore and Hall argued that Cranmer's settlement of 1549 had been overturned by a clique of 'Zurichers' or 'proto-puritans' amongst whom, once again, was that exponent of extremism John Hooper. These men had inserted a receptionist theology into the Eucharistic rite of the Second Prayer Book which had subverted the theological aims of the First Prayer Book.

Perceived differences between the two liturgies thus expressed in theological terms a historiographical division of Edward's reign into two distinct periods. The first of these was Somerset's uncontentious reforms of Catholic ceremonials in 1547-9, which scrupulously avoided doctrinal change. Northumberland's hegemony from early 1550 ushered in a period of more far-reaching doctrinal changes that constituted a decided break with the Catholic past and made the English church truly Protestant.

Yet what has already been observed concerning the radical intentions behind the iconoclastic reforms of 1547-9 should cause historians to pause. The inextricable relationship between theology and material objects in traditional Catholic religion negates any easy accommodation between theological conservatism and iconoclastic radicalism. Though Edwardian reforms aimed at the eradication of the objects of false worship, a primary intention in this destruction was to replace those theologies that these objects represented. Nowhere was the connection of theology and outward form closer than in the mass rite. The communal and sacral rituals that surrounded the mass expressed in visual terms the claim of the consecrated elements to be the corporal body and blood of Christ. As a result attempts to redefine the shape of the mass liturgy and thereby the congregation's experience of the Eucharist were part of a deliberate attempt to redefine the theology of the mass.³⁴

³⁴ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 464-5.

Nevertheless in order to gauge the validity of Dugmore and Hall's very specific expositions of Cranmer's theology of the Eucharist it is necessary to reinterpret the Prayer Book in the light of Cranmer's polemical works upon the mass.

Dr MacCulloch returns to the Protestant theology set out in the liturgical texts and Cranmer's polemic. His conclusion is that the receptionist theology which Hall believed was at the centre of the 1552 Book alone, is also at the heart of that of 1549 as well. The motive of Cranmer in drafting the Second Prayer Book was not to oblige the 'Zurichers' but rather to clarify those theological points that were already extant in the work of 1549.³⁵ MacCulloch thus reasserts the doctrinal continuity of the Edwardian reformation. Integral in the achievement of this process was the use of Cranmer's works of polemic, A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament and An Answer [...] unto a crafty cavillation by S. Gardiner.³⁶ The Defence was compiled in 1548 and printed in 1550. It was a clear expression of Cranmer's thought at the time when he was compiling both the First and Second Books of Common prayer. The present study sets out Cranmer's Eucharistic theology in greater detail, as expressed in his works of religious controversy, and demonstrates how aspects of it were expressed in his liturgical compositions.³⁷ Contrary to Dugmore and Hall's assertion, Cranmer's theology of the Eucharist is shown to be virtually identical with that professed by Hooper in his works of 1547. Nor was this similarity restricted to Cranmer and Hooper alone. Other polemical writers, notably Thomas Lancaster, Anthony Gilby and Robert Crowley, though often less erudite in their expression than Cranmer or Hooper, defended the same Eucharistic doctrines as they did. This consensus was not purely abstract but was used to produce works which aided the introduction of religious reform during Edward's reign. The logical implications of a receptionist definition of the Eucharist upon the Catholic mass were

³⁵ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 405, 411-14, 461-7, 486, 506.

³⁶ T. Cranmer, A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ [London, R. Wolfe, 1550], STC 6000. T. Cranmer, An answer of Thomas Archbishop of Canterburie, vnto a crafty cavillation by S. Gardiner. Wherin is also answered places of the book of Dr Rich Smyth [London, R. Wolfe, 1551], STC 5991.

³⁷ See chapter 6.

revolutionary. They became evident during 1548 when the Edwardian government allowed the proliferation of a succession of unofficial attacks upon the real presence and the mass sacrifice in sermons and printed tracts. There can be little doubt that this campaign was agreeable to the Edwardian authorities. Those involved were in some cases clients of Somerset or writers whose works were known and read at court. Even Thomas Cranmer himself committed a work to the presses under a pseudonym. Further, the tactics used in the polemical campaign of 1548 were mirrored in the official defence of a receptionist theology during the Lords' Debate of December 1548. The consensus between Cranmer and a collection of other polemical writers allowed both to collaborate in achieving the abolition of the mass and the formation of a reformed Eucharistic rite.

Polemicists were far more ambiguous when they came to describe their relationship with official reform towards the end of Edward's reign. Among many Protestant polemicists there was a growing conviction that the state had begun to use Protestant reformation as a theological excuse for the misappropriation of church wealth.³⁸ This was part of a long running discussion between Protestant clerics and the Tudor governments of Henry VIII and Edward VI about what to do with confiscated church wealth. However it says much about the worsening relationship between Protestants and Edward's government that this issue should have come to a head in a series of Lent sermons to Edward's court in 1553. Attempts to place writers like Crowley, Latimer and Lever into the historical category 'commonwealth men' has been shown to be anachronistic.³⁹ The term itself does little justice to the ambiguous motives that provoked their polemical writing in this period. A close scrutiny of these works demonstrates that while their initial purpose was ostensibly exhortatory, there was also a propaganda motive in their writing. Polemicists were eager to see the evils

³⁸ See chapter 7.

³⁹ G. R. Elton, 'Reform and the Commonwealth men of Edward VI's reign', in P. Clark, A. Smith and N. Tyacke, (eds.), The English Commonwealth 1547-1640 (Leicester, 1976), p. 124.

in the English state reformed, but they also wanted to distance themselves from the evils allowed by state reform. Paradoxically their polemical attempts to divide themselves from their nominally Protestant patrons were only fully developed during the Marian exile.

Chapter 2

The Problem of Authority: 1538-1547

Writing in exile on the continent in the early 1540s Protestant polemicists may have appreciated the irony of their situation. During the late 1530s Protestant writers had used the authority of Henry VIII's Supremacy as a cover under which to advance reform and to redefine orthodoxy. In 1539 Henry VIII used his authority as Supreme Head to enforce a restoration of Catholic theological orthodoxy in the English church. Those theological opinions held to be anathema by Henry's church were condemned in the Act of Six Articles (1539). The Act asserted the doctrine of the real corporal presence in the Eucharistic elements; any who denied this were to be executed for heresy by burning. The Act also asserted that vows of chastity, clerical celibacy and votive masses were all acceptable to God's law; those who denied this were to be imprisoned as felons. Many Protestant polemicists preferred exile to conformity with this new orthodoxy. One of the exiles was the writer John Bale. During the first two decades of the sixteenth century Bale had been a Carmelite friar. Around 1533-1534 Bale had converted, left his order, and become curate of Thorndon in Suffolk. Bale's anti-Catholic sermons at Thorndon had got him into trouble with the Catholic authorities, but he had been saved from prosecution by the personal intervention of Thomas Cromwell. From 1538-1540 Bale had headed a troupe of actors who operated under the protection of Cromwell. Upon Cromwell's fall in June 1540, Bale was forced by the new religious settlement to flee into exile on the continent. The new settlement, enshrined in the Act of Six Articles, touched John Bale on two points; as heretic and felon. For Bale was both a sacramentarian and a married priest. For a writer who had always, and continued, to assert strenuously his loyalty to his king as a duty enjoined by God, this must have been a bitter accusation to swallow. This was especially true since Bale had actively sought to show in his play Kynge Johan (1538) that the real harbingers of sedition in the state, under God's law and the king's, were Roman Catholics. To be called 'heretic' by a papist would have been no shame, in fact many Protestants took it as a proof of their own orthodoxy! But to be labelled so by the authority of the king in

parliament was different, for polemicists had cited royal authority as justification for the break with Rome and the enforcement of reform. In plays such as Kynge Johan and Three Laws, Bale had deliberately fostered the idea that the inescapable concomitant of loyalty to the crown was to dissent from the Pope. But what the Supremacy gave with one hand it could take away with the other. Henry's re-assertion of Catholic orthodoxy in 1539 turned against the Protestants the question they had put to Catholics; how one reconciled doctrine with loyalty to a monarch, when that monarch demanded a different religious practice. To understand why this posed a very real dilemma for the Protestant polemicists and how it influenced their exile writings, one must appreciate the ambiguous nature of the Supremacy, and the reformers early identification with it.

Part 1

The Collaboration with the King: 1538-1540

The Act of Supremacy was partly based upon the Roman law maxim: '*rex in regno suo est imperator*'.¹ However, though this could validate a claim to temporal sovereignty over the church, Roman law admitted the spiritual head-ship of the church under God was an honour reserved to the Roman see. In assuming this spiritual head-ship, the Supremacy thus took an unprecedented step. But opinion was by no means decided upon whether Henry's 'care' of souls, his duty to protect and cherish his subjects and enforce orthodoxy, was ever applicable as a 'cure' of souls, a spiritual charge to define doctrine. One who attempted to answer the question of what the king's authority was, was the Catholic cleric and academic Stephen Gardiner. Gardiner was a doctor of canon and civil law. Initially part of Wolsey's household, he had tried to defend the legal immunity of the church during 1532 in the Answer of the Ordinaries. However, he was later persuaded to accept Henry VIII's Supremacy and to write in defence of it. In his De uera obedientia (1535), Gardiner asserted that the king ruled his subjects both body and soul.² Gardiner's authorities for his assertion were biblical precedents and Roman law. But only the 'care' of souls was

¹ W. Ullmann, 'This realm of England is an empire', JEH, 30 (1979), pp. 179-93.

² S. Gardiner, De uera obedientia, ed. P. Janelle, Obedience in church and state (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 116-118.

allowed for in the precedents of Roman law. Scripture was used by royal propagandists to argue for the theory that God appointed kings to rule under him, and as his officers to be answerable only to him. The authority by which kings ruled came directly from God, and should not admit the intermediary authority of the Pope, whose authority was no more than a usurpation. Scripture was used to justify the primacy of the royal prerogative over papal authority. But the Old Testament, though it showed kings reforming the church, and ordering and ruling their clergy, made it clear that their authority to do so was derived from the definition of reform set out in the injunctions of the *Torah* or Mosaic law. Initially the *Torah* had been transmitted orally, but was later set down in a written form which came to constitute the *Pentateuch*, or first five books of the Jewish canon of Scripture. Even at an early stage there was at the heart of the authorities used to justify the Supremacy the germs of those arguments that could be used to limit it.

To found a religious settlement on the authority of the king would be tenable in only two ways. To achieve consensus would be a matter of enforcing obedience to it, or of persuading people to swear allegiance to the king's authority. Henry's government encouraged acceptance of the Supremacy by deliberately avoiding an explicit statement of the full implications of the king's new title. Though in theory Henry VIII did not claim and gain the 'cure' of souls, in practice the Injunctions of 1536 and 1538 showed the king redefining the religious settlement which affected the spiritual state of his subjects. The basis of his authority for doing so was unsure; and here was the crux of the matter. The Supremacy had given the king the right to enforce orthodoxy, but it had not specified what sort of orthodoxy Henry would enforce in his role as the temporal ruler of the English church. To cite scripture as divine law did not resolve the question of who was to interpret that scripture. In other words who was to formulate the face of religious orthodoxy that the king would enforce? One who attempted to answer the question was the anticlerical polemicist and legal expert Christopher St German. St German thought that the interpretation of scripture rested as a duty with the governing estates; the king in parliament reforming by statute.³ Reformers interpreted Henry's use of biblical rhetoric as proof of

³ J. Guy, 'The Henrician Age', in J. Pocock (ed.), *The Varieties of British Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 28.

his intent to pursue reform along lines laid down in the Old Testament, as iconoclast and restorer of the law. The exhortation in the 1537 Bible encouraged Henry to be this new Josiah, restorer of God's law and destroyer of idols.⁴ However Gardiner could use the examples of both David and Ezechias, and omit their iconoclastic actions, citing only their power to order priests and reform the church.⁵ The omissions in the Supremacy, and the ambiguous nature of Old Testament justifications of the royal office, were seen by both orthodox Catholics such as Gardiner, and non-Catholics such as John Bale and William Turner, as allowing room for counsel. They could define the religious settlement according to their own model, and offer it as counsel to the king for his approval. The Supremacy allowed all parties to hope for future change according to their own criteria, even if the present face of religious orthodoxy in the church was not all they may wish it to be.

The shared rhetoric hid religious disagreements, for Henry VIII and his Protestant propagandists did not always share the same assumptions in the biblical imagery they used. Obviously one could be selective in deciding how much of an Old Testament exemplar was relevant to a contemporary situation. J. N. King shows how Henry's personal annotations in a Psalter of circa 1536-9 bears witness to how seriously Henry VIII took his role as David the destroyer of idols and the favoured one of the Lord. However the king seemed to have avoided perusing those penitential psalms in which David had dealt with his guilt over his adultery with Bathsheba.⁶ Yet this aspect touched one area of the king's duty, which polemicists would not ignore. S. B. House argues that act 5 of John Bale's play, The Chiefe Promyses Of God uses the persona of David, and the example of his adultery with Bathsheba, to make what was a contemporary allusion to Henry VIII's liaison with Elizabeth Blount, Anne Boleyn's sister. In both cases the issue of these unions had died. The striking of both Israel and England by a subsequent plague, was taken to be a sign of divine wrath at the king's sin.⁷ In the case of England the plague or 'sickness' as it was

⁴ The Byble which is all the holy scripture ['Translated by Thomas Matthew' (ie. M. Coverdale and W. Tyndale.)] M. D. XXXVIII. 4 pts. [Antwerp and London, 1537], Preface. STC 2066.

⁵ S. Gardiner, De uera obedientia, pp. 105-11.

⁶ J. N. King, 'Henry VIII as David', in P. C. Hermann (ed.), Rethinking the Henrician era, pp. 84-6.

⁷ S. B. House, 'Cromwell's message to the regulars: The biblical trilogy of John Bale, 1537', R&R,

termed, raged from mid-1536.⁸ In this we see one instance of a reformer's determination to assert the authority of scripture, and his place to interpret and apply it, over and against a king who would have rather have seen the texts used to exalt the office of kingship. The title-page and preface of the 1535 Coverdale Bible is another example of this. The title-page portrayed Henry VIII in the pose of David. But as King points out, in the preface Coverdale used the example of David in order to introduce the story of Nathan, the prophet who had rebuked the king for his adultery and manslaughter.⁹ The visual image of Henry on the title-page was meant to be seen in the context explored by the preface. Despite the greatness of David he had been a frail human who deserved to be criticised by God's servant. Similarly the title-page of the Great Bible (1539) showed Henry VIII seated on his throne enunciating the words of Daniel 6. Placed in context this quote from Daniel was also highly ambiguous. It showed the king praising God, but it was drawn from an account where king Darius had admitted that his laws were of no value if they transgressed the Mosaic law. He admits his error in enforcing idolatry and stops persecuting the godly. Coverdale, who had been in exile with Tyndale in 1529, would have appreciated the relevance of this account to his own history. The use of a common imagery, underpinned by wholly different theological assumptions behind those images, was one aspect of the overall confusion of the late 1530s. This confusion allowed a cautious conservatism by some bishops, but also an interpretative freedom to the reformist prelates to go beyond the letter of the law.¹⁰

However the differences should not be exaggerated. In the happier days of the late 1530s there was sufficient common ground between Protestant polemicists and the Henrician government to allow these writers to work as propagandists for the king's religious policies. Elton's study of the enforcement of the Supremacy in England shows Thomas Cromwell to have been at the centre of the enforcement. It was Cromwell who

(Canada), ns. 15 (1991), p. 128-9.

⁸ J. Brewer et al. (eds.), Letters and Papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII (21 vols. London, 1867-1920), vol. XI. 162, 405, 501.

⁹ J. N. King, 'Henry VIII as King David', p. 86.

¹⁰ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 410-415.

received denunciations and reports upon those Englishmen and women who had acted or spoken against the Supremacy, and it was Cromwell who decided which of these reports warranted prosecution for treason. Part of this policy of enforcement was the use of propaganda, both in writing and visual events.¹¹ This was needed because of widespread disgruntlement at the Supremacy among the English.¹² Among those used by Cromwell as apologists for the Supremacy was the ex-Carmelite John Bale. It was Cromwell who secured the release of John Bale in January 1537, which was apparently not the first time Cromwell had helped the ex-friar out of trouble with the conservative church authorities.¹³ Bale had been imprisoned on a charge of heresy by bishop Stokesley of London. Plays by Bale, though not now extant, show by their titles how the playwright's early writing was geared to the issues that concerned Henry VIII's government: plays on the king's two marriages, on seditious papists, speakers against the Supremacy and the evils of the religious orders. All these were compiled around 1537 to 1538.¹⁴ Bale's plays continued to reflect the concerns of government policy after he became attached to a troupe of players patronised by Cromwell known as 'My Lord Cromwell's players.'¹⁵ This company performed Bale's plays over a three years span on an itinerant tour that covered large distances, performing in colleges, houses, town halls and cloisters, everywhere from York to Cambridge, and from Barnstaple to Thetford.¹⁶ S. B. House has shown that this company was well attuned to the contemporary political climate. Its primary purpose was to preach that obedience to the king was a religious duty, as the Supremacy demanded. But such preaching was tempered by Cromwell's concern for order in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace. It was not politically expedient for him as a politician to allow his players to stage inflammatory anti-Catholic plays in areas that had been loyal to the rebels; such plays which as House says could well be 'counter productive'.¹⁷ As a result the

¹¹ G. Elton, *Policy and Police* (London, 1972), chapter 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹³ H. Mc Cusker, *John Bale: Dramatist and Antiquary* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 1942), p. 5.

¹⁴ W. D. Davis, 'A Bibliography of John Bale', *OBS*, 5 (1940), pp. 210-11.

¹⁵ H. Mc Cusker, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Bale's troupe of actors were itinerant players, touring under the protection of a nobleman. There is no evidence that they operated from a specific base. H. Mc Cusker, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.

¹⁷ S. B. House, 'Cromwell's message to the regulars', p. 126.

staging of works stressing biblical piety and obedience to authority replaced the anti-monastic vituperation of plays like Kynge Johan and Three Laws.

Kynge Johan and Three Laws

Bale's most famous play Kynge Johan utilised a tradition of anti-papal history derived from the Lutherans Tyndale and Barnes.¹⁸ Like so much of Henrician propaganda it used Tyndale's writings in the service of the Supremacy. The play sought to justify, by history and biblical authority, the right of the English king to rule the English church, and the obedience God commanded all subjects to show to such a king. King John creates a historical precedent for Henry VIII when he asserts the sovereignty of the English crown, forbidding legal appeals by subjects to extra-national authorities, taxing his clergy, and controlling episcopal appointments.¹⁹ Cleverly Bale uses the historical John and the timeless typology of *Veritas*, truth or divine law, to propound the theory that the exalted nature of kingship, over all save God, enjoined a special obedience from the subject to the royal office. It thereby made the point that the religious duty of obedience was both historically demonstrable and verifiable by the Bible, a source of eternal relevance to all history. Scriptural examples such as David's respect for Saul as the Lord's anointed were cited by *Veritas* in an attempt to convince the types Commonality, Civil Order and Nobility, that King John's anti-papal actions were justifiable, and that they in no way absolved the estates of their obedience to him.²⁰ It was thus a call for quiet acquiescence in the religious reforms of the king. Imperial Majesty, the type representing Henry VIII, enunciates the obvious implication of the speech when he says: 'All they by God's lawe to kynges owe theyr allegeaunce.'²¹ Such allegiance demanded a loyalty that excluded all others. The play underlines the point that the exercise of Papal jurisdiction implemented by clerics and regulars subverted the divinely-ordered hierarchy of the king of England ruling

¹⁸ C. Levin, 'A good prince: King John and early Tudor propaganda', *SCJ*, 11 (1980), pp. 23-32.

¹⁹ J. Bale, Kynge Johan: A play in two parts, ed. P. Happe, The Complete Plays of John Bale (2 vols. Bury-St-Edmunds, 1985) I. p. 38, lines 348-358, p. 52, lines 898-905, and pp. 63-5, lines 1308-1355. [Hereafter Kynge Johan]

²⁰ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, p. 88, lines 2290-2298. For a similar speech by Imperial Majesty, see pp. 90-91, lines 2364-2386.

²¹ J. Bale, *op. cit.*, p. 91, line 2382.

the church. Sedition, dressed as an ecclesiastic, corrupts each estate from their loyalty to the king in a process that ultimately overthrows him. John was an object lesson to his sixteenth-century audience, that loyalty to the king could not survive alongside loyalty to the Pope, a point not lost on one member of the audience who saw the play staged at Cranmer's house in January 1539.²²

The close alliance between reformers and government propaganda is shown by Bale's use of Lutheran rhetoric. After *Veritas* had reduced the states to obedience Imperial Majesty arrives to remind the audience that *Veritas* had done so on his orders:

I perceyue Veryte, ye have done wele your parte[...] I praye yow take paynes to call our comynalte to true obedyence as ye are God's verytye.

Veritas agrees to preach God's Word, and in doing so gives a close paraphrase of Tyndale's work of 1528, 'On the obedience of subjects unto kings' in The obedience of a Christen man.²³ The most extreme example of the use of Scripture for government propaganda comes where Bale reduces Peter's confession of faith to a comparison with the profession of loyalty by *Nobilitas* to Imperial Majesty. *Nobilitas* admits the Pope is Antichrist and embraces full devotion to Imperial Majesty upon which the latter replies: '*caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed pater meus celestis*.'²⁴ This is a concrete example of what Richard Rex has called Henry VIII's reduction of the message of salvation by faith to salvation by obedience.²⁵

Vital though the message of obedience to the Supremacy was, Bale's plays also actively championed the measures taken under the authority of the 1536 and 1538 Injunctions, and their attack on traditional religion led by Cromwell and various reformers. The stage criticisms of the cult of saints by Bale in Kynge Johan and Three Laws, both compiled in 1538, coincided with the same criticisms in Cromwell's 1538 Injunctions.

²² D. S. Kastan, 'John Bale's Kynge John', in P. C. Hermann (ed.), Rethinking the Henrician era, p. 269. Also see, G. Walker, Plays of persuasion, drama and politics at the court of Henry VIII (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 172-3.

²³ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, pp. 89-90, lines 2347-2357. Compare with W. Tyndale, 'The obedience of subjects unto kings, princes and rulers', in The obedience of a Christian man [1528], in Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions, ed. H. Walter (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848), p. 177.

²⁴ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, pp. 91-2, lines 2417-2418.

²⁵ R. Rex, Henry VIII and The English Reformation, p. 126.

Cromwell headed initiatives at this time to discredit relics by investigations, polemical sermons and even destruction, beginning in 1538, and aided and abetted by like-minded men, such as Latimer and Shaxton. Bale indulged in the same ridicule of relics, in an attempt to discredit their authenticity. Similar techniques which aimed at de-sanctification were used by Bale in his plays. In Kynge Johan, recognisable relics such as the blood of Hailes are rolled into one speech by Sediton in which the examples progressively descend to the repulsive and the ridiculous: a scab of St Job, Adam's toe-nail, a louse of St Francis and 'St Fandigo's fart'.²⁶

Bale was prepared to use his plays as vehicles to support policies with which he agreed. But he was also willing to write according to his own agenda. This was more radical than anything sanctioned by the legislation of the 1530s, and Bale used his position as a protected client of Cromwell to write and stage plays which, though they endorsed much of royal policy, also exceeded their commission. By conflating the temporal and spiritual power of the Pope with Catholic rites in religion, Bale attempted to use the Supremacy against rites which had not been forbidden, and which the king was known to favour. This was by no means unusual amongst polemicists in the 1530s.²⁷ It became a commonly used argument in the writings of the exiles (1540-1547) and beyond. In the play Kynge Johan, Sediton is linked to the Pilgrimage of Grace and is thereby a traitor. His status as traitor is then associated with his beliefs in religion. Sediton uses auricular confession as a means to absolve *nobilitas* of his loyalty to the king.²⁸ Usurped power, the type representing the Pope, endorses auricular confession and the 'sekying of ymagery' as ways to maintain papal power in England.²⁹ There was no distinction made between images and idols. But Bale does not stop here, claiming the Pope's evil intent included holy bread, holy water, and the 'plucking down of matrimony,' a reference to the practice of clerical celibacy.³⁰ Yet Henry VIII's belief in the doctrine of clerical celibacy was a

²⁶ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, pp. 60-1, lines, 1604-1616.

²⁷ S. B. House, 'Literature drama and politics', in D. MacCulloch (ed.), The reign of Henry VIII (London, 1995), p. 188.

²⁸ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, p. 94, lines 2512-2520, and pp. 59-60, lines 1141-1151 and lines 1161-1189.

²⁹ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, p. 57, lines 1074-1085.

³⁰ J. Bale, op. cit., p. 54, lines 980-982. Henry VIII saw holy bread and holy water as instructive rites, see the Proclamation of 16th November 1538. E. Duffy, The Stripping of The Altars, pp. 410-12.

consistent feature of his theology in the 1530s.³¹ It is perhaps also significant that all the evil types in both Kynge Johan and Three Laws swear repeatedly by the mass, a word never on the lips of the good characters.³² Three Laws is the most theologically extreme play. Its denunciation of clerical celibacy, as the root of doctrinal and moral evil, the advocacy of clerical marriage as the only salve for this sore, is mentioned repeatedly, and forms the conclusive comment of more than one exchange by the characters in the play.³³

Part 2

Exile:1540-1548

The Reformers and obedience

The reformers' good fortune did not last. Towards the end of the 1530s the king's concern for religious unity, and his fears concerning the seditious implications of the rise of sacramentarianism, began to reshape his religious policy. Though the majority of the English people hardly favoured reform, divisions in England between Catholics and dissenters had found their way into every level of society.³⁴ The ambiguity of government reforms had allowed a disparity of practice in different parishes and there was a clear need for greater uniformity.³⁵ In addition to domestic divisions Henry was worried by developments on the continent. In June 1538, Francis I and Charles V had signed the treaty of Nice, a ten year truce, that Henry suspected would not only isolate England diplomatically, but allow its Roman Catholic enemies to wage a war on confessional grounds. In order to preempt such a crusade, and as part of a foreign policy re-alignment towards the Burgundian alliance, Henry set out to prove his Catholic orthodoxy in 1538 and 1539.³⁶ As if these reasons themselves were not sufficient, in early 1539 the king

³¹ E. J. Carlson, 'The marriage of William Turner', HR, 65 (1992), pp. 336-9.

³² J. Bale, Three laws (compiled 1538), ed. J. S. Farmer, The plays of John Bale (1907), The repeated swearing by the mass of evil types on pp. 12, 21, 26, 32, 34, 36, 41, 53, 54, 58, 69, 71.

³³ For mentions of Clerical celibacy see *ibid.*, pp. 23, 26, 27, 51, 54, 55, 56, 60, 61.

³⁴ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 417-20. S. Brigden, London and the Reformation. (Oxford, 1989), pp. 255-298.

³⁵ For the persistence of these divisions beyond 1539 see S. Brigden, London and the Reformation, pp. 377-422.

³⁶ G. Redworth, 'A study in the formulation of policy: the genesis and evolution of the Act of Six Articles', JEH, 37 (1986), pp. 42-67. [Hereafter, 'The Act of Six Articles'].

began to receive news of the infiltration of the town and garrison of Calais by sacramentarians. The governor of Calais, Lord Lisle, had doubted their loyalty and seen them as a cause of dissension, and Henry began to agree with him.³⁷ It was vital to maintain control in a town which may possibly be the first point of attack in a war with France. In the attempt to show he was an orthodox Catholic Henry undertook personal, but very public, acts of traditional Catholic piety.³⁸ These were clear signals to his Catholic contemporaries in Europe of the religious orthodoxy of the English king and of his settlement. A proclamation of 16 November 1538 outlawed all Anabaptist and Sacramentarian books, asserted the credentials of Henry as 'a godly and Catholic prince' and condemned heresies. Discussion concerning the sacrament was forbidden and 'laudable rites', such as creeping to the cross, were to be enforced. A proclamation 'For Uniformity in Religion' in April 1539 followed.³⁹ The apogee of this enforcement of Catholic orthodoxy came with the Act of Six Articles on 10 June 1539. The king personally corrected the draft and finalised the words of the articles dealing with the vow of celibacy and the mass.⁴⁰ In 1540 a committee of bishops began working on a new formulary of doctrine, the King's Book, which was eventually published as the official statement of faith, in 1543. This formulary was traditional in every respect save prayers for the dead, especially on the seven sacraments and the question of imagery, in which matters it revised the definitions in the 1537 Bishop's Book in a Catholic direction.⁴¹

Protestant writers seemed unprepared for the religious volte face. Bale staged Kynge Johan as late as January 1539.⁴² Yet as a married priest he was forced into exile with his wife when his protector and patron Thomas Cromwell was executed in 1540.⁴³ Coverdale and Hooper also fled into exile, an example which was imitated by George Joye late in 1540.⁴⁴ William Turner showed a misplaced confidence. Despite the Six Articles,

³⁷ S. Brigden, London and the Reformation, pp. 290-1.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ M. St Clare Byrne, The Letters of king Henry VIII (London, 1968), pp. 244-251.

⁴⁰ G. Redworth, 'The Act of Six Articles', pp. 50-2.

⁴¹ E Duffly, Stripping of the Altars, pp. 442-3.

⁴² S. Brigden, London and the Reformation, p. 301.

⁴³ J. Bale, The Image of Both Churches [R. Jugge, London, 1550], preface. sig. B2v.

⁴⁴ DNB G. Butterworth and A. G. Chester, George Joye: 1495?-1553 (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 205.

he became betrothed in June 1540 and solemnised this betrothal in November 1540, even though as a deacon he was subject to the article enforcing vows of celibacy. As Carlson shows it was this audacity that finally caused Turner's prosecution and probably explains his flight into exile at some time between November 1540 and April 1541.⁴⁵

In the 1530s it had been possible for Protestant writers to avoid confronting the difficult issue of reconciling religious and political loyalties. The government's patronage of reformers, and the reformers' belief that reform according to their own preconceptions was intended, meant it was easy to reconcile political loyalty to a government whose religious policy seemed to agree with Protestants. However in exile the divide resurfaced. Reformers were in a position where they were forced to justify their previous protestations of loyalty to the king, while denying his authority to command their religious beliefs.

The trial and condemnation of John Lambert was an illustrative example of the dilemma that faced the Protestant reformers after late 1538. John Lambert had been converted by the reformer Thomas Bilney and had subsequently fled to Antwerp, where he had become friends with Tyndale and Frith. In 1532 he had been tried for heresy by the Catholic Archbishop Warham, but was saved from prosecution by Warham's death and the succession of Cranmer to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. By 1538 the radical nature of Lambert's beliefs were such that evangelicals such as Cranmer and Cromwell could not afford to protect him. Lambert had questioned the real presence in the mass and had been denounced as a sacramentarian. At his trial before the bishops and the king on 16 November 1538, Lambert tried to blame the bishops for his persecution. In contrast Lambert praised the king and voiced his hope that God would incline the king's heart to show him favour. He appealed to the concept of the king's especial closeness to God, and sought to use the evil counsellor argument to disassociate the king from the new Catholic laws. But Henry denied this fiction, cutting short Lambert's flattery, and personally identified himself with the demand for a capital sentence for Lambert as a heretic.⁴⁶ Henry meant to leave no doubt that he was personally responsible for enforcing an orthodoxy, that

⁴⁵ E. J. Carlson, 'The Marriage of William Turner', *HR*, 65 (1992), p. 339.

⁴⁶ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. V. pp. 230-236. [Hereafter, *Acts and monuments*]

by its nature excluded sacramentarians such as Lambert.

Similar motives were at work in the case of Robert Barnes. Barnes's public railing against Gardiner in a sermon of 29 February 1540, and his open advocacy of *sola fidianism*, were points of disobedience to royal authority that Henry could not brook. The prosecution of Barnes was very much as a result of the king's determination to pursue the matter.⁴⁷

Of course at the centre of these issues was the Supremacy.⁴⁸ The determining factor in English religious life in the later years of Henry's reign continued to be obedience. Those willing to subject their personal religion to their duty of obedience to the king could survive in Henrician England irrespective of whether they were Protestant or Catholic. Cranmer, though he opposed the introduction of the Six Articles in parliament, outwardly conformed to the new settlement when the king made it clear that his authority was behind the new laws. Hugh Latimer, sensing the new climate, resigned his bishopric at the king's request and sought political obscurity in the Midlands. Thomas Becon, despite continuing to profess a Protestant soteriology in his books that was in marked contrast to the official theology of the English church, survived because he was willing to make two formal recantations. Catherine Parr, who had been foolish enough to disagree with her husband during a theological discussion, escaped prosecution for her religious beliefs by an act of formal submission to Henry and an admission of his greater religious wisdom. Nor were reformers the only ones who had to make acts of obedience to the royal will.⁴⁹ When his enemies attempted to implicate him in the papal treason of Germaine Gardiner, Stephen Gardiner managed to extricate himself from his nephew's fate by a full confession and an appeal to the mercy of the king.⁵⁰

Those who denied the Supremacy, whether Roman Catholics or Protestant dissenters like the Anabaptists, went to the scaffold, in one case on the same day.⁵¹

⁴⁷ G. Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: A life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford, 1990), p. 114.

⁴⁸ On Henry VIII's *via media* see R. Hutton, *The Rise and fall of Merry England: The Ritual year* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 77-9.

⁴⁹ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. V. pp. 553-60.

⁵⁰ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. V. pp. 690-691.

⁵¹ The execution of three Anabaptists on the same day as Lambert, 22nd November 1538. S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 202. Burning of three Roman Catholics on the same day as Barnes, see A.

Luther surely had a point when he wrote that Barnes had been guilty of disobedience to the royal will rather than unorthodoxy. The royal attempt to make the king's will in religion an article of faith, he wrote, had condemned Barnes as it had Fisher and More.⁵² The problem Protestant polemicists were faced with was to articulate their dissent from this royal will, even though this meant political exile. For some this became the inevitable consequence of their need to maintain their religious identity.

Evil counsellors and evil kings

Reformers had always imposed limits on royal authority, primarily through the obedience demanded by God's law. This principle was derived from biblical models. Tyndale had asserted that the king was a servant to the law and should not rule according to his own imagination.⁵³ Implicit in Bale's Kynge Johan was the same idea. Realising the need for royal authority to oppose the papacy, Bale cited David: 'As a strong David at the voyce of verytie great Goliath the Pope he strake down with hys slynge.'⁵⁴ This implied that Henry had the authority to reform religion, but that his reform should be limited by divine authority. The account in I Samuel 17 was explicit. David's success was not due to personal virtue or attributes, but his subservience to God's will: 'The battle is the Lord's and he will deliver you into our hands.' The battle was that between Christ and Antichrist, and though kings could help the war effort, the war could only be ultimately won by the Word of God.⁵⁵ As a warrior of the Word the king was its servant. His duty was to create conditions in his realm conducive to the preaching of the Word; Bale thought so, and so did Tyndale. Kings had a duty to read the Scriptures so they could counteract the clerical usurpations of God's authority.⁵⁶ Joye went further, adding that kings should

G. Dickens, The English Reformation (London, 1983), p. 248.

⁵² R. Barnes, Bekantnus des Glaubens. [Wittenburg, 1540], Preface by Martin Luther, ed. J. P. Ludsardi, The Complete Works Of Sir Thomas More (Yale, New Haven and London, 1973), vol. VIII. pt. 3. pp. 1414-1415. [Hereafter, CWTM]

⁵³ W. Tyndale, Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions, p. 334. Also G. Joye, Unite and scisme, [Antwerp, 1543], sig. B5v.

⁵⁴ J. Bale, Kynge Johan, p. 58, lines 1114-1115..

⁵⁵ 'Johan Harryson' [John Bale] Yet a course at the Romishe foxe: A dysclosynge or openynge [Antwerp, 1543], sig. A6v. STC 1309. [Hereafter, A dysclosynge]

⁵⁶ W. Tyndale, The obedience of a Christian man, in Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions, p. 249.

learn the law and teach their subjects to do likewise, by appointing and supporting godly and learned (Protestant) men to teach them.⁵⁷ Thus monarchs should be patrons of the preachers and teachers needed by the church. But no king merely by virtue of his crown was necessarily a true Christian; if he dissented from God's Word he placed himself outside the true church, and as a result in Antichrist's church. Just as the papal office had not protected the Popes from being excluded from the congregation, in the same way the high office of royalty could not give immunity if the king's life was immoral and his religion erroneous. By the same token royal authority could not seek by proclamation or statute alone to justify as valid pronouncements that reformers thought conflicted with the belief in *sola scriptura*. George Joye was openly critical in 1543 of the Supremacy and the way it had enforced what he saw as false religious uniformity through the parliamentary law, and the debates in Convocation:

Then was it disputed (as ye have seen of late in ovr parleamentes and convocations) of the intercession and praying to saints, and of their worshipping (God save it) and of the veneration of images and reliques, of purgatory, unwritten verities, of kynges autorite and power over Gods holy euerlastyng worde.⁵⁸

All this, wrote Joye was but: 'mortall menis transitorye new vayne actes.'⁵⁹ John Bale agreed, writing that the Six Articles were not made Christian merely because the papal bull had been replaced with the rubber stamp of the Supremacy:

The vi blasphemouse articles collected out of the Popes decrees [...] enacted and established with more tyranny than ever undre the Romyshe Pope or any other tyrant.⁶⁰

Yet despite this criticism of the king's laws, an initial inspection shows what looks like a widespread reluctance among polemicists to recognise that the king was personally responsible for the active persecution of the reformers or the enforcement of the Six Articles, which were the machinery of that persecution. As will be argued later, this

⁵⁷ G. Joye, The exposition of Daniel the prophete[...] a prophecye diligently to be note of al Emperowrs and kinges in these laste dayes ['Geneua' (Antwerp)], sig. B7v. STC 14823. [Hereafter, Exposicion]

⁵⁸ G. Joye, The Vnite and scisme of the olde chirche [Antwerp, 1543], sig. A8r. STC 14830 [Hereafter, Scisme]

⁵⁹ G. Joye, Scisme, sig. A8v.

⁶⁰ J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye of an Englyshe christiane [Antwerp, 1544?], sig. A5v and 6r.

ostensible loyalty to the king was a blind, especially during the later exile years.⁶¹

Nevertheless one is compelled to ask why polemicists felt the need to exonerate the king at all. There were a number of reasons, the most obvious of which was the fear of prosecution. The Act of Six Articles was enforced with a treason act that encompassed all those who dared to call Henry a heretic or a schismatic. Certainly Joye admitted that fear was a factor. No one would dare to write ill of the bishops he wrote, of their:

abominacions, couered and defended with so mighty brode wynges of the seculare armes, as though there durst no man say, nor wryte, reason nor do [...] ayenst them
62

Joye did write against the bishops, but from the safety of exile in Antwerp, and he was careful to avoid explicit criticism of the king. Yet even this was not enough it seemed. In the effort to avoid detection Joye falsified the place of printing on the title pages of his work. Despite this he was almost caught by the imperial authorities' search for heretics, an initiative he blamed on Gardiner's diplomatic influence with the Emperor.⁶³ In addition to fear for themselves, polemicists might also have been afraid for their co-religionists in England. They did not want to give their Catholic persecutors ammunition, for books that allowed opponents to substantiate a link between Protestantism and sedition, such as adverse comments about the king, would have made life hard for Protestants in England. As it was, the possession of forbidden books could form damning and central evidence in the conviction of dissenters; the prosecution of William Tolwyn in London in 1541 showed this clearly. Tolwyn was forced to admit that he had harboured known heretics and that he owned heretical books. These books were shown to the London audience who were present at Tolwyn's recantation sermon as a proof of his guilt.⁶⁴

Such practical considerations obviously carried weight with the Protestant writers, even when they themselves were established in comparative security abroad. But there were also what one may term tactical considerations, the desire to retain at least the possibility of renewed favour with the king. It is easy only with hindsight to see how

⁶¹ See pp. 53 ff. below.

⁶² G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. X8v.

⁶³ C.C. Butterworth and A. G. Chester, *George Joye*, p. 206.

⁶⁴ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. F7v-H1r and G5v.

hopeless this aspiration was. But the authority of the king, as in the 1530s, was still the only power able to re-direct the English church in a Protestant direction. The continual exhortations and pleas to the king by Bale and Turner are only comprehensible if one appreciates that, whatever Henry's involvement in the Six Articles, Protestants believed that the personal nature of the Supremacy would enable the king to change the religious settlement at will.

It was this ambiguity at the heart of the Act of Supremacy which forced Protestant polemicists to have recourse to the evil counsellor argument. This was a fiction that placed the onus for unpopular legislation enacted under the king's rule with his counsellors, in an attempt to avoid the necessity of criticising the royal office itself. It disassociated the king from his own laws, and for Protestant polemicists in exile at this time, it was a way of reconciling political loyalty to the king with religious dissent. While exiled Protestants still believed that they had something to hope for from Henry VIII they were loath to abandon their professions of loyalty to him, or to be openly critical or insulting. A respectful subservience was the best way to get his attention. The evil of the religious settlement had to be explained, but not in terms of opposition to a king. William Turner called on Henry to convene a gathering of godly (Protestant) laymen and clergy to settle the religious issue in favour of the reformers.⁶⁵ Bale cited Proverbs 21: 'The heart of a king is in the hands of God and at his pleasure he may evermore turn it'.⁶⁶

These men were trying to suggest advice to the king; to counsel him. As Thomas More wrote in Utopia, those excluded from the centre of political power could counsel their king from afar by writing books, and this was the motivation for the reformers' dedications of their books to the king.⁶⁷ In 1543 William Turner addressed to Henry his Huntyng of the romishe fox, expressing the hope that someone would show the book to the king before the bishops got hold of it (which they did).⁶⁸ Gardiner wrote a reply to it in the next year.

⁶⁵ 'W. Wraughton' (W. Turner), The Rescuynge of the romishe fox ['Winchester by me Hanse hit Prik', (Bonn, L. Mylius,) 1545], sig. A3v. STC 24355. [Hereafter, Rescuynge].

⁶⁶ Bale was citing his own translation from the Vulgate. For his use of the Vulgate in his plays of the 1530s see, P. Happe (ed.), The Complete Plays Of John Bale, vol. I pp. 16, 20

⁶⁷ T. More, Utopia, in CWTM, vol. IV. p. 87. I am indebted for this reference to Professor J. Guy.

⁶⁸ 'W. Wraughton' (W. Turner), The Huntyng and fyndyng out of the romishe fox, which more than seuen yeares hath been hid among the bisshoppes of Engelonde [Antwerp, 1543], sig. A1v. Titlepage. STC

Bale hoped the same as Turner in his 1544 Epistle, and Turner's reply to Gardiner in 1545 was dedicated to Henry VIII. Bale decided to try prayer as well as writing in his Epistle of 1544. The work began with a plea that:

[God would] open thoroughly the eyes of our most worthy and noble kyng (as he hath already begonne) ⁶⁹

Having established his good wishes to the king he also widens his address to include the Lords and burgesses in parliament. The scapegoats were the evil counsellors. Bale was able to criticise the king's religious settlement, by blaming it on the bishops. To this end he writes that the prelates should be revealed for what they were: 'Shameless lyers agaynst God and his word'. This task would be fulfilled with Bale's writing:

some with penne [...] so bringing them (antichristian bishops) out of theyr olde estimacyon, lest they shulde still regne in the peoples consciences.⁷⁰

Robert Barnes had been commanded by Henry VIII to recant for less than this. To this end in his Epistle Bale constructs a more comprehensive explanation for the beguiling of the king by unscrupulous counsellors. A Tyndaleian-style conspiracy theory maintained that the Protestants were the king's natural allies, and the Roman Catholics, and especially the Roman Catholic clergy, his natural enemy.⁷¹ Antichrist was manifest in all nations, but in England he was in the popish bishops, their clergy, and all rebels to the king. The clergy conspired to maintain their jurisdiction and false doctrine, by encouraging religious error and obscurantism among the people, and enforced this by misleading the king into supporting their religion. The unity of Antichrist had been manifested in the Six Articles and the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace. Those professing the gospel had been the obedient subjects, those who had not rebelled against Henry because they had the law of God written on their hearts. Tyndale's books typified this, Bale wrote, as they preached obedience and had won the king many true friends. The conclusion was that Bale's type of

24353. [Hereafter Huntyng].

⁶⁹ J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye, sig. A2r. The phrase was a commonplace amongst reformers. Tyndale had used virtually the same words at his execution. See J. Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. V. p. 127.

⁷⁰ J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye, sig. A3r.

⁷¹ For an example of a similar conspiracy theory see, W. Tyndale, Doctrinal Treatises, pp. 90-7.

reformer was one of a kind who were 'God's true servauntes and the kynges faythfull subjectes.'⁷² Bale exonerated the king, blaming the 'cruel Hamans' his counsellors. Bale's reference to Haman was an allusion to Haman in the book of Esther. Esther related how Haman, chief officer at the court of the Persian king Ahasuerus (rendered in Greek, Xerxes), had planned the death of his court rival Mordecai. Mordecai had been a Jew and Haman persuaded the king to pass an edict allowing the extermination of all Jews in the Persian Empire. The disaster was averted by Mordecai's cousin Esther who had pleaded the cause of her people to the king with the result that Haman, rather than Mordecai, had been executed.⁷³ Doubtless Bale thought the comparison apt, though by inference this made Henry King Ahasuerus, the dupe of his false counsellor, a comparison Henry would not have found complimentary.

Joye went even further in exploring the lengths to which the evil counsellor argument could be taken. Like Bale, Joye cited the bishops and their clergy as seditious traitors prosecuting the king's true subjects (by which Joye meant men like himself). The true base of Henry's authority was an exclusion of all papal authority, Joye argued. In destroying his anti-papal subjects, the Protestants, he destroyed his own authority. Thus in effect the king was allowing his enemies to denigrate the office of royalty. Like the Protestant exiles, the king was one of those persecuted by the effect of ill counsel!⁷⁴ This was the logical conclusion of an illogically premised argument. Joye repeated an image used by John Bale six years earlier in Kynge Johan to suggest an alternative reforming role for the king, one based on biblical examples, with all the limitations that inferred. The Pope was Pharaoh and Henry was Moses.⁷⁵ This was a plea for Henry to head a true reform of the church, as he had done in the 1530s.

Bale, too, reminded the king of his reforming initiatives of the 1530s and hoped he would return to them. Henry was explicitly compared to Jehosaphat. 2 Chronicles 19 and 20 recounted the events of king Jehosaphat's reign. Jehosaphat had been an exemplary

⁷² J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye, sig. A6v-B1r.

⁷³ Esther 3-8.

⁷⁴ G. Joye, A present consolacio[n] For the sufferers of persecucion [Antwerp, 1544], sig. A7v. STC 14828. [Hereafter, Consolacion].

⁷⁵ G. Joye, Consolacion, sig. A8r.

king in giving law and order to his subjects and in seeking the guidance of God. However the king's attack on Baalism had been incomplete; sacred poles had been cut down but the pagan hill shrines had been allowed to remain. The result was that the hearts of Jehosaphat's people had remained alienated from God and in thrall to false religion. When Bale called Henry VIII of England Jehosaphat it was to draw attention to the incompleteness of Henry's religious reforms, and Bale voiced the hope that Henry would be a Josiah and: 'Perfyghtly restore the lawes as yet corrupted'.⁷⁶ Bale reasserted the message that true religion was a proof of allegiance to the true God. Protestants were the true subjects and as a result they gave the best counsel, even though that advice may be what the king least wanted to hear.⁷⁷ As Joye had written, a true counsellor dared to tell a king the truth to his face; though in the cases of Joye, Turner and Bale, the type-face of their books was about as close as they dared get to Henry.⁷⁸ Though there was a censorious tone in this writing, the general impression was of a subject eager to profess his loyalty to his king, and to be given a chance of showing it. Gardiner put it more crudely, but also more truthfully when he characterised Protestant writers as estranged non-conformists, trying to reingratiate themselves into the king's favour, and that Henry was not interested in their opinions. His summary of the case in his reply to Turner was characteristically direct, though in this case perfectly accurate: Turner should recognise that the king's religious settlement was really set up by the king himself, and that favour with Henry VIII meant conformity with this settlement. He also wrote, to nettle Turner, that he should try and get back into God's favour as well. He advised Turner:

To make a more fruitful suit to Hys goodness [God's] and to the kingis Maiestie, for your reconciliation to both theyr favoures.⁷⁹

Gardiner was one of the major, if not the major target of the Protestant's invective.

Gardiner's position, as a high ranking Catholic bishop, and his high-profile career in

⁷⁶ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. B3r.

⁷⁷ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. B3r.

⁷⁸ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. B3v.

⁷⁹ S. Gardiner, *The examinacion of a prowde presumptious hunter* [circulated in manuscript, 1544?], ptd. in *The Letters Of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J. A. Muller (Westport, Connecticut, 1970), p. 492. [Hereafter, S. Gardiner, *Letters*]

politics made him an ideal target for the evil counsellor slur. He was famous enough to be known by readers of polemic, his Catholic orthodoxy was well known, and he was close enough to the court to be a convincing scapegoat for Henry VIII's Catholic orthodoxy. Thus in an ironic way the greatest enemy of the English polemicists was also their greatest asset. John Bale thought it feasible to blame him for the formation of the Six Articles; it was certainly less awkward than blaming the king. Turner said that the retention of all that was recognisably 'Romish' in the church was Gardiner's responsibility as the king, if he were better counselled, would want to abolish these rites.⁸⁰ Of course Gardiner was not fooled by any of this. With characteristic perspicacity he cited the real reason for the reformers' use of his name as a by-word for deceit and ill counsel. In doing so he tore away the mask of the evil counsellor myth to reveal what was the true motive for its use. In a long, but revealing passage towards the end of Gardiner's 1546 reply to George Joye, Gardiner claims criticism of the king's counsellors was covert criticism of the king, timorously expressed:

Can ye fynde in your harte, to doo so much iniurie to the kynges maiestie as to thinke, the state of this realme to be directed not by his high wisdom [...] but as I and suche other, for oure purpose (as ye note) wold haue it governed? [...] Is this the charitable deuise in the brotherhod, to chose me oute for a raylinge stock, and in iestinge of your pleasure of me, brynge to the kynges maiesties ears that ye wold he shuld heare spoken of you?

Then Gardiner went in for the kill:

Suppose ye kynges maiestie can not understande what ye meane by Winchester? When ye attribute all the fashion of the state of the realm to Winchester? Cal the actes that myslike you Winchester's? Al statutes Wynchester's? Al iuste punishments (howsoever ye call them) Wynchester's? And charge all upon Winchester, that in so doing ye name Wynchester, not for Wynchester, but use the name of Wynchester, in stede of that ye dare not name and speak out. Ye abuse herein so much the kynges maiesties [...] glorie in defence of religion from your corruption.⁸¹

We may reasonably suspect that if Henry VIII had not understood this, and it seems unlikely he could have failed to, then Gardiner would have been happy to explain it to him.

⁸⁰ W. Turner, *Huntyng*, sig. A5r-6r, and E3v-4r.

⁸¹ S. Gardiner, *A Declaration of svch true articles as George Joye hath gone about to confute as false* [London, 1546], sig. Bb4v. STC 11588.

The debate of William Turner and Stephen Gardiner

The polemical exchange between Gardiner and Turner from 1543 to 1545 was one of the fullest expressions of the evil counsellor myth, and its use in addressing questions of obedience to a king and his religious settlement. Its especial interest lies in the fact that it showed the extreme lengths to which polemicists would go, and the unusual arguments they were prepared to construct in order to recommend their religious ideas to the king. In 1543 Turner published The Huntyng and Fyndyng of the Romish fox. Gardiner replied in 1544 with The examinacion of the prowde presumptious Hunter. This work circulated only in manuscript, but Turner felt strongly that it should be answered, and by a twist of historical irony, preserved Gardiner's work for future generations by reprinting it in his 1545 answer A Rescuyinge of the Romishe fox.

The central argument of William Turner's work of 1543 was that papal authority was supported by canon law. This law was the only justification for the non-biblical rites of the Catholic religion. In this way he tried to argue that the Catholic religion was synonymous with the papal origins of canon law. Royal authority, Turner argued, was based on biblical law, and thus could only be truly fulfilled by a rigorous enforcement of this law. The work begins by explaining that Henry had ordered the Romish fox (the financial, and doctrinal jurisdiction and influence of the Pope) to be expelled out of his realm. But the 'hounds' he had set upon the fox, had disguised it in order to save the fox and had turned their aggression upon the true hunters. The metaphor was pursued, as the fox fled into the English church where he was given succour by sympathetic prelates who hid him, and beat up the scholars who were pursuing their papal quarry. Having located the Romish fox in the church, Turner explains his metaphor by listing twenty-nine rites and doctrines in the church the origin of which was papal; though as Pineas demonstrates Turner could only find and cite evidence in support of his assertion for eighteen of his twenty-nine points.⁸² Turner expressed a basic New Testament tenet when he asserted that the church was an ideologically-bounded community; a group of people unified by a

⁸² W. Turner, Huntyng, sig. A7r-B5v. R. Pineas, 'William Turner's polemical use of history', RQ, 33 (1980), p. 601.

common creed in God and his law. Proceeding from this assertion Turner argued that the apostles and prophets and many of those in heaven were undoubtedly members of this true church, yet they had never heard of canon law as the church's law, and thus canon law could not be an eternal law for the church, and must be a human invention: 'The church of Chryst hath at all tymes had none other lawe but Chrystes word.'⁸³

The immortal nature of this was contrasted with the temporality of canon law and judgements on the relative status of each were drawn. The incongruity of ruling an eternal true church with a temporal law was explained as a papal usurpation of Christ's law by man's traditions. Any church that allowed this was not the true church but was ideologically bound in doctrine to Rome:

Then if the canon lawe be the lawe of the chyrch of England, the Pope's chyrch and the Englyshe chyrch are all one concerning theyr ceremonyes and lawe.⁸⁴

With the audacious deceit common to the use of the evil counsellor argument, the writer claims that Henry must agree with this self-evident reasoning, and that consequently when he had ordered the expulsion of the Pope, he had obviously intended the end of papal doctrine as well as the papal purse and person. The king's prelates had deceived their ruler by disguising and hiding the fox of Rome, frustrating the royal intent.⁸⁵

Turner did not have to wait long for a reply, one from an able polemicist himself, Stephen Gardiner. Gardiner succeeded in provoking Turner into a more explicit statement of his reform aims, and as a result his true beliefs about the basis of royal authority. This of course said a great deal about the limitations Turner placed on the obedience he would admit to any king. Turner had addressed his 1543 work to Henry as 'Supreme governor' of his realms. Gardiner exploited the polemical potential of this in his 1544 reply, writing that Turner sought to deny the king his title. This slight from a subject to his prince was plain: 'pryde and arroganci.'⁸⁶ Turner's disingenuous reply in 1545 showed the reformer's acute discomfiture. Trapped between the Scylla and Charybdis of religious and

⁸³ W. Turner, *Huntyng*, sig. B8r.

⁸⁴ W. Turner, *Huntyng*, sig. B7r.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, A5r.

⁸⁶ S. Gardiner, 'The examinacion', in *Letters*, p. 481.

political loyalties, he was unwilling to admit the two were contradictory, or to deny either. The title Supreme Governor he wrote, betokened as much as Supreme Head. However Turner then qualifies this statement by admitting that a king can only be head over a temporal church, never over Christ's spiritual congregation. To prove the point he cited the example of history; that evil kings such as Herod and the Roman emperors Tiberius and Augustus had been temporal heads, but had been too corrupt to be admitted as spiritual head of the church.⁸⁷ These were not very flattering comparisons! Further, Turner wrote, Christ alone was head of his church. In other words Turner would admit political loyalty to his king as a subject's duty of obedience, but he retained the right to dissent from him in religion. He had shown himself to be deeply suspicious of the temporal church in England. The true relationship that exiled Protestants sought with the king began to be revealed. This position was not acceptable to Henry himself, as the case of Lambert had shown, and Turner could only write this openly because he was in exile outside Henry's political jurisdiction.

William Turner wanted to make a polemical case that his dissent came from a wish to be loyal to his king, and not as Gardiner had said, because he was a proud and seditious subject. In this he had more success than in defining the king's title. Turner stated that all true subjects genuinely desired to be loyal to their king. The justification for the validity of this impulse was shown in scripture:

[All subjects] are enclosed under theyr (king's) authoritie alon[e] bi the everlasting worde of good [God] and not by any corruptable politike law of man.⁸⁸

As Bale had intended in his writing a year before, Turner was deliberately hearkening back to the justifications made for the Supremacy in the 1530s *vis-a-vis* the papacy. But there was a crucial difference. Turner extrapolated from this endorsement in scripture of obedience to a king, the claim that the scriptural basis of obedience could only be truly served by strengthening this biblical authority. Nor did the authority for interpreting the Bible seem to rest with the person of the king. Turner's advice was expressed in such a

⁸⁷ W. Turner, Rescuynge, sig. C2r-3v.

⁸⁸ W. Turner, Rescuynge, sig. B1v.

way that it was tantamount to a claim that he could interpret the Bible truth for the king. Any true subject would exhort the king to print the Bible and follow its rules for reform, for thereby subjects would become aware of how much the Bible demanded the obedience of subjects to their king. If Gardiner invoked the royal authority against Turner for criticising Catholic rites, his aim must have been to conceal this biblical message and believe it was sufficient to base the king's Supremacy on the non-scriptural rites and doctrines of the Catholic church. These 'popish' traditions could not justify the authority of scripture for they were not in scripture and therefore, Turner reasoned, contrary to it. Having established this position Turner then accused his opponent of denigrating the royal authority. That which was temporal was made, and could be repealed by men. This included canon law and its endorsement of unwritten verities. Scripture was a truth that could never be repealed by men, because it was derived from the eternal and ever-living God. All faithful subjects would wish to base their loyalty to the king on this verity, and not one that could be impugned. Turner was reasserting the contention of his co-religionist John Bale that all true and obedient subjects were Protestant. Turner posed a rhetorical question to Gardiner: 'hathe not the kyng authoritie eogh of the scripture, for to matayn hys supremaci withal?'⁸⁹

By sleight of hand Turner had justified the royal Supremacy by basing it on the authority of scripture, from which position he could, and did, introduce his own interpretation of scripture, in his 'counsel' to the king. By doing so he could redefine the loyalty a king could reasonably expect from his Protestant subjects. He had also imputed to Gardiner's position the suggestion that Catholic use of the Supremacy made assumptions which themselves would ultimately undermine the king's primacy. For if it was based on man-made Roman rites, then like them, it could be dispensed with when men chose. This was a well made polemical point, but it was hardly honest. Nor if Gardiner had ever read Turner's work of 1545, as we know he read that of 1543, would he have been likely to have been convinced by Turner's reasoning. He had noted in his manuscript of 1544 replying to Turner's Huntyng, the tendency of his Protestant detractor to impute

⁸⁹ W. Turner, Rescuynge, sig. B1r-2r.

assumptions to an opponent's argument, so that he could triumph over these very points as if they had been put by Gardiner: 'ye make yourself wrong principles and therupon ingendre matter to talke on.'⁹⁰ Turner won the argument because he had rewritten all the rules. But as a political and religious exile from England it was the only way he could win against Gardiner who was a conformist and in power. The situation in England was such that Gardiner held most of the polemical cards.

But if Turner was prepared to use all polemical means he could conceive to somehow prove that Protestants were politically loyal to the king, this was in order to gain his support for a Protestant model of reform. The limits placed by Turner on royal authority were part of his effort to move the king to a settlement of religion defined by Turner's interpretation of scripture. Having asserted that scripture validated the primacy of the royal office, rather than the law of a king, Turner made the Supremacy a Trojan horse whereby he could sneak his own reforming ideas into the English church. Gardiner noted Turner's covert attempt to promote anti-Catholic reform by professing a spurious obedience to the king, spurious because it was an obedience on Turner's own terms and not those that had been defined by Henry VIII:

The man pretendeth to hunt the romishe fox [...] albeit he would gladly dissemble it, yit he cannot hide that he is angrie with the aulter and the chalice.⁹¹

Turner included in his attack Lent, clerical celibacy, all images, and numerous other laws and ceremonies:

He hath be lyke a mervelous platform in hys head to buylde, that he wold rid Christis religion of al these ornamentes.⁹²

This platform was the iconoclastic destruction of all ceremonies and doctrines, which Turner believed scripture did not allow. The reason Turner had justified the Supremacy in the way he did became ever more apparent. When pressed by Gardiner on what constituted Papal corruption Turner asserted it was all that could not be found in the scripture. Gardiner argued that deeds or beliefs were either intrinsically true or false, whoever might

⁹⁰ S. Gardiner, 'The examinacion', in *Letters*, p. 487.

⁹¹ S. Gardiner, 'The examinacion', in *Letters*, p. 481.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 492.

use them, and questioned Turner's contention that everything used by the Pope was therefore a product of the papacy. Not every thing the Pope had done or said was made erroneous just because the Pope had said or done it. Henry had discarded what was wrong with Roman religion and kept what was true. Gardiner asked, if the Devil said Jesus was the son of God should we not believe him? Turner replied in 1545:

If the Pope or any of hys taught the worde of god, that was not hys doctryne, but the doctryne of god, which is either in the new testament or in the olde.⁹³

This was an admission that the desire to chase out the romish fox was primarily a desire to attack Catholic ceremonial religion. A similar antagonism towards Catholic theology and religion had been evident in those works which Turner had translated during the 1530s.⁹⁴ However neither of these translations was as radical as the works which Turner wrote during the Henrician exile. During exile Turner developed an iconoclastic reform theology.

Gardiner was surely right in seeing Turner's model of reform as disturbing; any man who was a Catholic and a doctor of law would find it so. Its fierce determination to reduce all authority in religion to the direct injunction of scripture, and to see scripture as the command of God, was a concept open to abuse. It would allow the reformer to justify his own interpretations of scripture as God's will. Nor did Turner's reform touch only religion. He wrote that he would avoid all discussion or criticism of civil laws, for these were 'politic', that is made for the good of the commonwealth. Yet Turner denied that any law that was pro-Catholic could be anything but impolitic.⁹⁵ Thus no settlement of religion that did not fulfil Turner's expectations, that is, was not animated by the stark biblical reductionism he advocated, would be denigrated as 'impolitic.' Turner wrote in 1548 that it was better to smash an idol and risk disorder, than let it remain and risk the wrath of God.⁹⁶ The uncompromising nature of Turner's ideological position reflected his estrangement from the legal and political authorities that had enforced the religious

⁹³ W. Turner, *Rescuynge*, sig. C8r-v.

⁹⁴ These works were J. von Watt, *A worke entytled of ye olde god and ye newe* [London, J. Byddell (for W. Marshall) 1534], STC 25127. U. Regius, *A comparyson betwne the olde learnynge and ye newe* [Sowthwarke, J. Nicolson, 1537], STC 20840.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v-4v.

⁹⁶ W. Turner, *A newe dialogue, where in is conteyned the examinatio[n] of the masse* [London, J. Day and W. Seres, 1548], sig. B4v. STC 24362.

settlement in England. Turner also asserted that the gospel needed no politic law to maintain it. This seemed to infer that since no secular law would be needed in the enforcement of true religion, that no secular law had any authority if it legislated against scripture: scripture as expounded by the individual. It was a conviction suited to a minority in exile under the persecution of a secular law, but Gardiner saw such comments as more proof of the Protestant's 'licentious libertie'.⁹⁷ Certainly Turner's conviction was that the king had a duty to see the gospel preached; that was to reform according to Turner's own definition of necessary reform. His assertion was one man setting his private opinion against the legislative decisions of the English king and estates in parliament. As such it was deliberately disruptive to the settlement. Turner proudly defined himself as one of a minority. When accused of making a: 'tumult and a clamore and [aiming to] seduce the peple,' Turner replied that: 'Thys slander suffre i in common withe the prophete [and] withe Christe.'⁹⁸ It is obvious that this man sought contention as a badge of his elect status, proving his ideological affinity with the persecuted elect of the church's history. He gloried in his status as one who was irreconcilable to the Henrician settlement. It had become a sign of his sanctity.

Later in his 1545 work Turner returned to politic laws, only to deny their value altogether, if they conflicted with the divine law. God had ordered the Israelites to drive out all the heathen ceremonies, rights and laws from Canaan. This had included: 'them that were lawfull were they never so profitable or pleasant for the comonwelth.'⁹⁹ This introduced another example of Turner's relentless biblical reductionism, as he outlined an Old Testament-style purgation as mediaeval traditional religion came up against Turner's own brand of reform. All the practices of their forebears were to be wiped out; Moses had ordered an end to their ceremonies. Nor did Turner seem to care if he destroyed that which was of worth along with the dross; doubtless some of the Canaanite cattle and men were not evil, but this counted for nothing because God had ordered them dead, he wrote.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ S. Gardiner, 'The examinacion', in Letters, p. 492.

⁹⁸ W. Turner, Rescuynge, sig. B5r.

⁹⁹ W. Turner, Rescuynge, sig. E3r-v.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. E4v.

When Saul had refused to fulfil the totality of this command in I Samuel 15, God had punished him. That Turner intended a similar holy crusade for England, was shown by his question to Gardiner. If Gardiner and his ceremonies had come up against Moses, Joshua, or David, should they, as men of God, have committed acts of iconoclasm as they did? Should they follow God's commands, and would they be mad if they did? Turner answered his own question when he wrote that they would be fully justified, and so would any man who drove out all non-biblical ceremonies and rites in England. John Bale had professed the same intent two years earlier.¹⁰¹ This was the sort of reform Bale must have hoped for when he told Henry VIII that he hoped he would become a full Josiah (2 Kings 22, 23 and 2 Chronicles 34, 35) or Asa (I Kings 15) or Jehosaphat, (2 Chronicles 17-20) iconoclastic kings who restored the Mosaic law.

The exile writings of George Joye

Turner's discussion on authority had been formed in the heat of debate. In 1545 George Joye gave a coherent, and very long, exposition of the limits of a king's authority in his Exposicion of Daniel the prophete. This work is often correctly cited as a piece of apocalyptic literature, but it was also a discussion in print of the question of secular authority, as it presented itself to a beleaguered religious minority. Joye began by arguing that all royal authority was subject to God's since God was the source of all authority:

And in describing the kinges maiestie's powr etc, he sheweth kingdoms to be geuen of God and not gotten by man's power.¹⁰²

This was not radical, the King's Book asserted as much. But like Turner, Joye used this to establish a standard by which he could compass and limit royal authority. If a king acted in an ungodly way this would invalidate his authority. In such circumstances a subject was absolved of his obedience to the king.

¹⁰¹ J. Bale, A dysclosynge, sig. M6v.

¹⁰² G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. D3v. STC 14823.

The command of king Darius to Daniel to commit an act of idolatry was one such instance:

The king [...] had commanded Daniell to be destroyd for kepinge the first precept of God. He thus commanded it not as a kinge and lorde, but as an idolater and murtherer of innocents.¹⁰³

A king who exalted his own authority over God's was a tyrant.¹⁰⁴ Thus a king's authority to act was divided from his own will. Good laws were intrinsically good and validated by their inherent quality, not by royal fiat alone:

[The] lawes were above the kinges [...] It were the most indigne and detestable thinge that good laws should be subject and under euyl men.¹⁰⁵

The question of obedience had now come to turn not on whether the laws were the king's or not, but whether they were good or bad. Joye clarified the question by dividing the law into two; eternal and civil. Eternal law taught strict monotheistic religion in doctrine and outward religious practice and aimed at the sanctification and ethical improvement of the individual. This law claimed primacy over all others. Civil law dealt with government and ownership. All subjects owed obedience to civil law in so far as it did not transgress eternal law. When it did, then the demands of civil law were to be ignored. This meant that kings had no authority under civil law to impose religious reforms which conflicted with eternal law; which Joye interpreted as a prohibition of a Catholic settlement in religion. However the king could use civil law in support of, and to the furtherance of, the eternal law, by instigating acts, proclamations and ordinances to make sure the eternal law was taught. This was a duty of kingship.¹⁰⁶ Kings should carry, read and implement the divine law, which in a marginal note Joye equated with the teaching of Deuteronomy. They had a clear duty to promote this biblical teaching through the patronage of preachers.¹⁰⁷ Joye was looking for a king with the authority of an Emperor in his own kingdom to order the church,

103 G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. M5v.

104 G. Joye, op. cit., sig. D8v.

105 Ibid., sig. L7v.

106 Ibid., sig. L7v-M5r.

107 G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. B7r and C3r-v.

with the reforming zeal of an Old Testament king:

For it is theyr office not only to defende the publyke peace, but also to punissh ye malefactours and preserue and promote the godly lerned and take charge like a father and mother over the church of Christe seeing it taught gods worde faithfully and purely, quenching idolatry and suppressing all superstitious rytes etc, and traditions of men.¹⁰⁸

As with Turner the limit of civil law for Joye was dependent on which confession the enforcer subscribed to!

The fear that reform according to eternal law would damage the operation of civil law and provoke disorder was a charge Gardiner had made against Bucer.¹⁰⁹ Joye claimed that spiritual considerations should be taken into account before the secular demands of politics. This was not symptomatic of the writer's intention to divide politics and religion, but of his belief that the political good of the state would be best served by a concern with its spiritual health. No state could survive if its people were corrupt. A concern for order should not prevent a king from reformation, in fact he should expect unrest for serious diseases needed violent remedies. Much of the unrest would be illegitimate opposition to change. Joye wrote that though God's Word itself was not a source of disorder, it often provoked a tumultuous response from the wicked.¹¹⁰ The papists, said Joye, were like the Gadarene pigs, possessed of many evil spirits: 'legions of deuylish rytes, superstitious ceremonyes, dirtye tradicions and heythen idolatrye.' These pigs were running into a mere of their own vice and depravity and aimed to take everyone along with them.¹¹¹ John Bale also used the image of mad pigs to describe the possession of the English people by devils, a phenomena Bale thought sufficiently accounted for the English attachment to Catholic traditional religion.¹¹² The choice was either to preach the gospel and risk disorder, or to say nothing and to keep the legions of devils. Joye parodied what he believed to be the argument of his opponents who argued for slow reform

¹⁰⁸ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. G5v.

¹⁰⁹ R. Pogson, 'God's law and man's: Stephen Gardiner and the problem of loyalty', in C. Cross, et al. (eds.), *Law and Government under the Tudors*, p. 75.

¹¹⁰ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A3v.

¹¹¹ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A3r

¹¹² J. Bale, *A disclosynge*, sig. M8r.

to avoid social disorder:

Better it were therfor eche of us all still possessed and laden with legions of deuyls [...] than that Jesus Christ with his worde should tarry here any longer.¹¹³

To Joye, temporary disorder was better than prolonged error. If communities were reformed the evils associated with false religion would be eradicated at a grass roots level. Sedition itself was the fruit of corrupt faith and adulterated religion, and so a failure to reform religion would conserve the root causes of political subversion in the body politic. Jewish history taught that any religious uniformity based on heresies (non-biblical beliefs) led to political disaster:

As eue now aftir the thrusting away of the Gospell graciouslye offred us, there must nedes follow bloody batail and mutacions of kinges and realmes, as the stories and wordes of the bible playny declare.¹¹⁴

Thus order could be achieved by conformity, but only a conformity based on the truth; the Protestant exposition of the Bible. Like Turner, Joye disregarded considerations of 'politic' laws as a feasible alternative; they were subservient both in nature, and in effect, to eternal law. Any king basing his conformity purely on considerations of order should realise that only true religion gave this order:

For when princes feare that the worde of peace and obedience frely and purely preched, wold make mutacion, tumulte, and sedicions, and so for this course repress the free course therof, either by putting the prechers to death, by banishing them or burning them, then (be thei sewer) *quod uerebantur, hoc accidit illis*. That [th]at thei feared shall come upon them. Job iii.¹¹⁵

In ancient Israel this had caused God to allow the triumph of the Assyrians, in modern Europe it could mean the Turk.

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to infer from this writing that the Protestant polemicists were advancing a radical agenda for religious dissent. At the heart of Joye's analysis of the limits of obedience was a clear sense that opposition could never pass beyond passive resistance. Whereas kings could enforce obedience with the sword and execute dissenters, all Protestant writers were prepared to justify was that a true believer

¹¹³ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A3r.

¹¹⁴ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A3r.

¹¹⁵ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A3r.

should absent themselves from the seat of idolatry by going into exile, from where they could write, preach, exhort and criticise, but they could do little else. Like Joye, John Bale would not sanction taking up arms against a king, however bad that king may be.

The later exile and mounting criticism: The polemic of Joye and Bale

The constraints within which the Protestant writers operated, however, did not prevent them adopting an increasingly critical stance towards the Henrician regime. In the case of the king's counsellors the criticism was overt. In the case of Henry himself it remained more subtle and understated. But a close examination of polemicists' texts makes it clear that they meant more than they were saying explicitly with regard to Henry's responsibility for the religious persecution in England. This rhetoric of criticism relied upon the theology of the two churches.¹¹⁶ Humanity was divided between the followers of Christ's true church, and adherents of the false church of Antichrist. The spiritual battle of good and evil was enacted throughout history in the form of each church. Membership of each body was ideological rather than institutional; in effect it extrapolated Tyndale's congregation of true Christians back across history.¹¹⁷ The implication of this was drawn out in the Protestant writers' use of nomenclature, which became a way not merely to abuse or complement, but a means whereby a subject could be placed in the true church or the false. To be called Herod for instance, did not merely mean a man was arrogant, cruel and capricious, though this was certainly part of the inference; rather it meant that man was part of Herod's church, an ally of the historically pervasive force of Antichrist. The names of biblical and historical characters became specific badges of spiritual affiliation in the present. George Joye wrote:

Now ye se antychryst to be one and many in successio[n] There ar this day Jasons, Alcimus', and Menelaiusses, betrayers, traditours Simoniake.¹¹⁸

All the characters Joye mentioned were historical personalities in the two books of

¹¹⁶ See chapter 3 below for a detailed exposition of this theology.

¹¹⁷ W. Tyndale, An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue [Antwerp, 1531], in An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, ed. H. Walter (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1850), pp. 13-16.

¹¹⁸ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. S8r.

Maccabees and the book of Acts. Jason (2 Maccabees 4) had been a high priest in Jerusalem who had gained his post through bribery. His successor, Menelaus (2 Maccabees 4-5), had gained his office in the same way and had used his position to plunder the possessions of the Temple in Jerusalem. Alcimus (I Maccabees 7 and 2 Maccabees 14) had also been high priest. The leader of a lawless rabble his tenure of office had been characterised by irreligious acts and oppressive government. Last, but certainly not least in Joye's list of men of vice and impiety, was Simon Magus (Acts 8) a heretic who had tried to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost from the apostles. The Protestant use of scriptural imagery to describe the contemporary world was facilitated by their belief in the nature of scriptural truth. Historical unity became inseparable from ideological unity. Bale's kinship with the apostles was a doctrinal one. Like Turner and Joye he professed a belief in the immutable truth of scripture, the same truth that the apostles had believed. This replaced any claim to a historical genealogy via an institutional church. Doctrine could not change or progress, even if the institutional church tried to cite the continuity of their historical existence as authority for their doctrinal practices. The Word was the one constant, immovable truth of all ages and for all ages. It was this attribute that justified the use of scriptural imagery to describe the contemporary world.

The use of biblical imagery had obvious advantages as a rhetoric for political criticism. It could be used ambiguously, thus affording a degree of protection to the author should they happen to fall into the power of the authorities. But the biblical allusions would be perfectly clear to the people for whom the Protestant polemicists were writing; Bible-reading dissidents. This ambiguity was made possible by the organisation of the Bible text itself. Until the publication of the Genevan Bible of 1560 all English translations of the Bible lacked versification numbers. This allowed authors to cite a chapter of the biblical text without specifying which part of the chapter they were referring to. This degree of latitude would prove impossible after 1560 when the introduction of Bible versification made biblical citations specific. During the Henrician exile, however, the ambiguity inherent in biblical citations was exploited to maximum effect.

For all the convenience of the evil counsellor argument, Joye showed a clear

appreciation of the king's role in forming the religious settlement. Kings converted nations, for they could by commissions, exhortations and example, plant the gospel both 'swiftly and effectuously'. The last was vital for 'As the kynge beleueth so beleueth the moste parte of hys subiectes.' Put tersely, princes could damn or save their people.¹¹⁹ It was probably this knowledge, and a sense of impatience, that caused Joye's offensive criticism of contemporary kings in his 1545 Exposicion of Daniel the prophete. Printed in English in Antwerp, it was intended for an English readership. The book of Daniel was well suited as a text English Protestants could use to explore the implications of their situation. The book plotted the progress of a small elect under kings who were either tricked into, or actively involved in, the persecution of God's people. Chapters two to four dealt with Nebuchadnezzar, a king who used his authority to enforce the practice of idolatry upon all his subjects, including God's people. Despite his initial revelatory dream from God, interpreted for him by Daniel, the king apostatised. Though he realised that it is a worthy thing to obey God's commands above the king's, Nebuchadnezzar succumbed to his own pride and ascribed his greatness to his own qualities, rather than God's appointment of him. Struck by madness he was humbled by God. In chapter five Belshazzar, his son, restored idolatry, and was destroyed by God's judgement. Finally king Darius is taught that his office gives him no sovereignty over divine law. Daniel's survival in the lions' den indicates his innocence of all, save the hatred of irreligious men, but also justifies the right to assert God's scriptural law over contrary commands of the king and secular law. Within the framework of these biblical accounts Joye forms a language of biblical criticism that accuses Henry VIII of active complicity in the persecution of Christ's church. He argued the king had inherited the papal role, and that this has tied him in act and purpose to Antichrist's church.

Joye began his criticism by questioning the constancy of kings. His example was one that readers in England would have seen as applicable to recent events in their own country. The evangelical cause had first triumphed by tending counsel to the king, which favour had been reversed when the king changed his mind. Similarly Nebuchadnezzar,

¹¹⁹ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. F1v. I2r.

despite God's revelation to him, interpreted by Daniel, had not built on this godly alliance. He had excluded Daniel and his presence surrounding himself with: 'magos, sacrificers, and flaterers' which the marginal note clarified as: 'The property of our papists, about the kings and emperowr.'¹²⁰ Despite the usual shadow of the culpable evil counsellors, the blame in this account is laid squarely on the shoulders of the king himself:

So is not therefore, a godly emperowr and prince, which diligently enquireth and sercheth the trewth, an[d] when it is found and knowen he neglecteth it and forgetteth God.¹²¹

The use of the plural 'kings' would not have masked the allusion to Henry for English readers, especially as on the previous page the demand of Nebuchadnezzar to worship the golden idol, was compared with a discussion and refutation of the 1543 king's book and its doctrinal position on images.¹²² Joye continued to juxtapose the biblical narrative to the events of the sixteenth century. This was an attempt to draw parallels but also to highlight the two-church implications. The battle of the two churches in the book of Daniel was still going on in Joye's own day. Thus Joye told his readers that Belshazzar's restoration of idolatry in chapter six had a significance which could be explained by consulting Revelation chapter 17; which, Joye hinted, offered the key to understanding his own age. Though Joye makes this reference, he does not explain further. No wonder, for this passage dealt with the fornication of the kings of the earth with the Babylonish whore who drank of the blood of the martyrs.¹²³ Which kings Joye meant he did not explicitly say, he looked for the day though when there would be: 'but one Josias or Ezekias' aware that in his own time there seemed but: 'so many Antiochus'.¹²⁴ Joye was referring specifically to king Antiochus in I Maccabees. This monarch had attempted to destroy the covenant religion of the Israelites by persecution and the imposition of pagan worship.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E8v.

¹²¹ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E8v.

¹²² G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. D7v-E7r. For a similar discussion of the same matters see W. Turner, *Rescuynge*, sig. H4r. Also see A. Gilby, *An answer to the deuclish Detection of Stephen Gardiner*, sig. A4v-5v. For the position of the King's Book on images see, M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, pp. 239-245.

¹²³ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. I1r.

¹²⁴ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Y8v.

¹²⁵ See especially I Maccabees 1.

But the name 'Antiochus' was also short hand for the affiliation of a king with the force of evil and the personification of this evil was Antichrist. The same Antichrist who had inhabited Antiochus was still abroad in the sixteenth century. In support of this contention Joye utilised the malleable ambiguity of the images in Daniel and Revelation. The goat in Daniel chapter 8, was a prophecy of the historical Antiochus of Maccabees, but the image also had importance in the comprehension of the sixteenth century:

owr antichristen antioches, in the text, where be many particles [particulars?] hauing uery heuye and terrible significations, and tokens to come ouer them, which euery diligent reader by himself may consider if he beholde our present days.¹²⁶

The divisions of chronology began to dissolve under the influence of two-church constancies. The intricacies of historical chronology and its events, were explained and simplified according to a providential scheme of history whose constant feature was the ebb and flow of the warfare of the two-churches. Bible images became metaphors that could be used to understand all ages. Nowhere was this more evident than the ambiguous images of horned beasts in Revelation 13 and in Daniel 7. Joye believed that the Pope's role as the enforcer of ungodliness had been assumed by kings and that Antichrist's alliance with Rome, had spread to the secular authorities: '[from] the ecclesiastik cheier of Rome unto the secular emperowrs and kinges trones.'¹²⁷

The beasts of Revelation 13 and of Daniel 7 were interpreted by Joye as images of Antichrist. Joye believed that Antichrist had become historically embodied in the Papacy and he expounded Daniel 7 in a way which supported this belief. The ten horns of the beast, Joye maintained, bore the names of Antichrist's myriad defenders among the secular rulers. These horns had healed up the wound made in the beast's head by the power of the gospel, so that he could go on defending the doctrines, traditions and ceremonies of the Pope. In the tangible world kings had become the means whereby this was achieved. By: 'actis and articles', they: 'Dare alter, interprete adde and minishe and expowne God's lawes and gspell at their pleasures.'¹²⁸ To eliminate doubt as to who these evil kings were Joye

¹²⁶ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. S2v.

¹²⁷ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. R7v.

¹²⁸ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. N5v and O3r.

describes the titles written upon the beast's horns:

For the healing of this wounde, one horne was called the moste sacred cesar,
another the most crysten, another the moste catholyke [...] and another defender of
the faith.¹²⁹

In using these titles Joye was making explicit references to the respective titles of the Emperor, the kings of France and Spain, and the king of England. These kings were Pope in all but name, because like him they were part of Antichrist.¹³⁰

Whereas in earlier works George Joye had separated the king from his bishops in the attempt to use the episcopacy as a scapegoat for royal policy, the Exposicion took a different tack. Joye affirmed that the royal assumption of papal authority had given kings the same aims as the unchristian prelates, because they were both in the false church of Antichrist. The bishops and 'theyr sworne secular sorte,' caused the 'Ungodlness of misses', and 'playn idolatry, worshipping of dead seiants, stockes and stones' as well as clerical celibacy: 'wyuelesse unchaste chastitie.'¹³¹ The alliance of the clerical estate with the crown was explained in terms that used a pragmatic criticism to discredit the spiritual claim that kings had made to command the obedience of their subjects. The king became subject to a form of criticism that was similar to that used by the Lutheran reformers in the 1520s to discredit the authority of the papacy. Whereas Bale had in 1538 argued in his play Kynge Johan that kings were appointed by God, in 1545 Joye explained the exalted status of kings as a result of their ability to grab and keep as much money and power as they could. The office of kings is reduced to a seedy scramble for primacy, where office is based upon money and money is achieved through falsehood. Rulers used wealth to win the allegiance and admiration of nobles and to entice them to exalt the king above God. The source of this money was church wealth. It had been given by bishops on the understanding that in return kings would persecute the godly. Princes had taken the riches of the spirituality into their own hands, justifying the action with the falsehood that they did so as part of a process of reform meant to abolish old abuses and schisms. They

¹²⁹ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. N5v.

¹³⁰ See M. Holt, The French wars of religion (Cambridge, 1995), p. 9. The French king was *rex Christianissimus*.

¹³¹ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. S2v.

subsequently betrayed their real motivation as cupidity, by reversing their policy and reintroducing measures to retain ‘certayn greate abuses and heresies’, and enforced these: ‘With perels to enter the olde usages.’¹³² This example of the bribing of kings with church wealth, was the reflection in microcosm of the broader lessons that were to be derived from the imagery of apocalyptic scripture. In Revelation 17 the kings of the earth are joined to the whore of Babylon by drinking of the wine of the great whore. The conclusion that Joye meant his readers to draw was that the kings of the sixteenth century had betrayed the cause of the saints and been seduced by Antichrist, through bribery.¹³³

The comparisons of the unholy alliances in the Bible with those of the sixteenth century continued throughout the Exposicion. Traitorous bishops had been in league with kings to place idols in the temple. Joye draws this from Daniel 11 then applies this chapter to the historical events written in Maccabees, and from there extrapolates the significance of both accounts to the present day: ‘nowe see whether Popis and bishops laws, haue not ensenced lyke Antioches unto the same synfull factes this day.’¹³⁴ The reference to ‘traitorous’ bishops was interesting, suggesting that treason did not consist in opposing the king, but in assisting him to flout God’s law. The divide between the king’s person and the basis of his authority was thus widened. Overall the church was at war with princes.¹³⁵ Kings, who for Bale in the 1530s had been the natural allies of reform, had become its natural enemies. For the most part across history, Joye asserted, kings and bishops had been against the church; a belief Bale proved from English history the following year in his Actes of Englysh votaryes.¹³⁶

It is arguable that Bale had come to the same conclusion as Joye regarding Henry VIII at least two years before Joye printed his Exposicion. His criticism, like Joye’s, was slyly concealed, possibly because he feared prosecution under the Treasons act appended to

¹³² G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. S6r.

¹³³ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. N5v.

¹³⁴ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. Bb5r-7v.

¹³⁵ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. Y6v.

¹³⁶ G. Joye, Exposicion, sig. Cc7r. For the same idea see J. Bale, The actes of Englyshe votaryes [‘Wesel’ (Antwerp), 1546], rptd. [London, 1550], sig. I1r ‘kings become the beast’s image.’

the Six Articles. Like Joye, Bale used biblical imagery and a syncretism of periods, deliberately blurring the divisions between the examples of the Bible and those of his own century. Interestingly enough, in many instances Bale used the same texts as Joye in his criticism of Henry's actions; Revelation and 1 Maccabees were prominent. But Bale's method of concealment was at once more complicated, and more ingenious than that of his co-religionist. One method was to replace Henry's name with that of a biblical character, often one who had previously been used as an example to praise him:

Springing now out of Eckius' old divinity, and Winchester's new Canon laws, hath brought upon David, for all his wonderful victory over the lion, bear and Philistine, the plagues promised for such ungodliness.¹³⁷

As with Joye there was a deliberate juxtaposing of the biblical account and the sixteenth-century incident here, which in this case is the enforcement of clerical celibacy. But to trace the full import of Bale's image, it was intended that the reader should consult the marginalia which referred him to references in his own Bible. The first citation was to I Kings 17 (which according to modern biblical ordering is I Samuel 17). This recounts the victories of David over Israel's enemies including Goliath. It thus restates the biblical exemplar used five years earlier to describe Henry in Bale's play King Johan. But there was obviously something wrong, as the next margin note to Deuteronomy 28 threatened: 'unimaginable plagues', to anyone who disregarded the law of God. This divinely apportioned ruin and decay is then related to King David, by the next margin note to 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 12. In this Nathan threatens the posterity of David's house, because of David's adultery with Bathsheba, that had flouted God's law. How, Bale asked rhetorically, could the king be ignorant of what the world knew; of the disgrace he allowed to be wrought on the gospel by his prelates? As if to confirm his accusation of guilt against Henry, Bale cited 2 Kings (Samuel) 16, the cursing of David by Shimei at Bahurim on the orders of God. Obviously Bale did not think kings should be seen as immune to the criticism of their subjects, at least not the godly ones. But by 1543, Henry had gone further than a fallen David ever had: 'Thus are they plagued that follow yll counsel', reads the margin note, and allusions are made to Henry VIII's ideological heritage with a whole series of bad kings from the Old

¹³⁷ J. Bale, A dysclosynge, sig. K3r.

Testament, kings who according to the theology of the two churches were part of the false church of Antichrist:

With soche holy counsellors (as yow are) nowadays were Ioram, Achab, Ochosias, Ioachim, Sedechias and other kings more of Israel and Juda deceyved and brought into the great indignacyon of God.¹³⁸

In the space of one page the image of Henry as David the champion of God, had been deconstructed to David the fallen sinner, to Achab the enemy of God. Nor was this an isolated outburst. In an earlier part of the same work, Bale described Bonner's persecution of Tolwyn in London in 1541.¹³⁹ Recanters, he said, had 'sought help at the power of Pharaoh and comfort in the shadow of the Egyptians'. Marginalia drew the readers attention to Hosea 7:

They have not kept faith. Now their deeds beset them and stare me in the face. They win over the king with their treachery. On their king's festal day the officers begin to be inflamed with wine and he joins in the orgies of arrogant men.

On a later page in the same book the text read: 'For hys laws mynyster they the doctrine of devils.' The marginal note to Psalm 118 advised: 'Better it is to seek refuge in the Lord than to trust in mortal man, better to seek refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.' This was advice that kings themselves should take to heart; trust in God not in oneself. A marginal note to Psalm 18 two lines above reinforced this idea, since it was a psalm in which David put all his hopes in the hands of God. This was clearly a bit of wishful thinking on Bale's part concerning Henry VIII. Like Turner, Bale qualified the validity of secular laws by the test of their adherence to God's law which had the prior claim to a Christian's loyalty. A law that served the best interests of the commonwealth was one in keeping with God's law, and those outside this were manifestations of violence and tyranny.¹⁴⁰ In discussing the limits of a ruler's authority Bale cited a list of biblical references dealing with the position of a small body of the faithful under the rule of a heathen king. 1 Maccabees 2 recounted the story of the resistance of Mattathias and his sons to the officers of king Antiochus who were enforcing apostasy from the Jewish

¹³⁸ J. Bale, op. cit., K3r.

¹³⁹ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. A4v.

¹⁴⁰ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. M8v-L1r.

religion throughout Judah. In 2 Maccabees 6 Antiochus sent a senator to compel the Jews to forsake their laws and to profane the temple in Jerusalem. The Jewish population were forced to take part in these irreligious acts and those who refused were slain. Eleazar the priest refused to dissimulate, preferring instead to give an example of martyrdom than to mislead others by seeming to accommodate with the regime. Other examples included Jerico's king in Joshua 2 who ordered Rahab to betray Joshua's scouts to him, but Rahab deceived him; and Pharaoh's orders in Exodus 1 to kill all new born Hebrew boys, and the refusal of the Hebrew midwives to obey.

All these citations made their references to Henry VIII implicit rather than explicit. It was a method of concealed communication discernible not just in the marginalia, but in the main body of the text itself, by the use of a literary pattern. A eulogy of Henry VIII mentioning him by name, is often prior to, or follows, a passage that criticises his counsellors. Criticism of counsellors is then linked to a metaphor of a scriptural image, including evil counsellors and a biblical king. Once again we have the juxtaposition of the contemporary and biblical situations, and thereby a didactic question is posed. Thus in the Epistle, Henry is praised as a noble king and his blindness blamed on his malicious advisors. These men were akin to: 'Other false priests of Egypt who persuaded Pharaoh to withstand the pleasure of God.'¹⁴¹

But if Henry's priests were akin to Pharaoh's priests, who was Henry's ideological ancestor in this situation? The obvious and unstated answer seems to be Pharaoh, his heart hardened against God's will. Henry was afterwards praised once more as a great reformer. This literary pattern is discernible in at least five of Bale's texts printed over the period 1543-1546.¹⁴² In all these cases Bale did not denounce the king by name, but there was one instance where he came very close to doing so in The Image Of Both Churches. Bale's commentary on the book of Revelation was addressed to the faithful in England. It was an attempt to explain the process of history in terms of the biblical verity of Revelation. But it was also an indictment of the political state in England. In the 1530s Bale's view of the

¹⁴¹ J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye, sig. A4r.

¹⁴² Discernable in: A dysclosynge (1543) The Epistle (1544) The Image of both Churches (1546). The Examinations of Anne Askew (1546) The actes of the Englysh votaryes (1546).

state as a curber of vice had been derived from Pauline writings on authority and obedience, most notably Romans. The Image presented the Revelation view of the state as the embodiment of all those evils, which the state was founded to suppress; primary amongst these was false religion, the mother of all vices. The Image made clear, and extremely vitriolic, references to the state of England and her king:

When they once set up in the place of a godly governor, a cruel murderer of God's people, by flattering praises to encourage them to all mischief, and by wicked counsel to prick them forward to cruel acts of murder for the upholding of their beastly generation; the spirit that they minister unto princes is not the correction of vices, but to uphold them in their evils. Much after this sort of speaking: "Your majesties or graces are most wise, most worthy and best learned among all Christian potentates. If it be your majesties pleasure to do this or that in your own dominions whom shall be so bold as to withstand you. No though God's law be an hundred times against it, support the old religion of Holy church against the heretics [...] let it be treason if they do but once speak against her corrupt customes [...] make cruel constitutions apace, to show your self the Pope's lively image." ¹⁴³

The identification of religious non-conformity as treason 'If they do but once speak against it', was deliberately reminiscent of the Six Articles and its penalty that allowed no recantation for revilers of the mass.¹⁴⁴ There were also clear references to Henry VIII in the phrase 'majesties or graces'. Henry was the first English king to use the title majesty instead of grace, as part of his pretensions to the status of Emperor.¹⁴⁵ Bale seemed unsure of which to use. This title did not concern Bale so much as Henry's religious title, for which he reserved his full invective, describing it as:

[one of the] blasphemous titles of Antichrist as to call them [...] defenders of the Catholic faith, (Meaning the Pope's old traditions) surely this is none other but with the same Antichrist to receive authority seat and power of Satan.¹⁴⁶

This passage continued with a warning that the king's title of supreme head of the church

¹⁴³ J. Bale, The Image Of Both Churches [R. Juge, London, 1550], in Select works of Bishop Bale, ed. H. Christmas (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1849), pp. 443-444.

¹⁴⁴ Article 1: 'any who contempt, deprive or despise the said blessed sacrament shall be adjudged heretics [...] shall suffer judgement, execution, pain, pain of death by way of burning, without any oburation to be therefore permitted [...] as in cases of high treason', in English Historical Documents, ed. C. Williams (London, 1967), vol. V. p. 816.

¹⁴⁵ The first use of the term Majesty was made in the statutes and proclamations of 1534. From the latin term in Roman Law, *maiestas*. (greatness, dignity or majesty) See An Act for the exoneration from exactions paid to the see of Rome 25 Henry VIII c. 21 1534, in Statutes of the Realm, ed. C. Williams (1817), vol. III. p. 464. Also: An Acte concernynge the kynges hyghness to be supreme head of the churche of Englande. Anno 26 Henry VIII, in Statutes of the Realm, ed. C. Williams (1817), vol. III. p. 492.

¹⁴⁶ J. Bale, Select Works, p. 428.

was analogous to the head of the beast.¹⁴⁷

Though kings were now the enemy, both Joye and Bale preached only passive resistance. But for all that their writings were still full of menace for the monarch they had once admired. Their strategy was to lay their cause before the judgement of God and the action of his providence, hoping for God's intervention. Joye counselled that the days of tyrants were numbered. He also drew his readers' attention to the fact that each of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar had a godly queen to advise them. In addition there was ever an 'Abdias' who would defend the cause.¹⁴⁸ 'Abdias' or Obadiah had been comptroller of king Ahab's household. I Kings 18 recounted how Obadiah, a devout worshipper of God, had hidden one hundred of God's prophets in order to save them from the religious persecution instituted by King Ahab and queen Jezebel. This cryptic reference to the clandestine religious acts of Obadiah within Ahab's court may be a reference to Cranmer, as Nebuchadnezzar's queen may have referred to Catherine Parr. Joye went on to offer a bleak warning that kings who conspired against God would be struck down, and he cited Psalm 2.¹⁴⁹ This passage comes after the didactic value of Darius' condemnation of Daniel has been applied to Joye's own age. Joye reminded his readers how through the influence exerted on king Darius by his irreligious counsellors (Daniel 6) the prophet Daniel had been thrown into the lions' den for practising the true religion. Though Darius had sentenced Daniel to death God had declared Daniel innocent and he had sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths. Daniel had survived and Darius, perceiving God's authority to be greater than his own, issued a decree admitting Daniel's God was his supreme Lord and master. Darius had usurped God's honour, but had later relented. This was surely a lesson for sixteenth-century kings. God's prime concern was not the survival of kings, except in so far as they served the health of his church. According to the precedents of history, and because of God's providential plans for the two churches, this made kings dispensable to the God who had appointed them. If the church was to flourish and finally triumph, as scripture said it must, no temporal king would be able to resist this plan. The

¹⁴⁷ J. Bale, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

¹⁴⁸ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. K3v, I8v, K1r.

¹⁴⁹ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. L2r.

ultimate triumph of the true church was prophesied in Revelation and God would remove any king who tried to impede this immutable prophecy. No potentate could be allowed to flout God's laws and his purpose forever.¹⁵⁰ Antiochus, a king who had harassed the church, was replaced by God's decree in a revolt led by a new king more inclined to God's law, Mattathias.¹⁵¹ No longer was the hope only for a king who would change, but for a change of king. The hope became rooted in a final apocalyptic triumph in which God would confound his enemies and deliver the godly persecuted from tribulation. But Joye wrote that the faithful must be patient in awaiting it. Scripture was no longer being used to preach obedience to a king, but to justify why he should be disobeyed. It gave an authority whereby his jurisdiction could be limited as well as justified, and a rhetoric wherewith he could be criticised.

The question is for whom both Bale and Joye intended their message; a question all the more tantalising because it is largely unanswerable. The books were addressed to the faithful in England, and this community must have been thought to have had its own copies of the biblical text, or at least been familiar with them. The biblical marginal notes especially in Bale's work were not a scholarly conceit; they were included as deliberate elucidations of the text itself. It seems reasonable to suggest therefore that Bale's works were written to be used in conjunction with the Bible. We do get glimpses of this practice, of reading polemic with the Bible, in the writings of other authors. Philip Nicolls quotes part of Isaiah 29 then advises the reader to: 'read the place'.¹⁵² Thomas Becon claimed that he was glad that his patron had tried his book by the scriptures and found it true. He described how Sir Thomas Nevel had engaged in:

diligent searchynge and comparynge of my banket [a work of 1542] with the holy scriptures.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Z4r.

¹⁵¹ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Cc1r.

¹⁵² P. Nicolls, *The copie of a certain letter* [London, 1547], sig. A5v. STC 18575.

¹⁵³ T. Becon, *A potacio[n] or drynkyng for this holi tyme of Le[n]t* [London, J. Mayler for J. Gough, 1542], sig. A2r and A4r-v. STC 1749.

In a work of 1550 the Protestant writer Thomas Lancaster told king Edward that: 'I desyre your grace that ye examyne wyth the Lordes worde, this my pore boke'. Elsewhere the marginalia in Lancaster's book cited Isaiah 53 and told the reader: 'Rede I praye you Esay the Prophete'.¹⁵⁴

In Bale's case it would have been, and still is, impossible to understand his use of imagery or the full nature of his arguments without reference to a Bible. About the closest we can come to identifying readers of such literature is to recognise that its images and arguments were in use during the reign of Henry's son among many of the Protestant clerics. The reformers' efforts to express Edward's place in reform as 'Josiah' and other Old Testament kings are legion. Often their use of this imagery suggested misgivings about the definition of royal authority in regard to religion; Bale was not alone in his fears of the ambiguous effects of royal patronage. The constant Catholic gibe, that Edward was only a child, relied on the argument that when he was older the Supremacy would allow him to turn Catholic and to reverse the reformation on his own authority. Changes to the Act of Supremacy in 1547 allowed Edward to alter the religious settlement made on his behalf during his minority on reaching the age of twenty-four. The Catholic jibe was a good one for it cut to the core of the Protestants' concern, that secular authority in the law and in the person of the king could subvert what they believed was the *sine qua non* of all truth. The spectre of the Supremacy haunted the reformers. The use of biblical examples was to confer praise, but also to suggest limitations of the Supremacy's applications; limitations which the Supremacy itself did not admit. Implicit in the use of biblical kings was the Bible's limitation of royal authority by divine law. As late as 1550 Hooper counselled Edward to persevere in reformation.¹⁵⁵ Latimer preached that Absalom was proof that God would not work with private authority which went against his will.¹⁵⁶ Other examples were Pharaoh, Herod and Jeroboam, kings who had been made, and unmade, by God at his will. Latimer told Edward: 'Remember this I beseech your

¹⁵⁴ T. Lancaster, *A ryght and trew Understa[n]dyng*, sig. A8r and E8r.

¹⁵⁵ J. Hooper, 'Sermon to the court: Lent 1550', in *The Early Works of Bishop Hooper*, ed. S. Carr (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), p. 439.

¹⁵⁶ H. Latimer, 'Second sermon before king Edward the sixth', in *Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. H. Corrie (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844), p. 115. [Hereafter *Sermons*]

grace'.¹⁵⁷ In 1549 Latimer told Edward that he did not have to walk in the footsteps of his father and cited the example of Josias, who had 'reformed his father's ways who walked in idolatry.'¹⁵⁸ Not only did this show what many reformers really thought of Henry, it argued for a common understanding of the biblical imagery used to express it.¹⁵⁹

The Edwardian period saw Protestants able to return to the position of the 1530s in some respects. William Turner was aware in 1548 that the new religious climate meant he could argue upon the assumption that his political and religious loyalties converged. Loyalty to the King no longer meant observing either the Six Articles or the Catholic religion. It was now Catholics such as Gardiner who had the problem of reconciling political and religious loyalties; the Supremacy had changed tack again. In Turner's A new dialogue typological characters perform in a fictional court room scene in which the author explored the change in the attitude of the government to men like William Turner. Fremouth tries to arraign 'mistress missa', the type for the mass, on a charge of blasphemy, but is told by Justice that he is in danger of prosecution himself under the Six Articles. But Knowledge informs them that the new king's intent was to: 'purge and cleanse' his church and threatens the religious conservatism of Justice with the king's authority:

Then seyng that this is the kynges mooste godly purpose, when as ye will not suffre me[n] to cite abuses and such thynges as are thought to be abuses to

¹⁵⁷ H. Latimer, 'Second sermon', in Sermons, p. 123. Latimer was only one of those who maintained a constant barrage of counsel against the king in an attempt to form his religious identity in the impressionable age of childhood. Another reformer who did so was Edward's tutor, the Protestant Sir John Cheke. A Privy chamber gentleman, Cheke was constantly in Edward's company. He used this closeness to influence the king's religious opinions. Other reformers like Cranmer approached Cheke to gain the king's agreement to reform measures. Cheke's deathbed letter, in 1552, which was a mixture of coercion and flattery, advised the king on God's behalf to temper his actions in the fear of God or he would fail as a king and be cast out from the inheritance reserved for the elect, for them 'timentibus eum'. To a 15 year old this must have appeared quite an intimidating letter. Its purpose was to confirm the king in the religious opinions that had been drummed into him from his early years by the court preachers. J. Strype, Life of Sir John Cheke (Oxford, 1821), pp. 22, 47, 175. Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, ed. J. Cox, (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1846), p. 427. [Hereafter, PS II.] The Literary Remains of Edward VI, ed. J. Gough (New York, 1966), vol. I. pp. clix-cxi.

¹⁵⁸ H. Latimer, 'Sermon of April 5th 1549', in Sermons, p. 175.

¹⁵⁹ Though few dared express openly what they thought of Henry VIII even during his son's reign. A notable exception was the preacher Stephen Caston who in a sermon of 31 August 1550 at St Paul's cross criticised the late king as a papist: 'with many approbrious wordes of hym as yt was harde.' in Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London, ed. J. Nichols (Camden Society, Cambridge, 1852), p. 67.

examination: men may gather playnly that ye entend to resist the kynges mooste godly purpose, whyche if ye doo, ye are not hys frend.¹⁶⁰

It must have appealed to Turner, as an exile from England on account of his religion, to show 'Knowledge' rebuking a Catholic judge enforcing the Six Articles, and doing so with the king's authority. As in the 1530s the link between Catholicism and treason was asserted as Protestants deliberately interwove loyalty to the king's Supremacy with loyalty to his new religious settlement. There was a difference. The writings of Joye, Turner, Bale and others were more radical than they had been before the exile period. During exile they had defined their basis of authority in such a way that though it appreciated the place of the king, it subjected all loyalties to a biblical authority that gave the king a defined duty in reform. The expression of Daniel's religion had been his refusal to commit idolatry. This stand had been prompted by Deuteronomic law; Protestants used this and its enactment in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament to form their own identity. There was a seed of truth in Gardiner's assertion, that men such as Joye needed only to profess a few points of belief to be called godly:

Suche one can say onely faith justifieth, and a preist is a knave, and the masse is not in scripture, and an image is an idole.¹⁶¹

Despite the deliberate negativism of Gardiner's comment it is true to say that Turner, Joye and Bale had said all these things at various times. But as Joye's Exposicion proved these were no longer mere slogans. They were embedded in the biblical understanding of authority formulated during the exile. This touched the authority and roles of kings and the godly. The difference in 1548 was that Edward VI's reign gave them the chance to put these beliefs into action.

¹⁶⁰ W. Turner, A new dialogue, sig. A8r and A8v.

¹⁶¹ S. Gardiner, A declaration of svch true articles as George Ioye hath gone about to confute as false [London, 1546], sig. Y3v.

Chapter 3

The Two Churches

The previous chapter explored the methods used by the Protestant polemicists in exile to redefine the limitations of royal authority in order to accommodate the conditions imposed by Henry VIII's hostility to reform. Protestant writers sought to justify their religious dissent from a king who was God's vice-regent upon earth. As we have seen this involved the Protestant writers in all sorts of casuistry and subtle reasoning: the fiction that Henry, one of the most authoritarian of rulers, was somehow the dupe of his advisors, must have been patent even to those writers who adopted such strategies. But the polemicists' sense of alienation from the regime also had a more substantial intellectual foundation, one common to much Protestant writing of the period: the theology of the two churches. Two-church theology had two polemical purposes: firstly to justify their identification of the Henrician church as the false church; a radical step by any measure. But secondly this theological construction also allowed Protestants to identify the true church with their own small dispersed brotherhood.

The Protestant writers recognised that those who separated themselves from the church in England were very much in a minority. The church of true believers was subject to constant erosion wherever fellow Protestants chose the path of accommodation with the present regime. Every time a member of the true church went to mass they betrayed the doctrinal identity of the true church and accommodated with the false. It was largely in response to the danger of this happening in England that the Protestant writers used two-church theology to construct an identity for the Protestant community that separated them from the Henrician church. This identity discouraged recantation and actively cultivated the identification by Protestants of themselves with a historical tradition of dissent. Central to this tradition was the role of the true church as the persecuted minority. Though initially useful as a justification of Protestant division from the Henrician church, the model of the persecuted minority became incongruous during the reign of Edward VI. It no longer accurately described the Protestant communities' true situation. Yet it proved impossible to escape what had become an integral part of the Protestants' self identity as a historical

church community. This resulted in a number of attempts to redefine the ideology, many of which lacked credibility. The paradox raised by a change in political conditions would not be resolved during Edward's reign and had to wait until the historical situation changed again in the reign of Mary.

The Church Catholic

The position of the Henrician church regarding religious separatists was set out clearly in that church's official formulary of faith, the King's Book. The Book defined the English church as the national expression of a Catholic doctrinal consensus that was universal. Though all sharing one Catholic doctrine, each national church had the exclusive claim upon the religious allegiance of all Christians within its political borders. The Book, while recognising the existence of dissenters, did not allow to such non-conformists the status of a church in any sense. There was no alternative to the universal church, and those who were placed outside it were labelled heretics and infidels.¹ Similarly English Catholic writers depicted their Protestant opponents as lacking the doctrinal cohesion to constitute a church. Rather they existed as apostates, a collection of individuals each with a different theological opinion, unified only in their opposition to the one universal church. The Catholic polemicist John Huntingdon constructed a genealogy of heresy in 1541 that included Luther, Zwingli, and the Anabaptist Peter Franck, as well as the English reformers Garrett, Barnes and Jerome, burned in London a year before.² The theological variance between all these men stood in contrast to their common root in those vices which had placed them in opposition to the one church; obstinacy, wilfulness and frowardness.³ Bishop Stephen Gardiner told William Turner that he was 'an heretike' and in the nature of heretics defined his doctrines by a personal desire to oppose everything the church Catholic professed, no matter what that might be.

¹ C. Lloyd, Formularies, pp. 246-8 and 226-7.

² Peter Franck was an important leader of the Anabaptist community in England. A native of Bruges, Franck was burnt on 29 Nov., 1538 at Colchester as part of Henry VIII's campaign against heresy that also included Lambert. See I. B. Horst, The Radical Brethren. Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558 (Nieuwkoop, B. De Graaf, 1972), pp. 87.

³ J. Huntingdon, The genealogye of heresy, rptd. in J. Bale A mysterie of inyquyte [Antwerp, A Goinus, 1545], STC 1303.

Turner's position was:

myche agreying to the faciones amongst the Florentynes whil[e] they were in their comonwelthe. When on[e] demanded what he sayd to suche a matter, beyng then in consultacion, he loked about and espyng out on[e] of hys enemies sayd, whatsoeuer suche a man wold say, poyntyng to his enemy, he was of the contrari opinion.⁴

Such opposition resulted not in an alternative church but in the fragmentation of the one church into many differing opinions. It was the 'deuylls persuasion', Gardiner told George Joye, that caused schismatics like Joye to encourage 'eche man onely to beleue hymself', instead of deferring to the judgement of the church Catholic. This infernal pride led to the division of the church community so that:

the churche to be in no place a church[...] whereunto by scripture mens desparate faultes shulde be tould neither in the hole to be unite in sacramentes and true doctryne, but eche one man to be a church alone.⁵

With his accustomed sapience Gardiner had exposed one of the principle weaknesses of the Protestant position. Those Protestant polemicists who set out to justify their estrangement from Henry VIII's church thus had to do so by legitimising their own existence as a church. While continuing to affirm their dissent from the Catholic religious settlement in England, Protestant dissent would not be purely negative. It would be derived from their positive theological identity as a church distinct from the Catholic church that had rejected them. This objective, the creation of an alternative ecclesiology, was achieved largely through a use of two-church theology.

Two-church theology

Two-church theology was an ideological division of all humanity into two groups or churches; a true church of Christ and a false church of Antichrist.⁶ As the names implied, Christ and Antichrist were completely opposite to each other in every respect, and their churches partook of this relationship.⁷ Protestant polemicists described the division by a

⁴ S. Gardiner, *Letters*, pp. 482-3.

⁵ S. Gardiner, *Declaration*, sig. M2r-v.

⁶ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 252, 412. For a treatment of the Classical, Mediaeval and Lutheran roots of Bale and Joye's use of the Apocalypse see, R. Baucham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Abingdon, 1978)

⁷ J. Bale, op. cit., p. 411.

series of extreme contrasts; black and white, light and dark, east and west.⁸ The doctrines and moral acts that typified each church were similarly antithetical. This polarity derived primarily from the close relationship between Christ, Antichrist, and their respective church congregations. Antichrist's spirit possessed the minds and bodies of those who were in his church. Describing this, John Bale cited Tobit 3, an account from the biblical Apocrypha which related how Tobias' future wife Sarah had been possessed by a demon which compelled her to commit murder. Sarah had prayed to God and he had sent the angel Raphael who had driven the demon out.⁹ The pervasive presence of Christ among his congregation had the opposite effect. The Holy Spirit provoked the true church to virtuous acts and godly religion. The importance of the spiritual nature of the churches was the historical unity that it gave to them as ideological communities. Christ and Antichrist were supra-historical entities but they were continually invading history via the members of their churches. Though history contained many Christian and Antichristian men and women who were often separated by time or geographical distance, they were all part of one of two communities because they all partook of one of two spirits, Christ or Antichrist. The two-church division became the constant reality that underlay every event in human history. One effect of this as has been noted was the reduction of historical details and personalities to exemplars.¹⁰ The names of historical characters who had obviously been in Antichrist's church community could be re-used in later ages as badges of spiritual affiliation. Bishop Gardiner was called 'Caiaphas'. Caiaphas had controlled the Sanhedrin during the trial of Jesus and had thereby ensured Christ's condemnation and execution (Matthew 26, Mark 14, John 11 and 18.) The use of Caiaphas' name to describe Gardiner denoted Bale's belief that like Caiaphas, Gardiner was a member of Antichrist's church and shared in Antichrist's spirit.¹¹

Each church community professed a set of beliefs which were an expression of their spiritual sympathy with either Christ or Antichrist. These doctrines gave the respective churches their identity in the world since beliefs, and their ethical effects in people's lives,

⁸ A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. U2v. G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. U3v.

⁹ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. N1r. For the same belief see J. Hooper, *A declaration of Christe and of hys offyce* [1547], ed. S. Carr, *The Early Works of John Hooper* (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), p. 39.

¹⁰ See Chapter 2 above.

¹¹ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 219

were visible to all men. This enabled one church member to identify himself with his or her co-religionists. Consequently the basis of the coherence of the church congregation was doctrinal. This meant that the church congregation need not be synonymous with an institutional church or the national jurisdictions that endorsed them. Both Bale and Joye stated this emphatically:

The church is not a comynaltie, bound to and sette in one sure certaine place, but wheresoever they be that all call upon the one God in the faith of Christ.¹²

Bale reiterated this view, writing that the church of God was not:

Builded of men nor made holy by their outward observances [but is] the living generation that love fear and seek their Lord in faith, spirit and verity.¹³

This purely doctrinal definition of the church would allow the congregation to exist as secret conventicles should the state become hostile to their religion, since the church needed no institutional signs to maintain their cohesive identity. Such an ecclesiology was obviously well fitted to serve the needs of the polemicists themselves. As a community scattered across Europe, often in officially Catholic countries, the only way that they could remain part of a church was to define it as a body that existed independent of, and alongside, the state churches.¹⁴

Unity and Schism

The centre of the true church's doctrinal coherence was its concept of justification by faith alone, which encapsulated the relationship of Christ with the individual believer. Joye believed that all church sacraments and rites, though they could be complementary to *sola fide* justification were never substitutes for it:

Christe with hys apostles deliuered to us the doctryne of unite, that is to weit, onely helthe and saluation to be set forth in him onely whiche is ovr iustificacion [...] he commaunded his apostles to glew together his church by this perfit doctrine of unite into one bodye, by hys baptisme and brede breking to gather the[m] together nowe conseigned and sealed up together.¹⁵

¹² G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Gg3v.

¹³ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 385-6.

¹⁴ The dispersal of the Protestant polemicists on the continent was: John Bale and George Joye were in Antwerp; Miles Coverdale was in Germany, William Turner travelled to Italy via Germany and then into Switzerland; John Hooper fled to Zurich; Becon and Latimer remained in England.

¹⁵ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A7v.

Institutional churches may possess many of the outward symbols that were associated with church unity, the sacraments for instance, yet lack a Christocentric theology of justification. In such circumstances institutional forms only served to conceal theological divisions among the members of the congregation. The result was a community where every person believed something different. Joye wrote that the official church in England was just such a congregation; its rites and ceremonies implied a diversity of soteriologies founded upon religious observances, all of which detracted from sola-fide justification:

veneracion of images, and reliques, of purgatory, of unwritten verities [...] of gay significacions for decent ceremonies and laudable rites of priests vowes, sacraments and I can not tell what. Here lo! are the hertes of the faithful thus abstract from the doctrine of unite that they seke not althings at and in Christe.¹⁶

The Henrician church was, in other words, far more guilty of the internal divisions associated with heresy than the Protestant reformers were. This allowed the Protestant reformers to justify their separatism from the institutional church by arguing that only through such means could they retain the doctrinal unity needed to maintain their own Catholic orthodoxy.

The authority for the polemicists' assertion was derived from the precedents afforded by biblical history. These were interpreted according to two-church theology. Joye claimed that after the Jewish return from exile in Babylon, the doctrinal unity of their church had been subverted from within by the rise of institutional heresies. These heresies had been propagated by new sectarian groups within the body of the church, namely the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. The ideology of each of these groups constituted a doctrinal schism from the truth since: 'All beleued contrarily and diversly of ovr iustificacion', but every one was ignorant of the 'verye ryght and trewe way of ther iustificacion.'¹⁷ The extent of the damage wrought by these sects had become obvious by the time of Christ when 'trwe religion, pure gossell, and the playne doctryne of the truth were skant knowne.'¹⁸ By this stage the institutional church had become the embodiment of many errors rather than one truth. No-where was this more clearly displayed than in their internal divisions upon every issue except their hostility to the truth. The Pharisees and Sadducees

¹⁶ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A8r-v.

¹⁷ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A6v.

¹⁸ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A5r.

‘Neuer agreed among themselves in ther doctryne’, yet all concurred in preaching against Christ: ‘in this mischeif they consented.’¹⁹ The aim of John the Baptist and Christ had been to restore the ‘doctryne of unite’ to their Jewish church, lost after the exile. The response of the official church had been to call them ‘heynouse heretiques’, and to exclude them from the church congregation.²⁰ The maintenance of doctrinal unity and institutional church membership had become incompatible.

It is clear that Joye perceived the situation of Christ and the early church as directly analogous to that of the Protestant community with Catholic churches in England and elsewhere. The identification was derived from a use of two-church theology. In describing the doctrine and apparel of the Pharisees Joye compared them to ‘owr pharisais’, the clerical estate of the Catholic church. The Charterhouse monks and Friars observant were held to be so similar to the Essenes that Joye advised his readers merely to observe one of these Roman regulars if he wanted to see an Essene: ‘in ther owne lively colours paynted.’²¹ This was more than a coincidence; the similarities were derived from the spiritual constants of the two churches which operated in every period of history. To make this plain Joye indulged in deliberately anachronistic uses of sixteenth-century terminology to describe the reality of ancient Israel. Those responsible for the rise of the Jewish sects after the Babylonian exile had been ‘Bishops’ who had competed for ‘bishopyrks’ and: ‘what other popish paludaments or rather ther uery nugaments eue[n] the uery badges of ther lordly bysshopyrks.’²² By drawing the two historical periods together in this way Joye added a new immediacy and legitimacy to dissent from the institutional church. Far from proving him to be a schismatic, Joye’s exclusion from the English church was proof of his devotion to an orthodox Christianity from which the institutional church was in schism.

Similarly, the Protestant polemicists’ dissent from the Henrician church was explained as a doctrinal dissent from a false church, not separatism from a state church. Joye was well aware that the Catholics claimed that acts against the Protestants were not

¹⁹ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. B1r.

²⁰ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A7r.

²¹ G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A7r.

²² G. Joye, *Scisme*, sig. A4v.

persecution, but the acts of a Christian state against subversive heretics. The Catholics tried:

copellinge men to recant and renye the truthe, openly and oft preched, or els burne them. Compell them to saye, this is a realme of rightwiseness where in is ministered all iuste execucion and no persecucion. For where the heade and gouerner professeth Chryst ther can be no persecucion.²³

The application of the two-church divide within the secular state meant that persecution was no longer the just punishment of a divinely founded political order upon heretics, but the act of a doctrinally false church against the true church. The attractive aspect of this theory was that it dispensed with the idea that a consensus of all Englishmen had judged Protestant martyrs to be heretics; because there was no overall consensus in the state. The division was not that of a society pursuing a heretic, but of one group within that society gaining control of the law and using it for immoral ends. The proof of this was that the two-church division was not of society and outcasts but of a division within every level of society:

Lo here may ye see the Christen persecuted of his owne subiectes, one jewe to persecute another, one brother another, one gentyle another, one Crystian in name another, one englissman another as Chryst said. Mt 10.²⁴

Two-church ideology offered the legitimacy of historical precedent for religious dissent in the state. Deviation from a false church was to be expected and even encouraged, since the motivation for this schism was not personal but was derived from a valid theological alternative. The term 'heretic' became an expression of exclusion, not from the one universal Catholic church, but from either the true or false church depending upon who used the term. As a result Protestants were eager to gain the name of 'heretic' from someone who they considered was in the false church. Exclusion from the false church could only mean inclusion in the true, since the whole of humanity was a member of one of the two churches. John Philpot was desirous of gaining just such an inverse compliment, though was unwise enough to seek it from the bishop of Winchester. Gardiner told Philpot that despite Philpot's desire to be excommunicated from the church for his doctrine,

²³ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A3v. For the truth of Joye's accusation see the recantation by Robert Wisdom in which he was forced to admit that in a Christian country Christians could not be persecuted. J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. V, appendix xii.

²⁴ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A8v.

that the measure was a matter of discipline:

I told in dede Philpot that I wold excommunicate hym not for any opinion of hys wherin I shuld contend with him, for that he wold wishe but bicause without any occation being gyven of me, being called for other purpose by suche as had charge of the musters, he untrewlie reported my sermond made a fortnight before.²⁵

It is obvious that Gardiner was fully aware of Philpot's intention and did his best to subvert it:

With Philpot I have none other matter, nor will not. He will nedes call hym selfe heretique, and therefore I blamed hym gentely, but no man wyll call hym so againe that I know. For myself I call him onelie unlearned and it angreth hym more than any other name I can call hym.²⁶

Separatism and the Two Churches

The identity of the true church as a body defined by its doctrine rather than by political or institutional forms, made the question of theological conformity vital. It was imperative that each member of that church's congregation maintain his or her doctrinal integrity if that church was to survive as a distinct group. The dangers of compromising on points of doctrine in order to reach an accommodation with the institutional church were obvious. Every compromise debased the identity of the true church and enabled its absorption by an institution whose theology may be different. The threat appeared particularly acute in England. Though the official theology of the English church was Catholic, there were a number of initiatives during 1541-6 which marked a decided shift away from the theological assumptions upon which the system of mediaeval traditional religion had been based.²⁷ Proclamations of July and October 1541 had struck at the cult of the saints by forbidding festivities on a number of saints days and ordering the dismantlement of all shrines.²⁸ This was followed up in the new Litany of May 1544 and the Primer of 1545, both of which reduced the intercessory role that had traditionally been attributed to the saints, and excised many of their names from the church's calendar.

Between late 1545 and early 1546, Archbishop Cranmer, with the full endorsement of

²⁵ S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 433.

²⁶ S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 434.

²⁷ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 447.

²⁸ J. Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, p. 422. E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 424-31.

Henry VIII, drew up a plan for the revision of the liturgy. This plan envisaged the abolition of various aspects of mediaeval religion, including the traditional roles of creeping to the cross on Good Friday and kneeling to the cross on Palm Sunday. Though Henry VIII later found it politically expedient to disavow these initiatives he made it clear that his veto upon their implementation was only temporary. He left the option to reform open by claiming that the measures would be enacted at a 'more apt time'.²⁹

The overall effect must have been confusing to many English Protestants. Henry VIII's church lacked a Protestant theology, particularly regarding the central question of justification, yet its 'slow erosion of the old religious order' made it hard for Protestant polemicists to convince their co-religionists of the need for religious separatism.³⁰ For instance, some of the most striking criticisms made by Protestant writers against the English church and its religion were partially answered by royal policy. Joye's criticism of images, relics and the place of intercessory saints in 1543 were answered in part by the king's reforms of 1543-5. In 1545 Joye warned his co-religionists again, this time about creeping to the cross. English bishops may compel them to perform the idolatrous devotion of creeping to the cross, Joye wrote, but the faithful should assert their identity as members of the true church and refuse.³¹ Yet in 1546 Henry VIII showed his willingness to abolish this rite. In such circumstances the temptation to eschew exile and martyrdom in favour of outward conformity and recantation, to wait for better times, must have been almost irresistible.

The Protestant polemicists responded to this threat by articulating a clear dialectic opposition between the churches, the primary intention of which was to prevent English Protestants from being seduced into communion with the church Catholic in England. Two-church theology played a central part in this process. It allowed the Protestant polemicists to impose an artificial polarity onto a contemporary situation that was often far more ambiguous. Polemicists encouraged their readers to identify the two churches in the everyday world, and among its inhabitants. They warned against making any judgements concerning religion solely upon the evidence of the human senses; appearances could be

²⁹ J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp. 472, 6.

³⁰ The phrase is in J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p. 422.

³¹ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E2r-5v.

deceptive. Antichrist was an arch-deceiver and had bewitched generations of hapless people into the false church by disguising theological error with the appearance of religious piety.³² Instead the believer should use an interpretative framework derived from the apocalyptic texts of scripture with which to discern the true nature of the times. Possessing this information, the individual could then make an act of allegiance to one church or the other.³³ The book of Revelation contained the true image of both churches:

Herein is the true-Christian church which is the meek spouse of the lamb without spot, in her right fashioned colours described. So is the proud church of the hypocrites in her just proportion depainted to the merciful forewarning of the Lord's elect.³⁴

The apocalyptic texts concealed their information about the churches under a series of images or tropes that were susceptible to varied interpretations. This enabled Protestant writers to exploit the general nature of apocalyptic imagery in order to apply it to their Catholic enemies. The application of this imagery to English Catholics was completely arbitrary in nature. Thus Revelation 17 was an image of the whore, which Bale claimed was a similitude that denoted Antichrist and his church. He then narrowed the identification and applied it specifically to Henry VIII's church in England. Bale then listed some of the individual members of Antichrist's church in England: 'Stokesley, Sampson, Gardiner and Tunstall, Wilson and Friar Watts, with such other holy prelates.'³⁵ These included Bonner who in a work of 1543 was called the 'man of sin'. The 'man of sin' or 'son of perdition', was mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2, a chapter Bale cited in the marginalia of his book. He interpreted this apocalyptic image as a prophecy of the coming of Antichrist into the world in human form.³⁶ This tendency to identify individual contemporaries with abstract images of evil was actively encouraged by writers of polemic. Epithets used to describe Antichrist in the Bible were used by Protestants against Catholics in order to de-sanctify their doctrine and demonise their bishops. Having decided that Bonner was the Man of Sin, Bale

³² On the belief in Antichrist's deceptive power see A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. N8v-O1r. P. Nicolls, *Letter*, sig. D4v. J. Hooper, *Declaration*, p. 39. J. Bale, *A christen exhortacyon*, sig. A1v. Also W. Lynne, *The beginning and endynge of all popery* [London, J. Herforde, 1548?], sig. A2r. STC 17115. For an earlier example see, W. Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises*, p. 327.

³³ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 252.

³⁴ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 251.

³⁵ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 510-11.

³⁶ The same identification had been made by Luther and Bullinger. See R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, pp. 91, 96 and 109.

proceeded to cite Nahum 3 as a biblical authority to justify the words he meant to use to describe Bonner. In Nahum 3 God passes judgement upon the city of Nineveh for her sins declaring that the city will be treated as 'loathsome' and 'as excrement'. Nahum's prophecy was taken by Bale and applied to those Bale considered were the ideological successors of Nineveh, the false church of Antichrist. As a result Bale called Bonner's doctrine a dung-hill, and Bonner the effusion of this dunghill.³⁷ The individuals on the episcopal bench were deliberately subsumed into the typological exemplars of the false church. Gardiner became 'Caiaphas' and 'Nimroth', Stokesley and Gardiner were 'tyrauntes of Sodoma'. Bonner was 'a feerce furyouse angel' and a 'locust' both from the bottomless pit of Revelation 9.³⁸ Bale further de-humanised the English Catholics by inputing to them every sin that could be attributed to Antichrist and his church:

Straugers, beastes, aduersaries, dreamers, colubers, belyals, domme dogges, rauenyge wolves, serpentes, leviathans, bastardes, traitors, destroyers, theues, idolles, men of synne, sonnes of perdition, unshamefast lyers, wicked doers, enemies to the truth, uncleane fowles' deuilles incarnate, blynde leaders of the blynde, hypocrites [...] yll sede with an C more.³⁹

The attempt to cover his opponents with abuse served the same purpose as Bale's reduction of their personalities to typological expressions of Antichrist. Bale hoped that through his suggestions, his readers would associate the Henrician church and its bishops with the vices and nature of Antichrist. He wanted to convince his co-religionists that although the Henrician church seemed to offer a way to further reform through compromise in its nature it was still the habitation of Antichrist and to be avoided as such.

Recantation and persecution

The spiritual polarity between the church of Christ and the church of Antichrist was designed to prevent accommodation or compromise between the two bodies. The exile polemicists' attitude to recantation and religious dissimulation was informed by the same ideology. The spiritual unity of the true church did not by its nature allow recantation or dissimulation as a valid option for the believer. Each individual member of the true church

³⁷ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. A6r-8v and F6r.

³⁸ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 219, 259. J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. H1v, A2r.

³⁹ J. Bale, *A christen exhortacion*, sig. A6v.

was a habitation in which Christ's Holy Spirit lived, invited into the believer by a profession of faith in Christian doctrine. It was impossible for God to be in the heart of the believer without being in the words of his mouth as well:

Nyghe is the worde unto thee, euen in the mouthe and herte, and this is the worde of faith whiche we preche, for fayth in oure hearte iustifyeth and the confession with oure mouthe bryngeth saluacyon.⁴⁰

Christ's spirit could not lie by dissimulation, nor confess allegiance to false doctrine through an act of recantation. The refusal of Garrett, Barnes, and Jerome to recant their faith in 1540 despite the threat of death was sure proof, Bale wrote, that the spirit of Christ was in them, and that thereby they were members of Christ's church:

It is a full manyfest token that his persecuted churche is not yet all dead but that he styll lyueth in hys trobled members according to hys iust promes.⁴¹

By contrast those who recanted subverted the whole basis of the church's identity. The recanter slandered the Holy Spirit within him by denying its truthfulness and asserting the contrary to be true. Just as the Pharisees had accused Jesus of being possessed by demons, so the recanter accused the spirit that he possessed, Christ's Holy Spirit, of being a demon, a spirit of lies. Like the Pharisees the recanters 'pluke the sin of the holy ghost into theyr bosom.'⁴² Such a sin propelled the believer out of Christ's church and into that of Antichrist. When Shaxton recanted in 1546 Bale compared him to the proverbial pigs of Matthew 7:6. 'Ye have trodden his [God's] verity most unreuerently under your feet [...] as ye are but swine.' It would have:

bene better for them that they had neuer had geuen that is holy to dogges and swyne, after Christes premonishmentes than thus shamefullye to become swyne with them.⁴³

Shaxton's porcine identity was an expression of his new allegiance to the false church whose members were described in the same terms. Gardiner and the Catholic polemicist William Peryn, were both 'Epicures, pigs' wrote Bale, and like Huntingdon 'prowde

⁴⁰ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E2r.

⁴¹ J. Bale, *Mysterye*, sig. L2v.

⁴² G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E1v. The comment is from Mark 3:30 and Luke 8.

⁴³ J. Bale, *Mysterye*, sig. L3v.

porklynges.⁴⁴ Of course, Shaxton was not only a pig but a Gadarene pig. Matthew 8:28-34, recounts the healing of two madmen in the country of the Gadarenes by Christ who sent the evil spirits that afflicted them into a herd of pigs. In the same way all those in the false church were possessed by demons as the Gadarene pigs had been, and the recanter joined them through his disavowment of God. Bale asked Shaxton: 'What Devil bewitched thee Shaxton to play this part?'⁴⁵

The Protestant polemicists' definition of the church as a doctrinal body unified by the Holy Spirit, meant that the act of recantation was an act of apostasy in which the recanter crossed the line dividing the two churches, becoming part of Antichrist's community. The decision as to whether to conform to false religion or not became an apocalyptic decision where the answer decided one's spiritual allegiance, and could decide one's destiny. Though Bale allowed those who recanted the chance to get back into the true church through repentance, the preferred option was exile or to endure persecution or martyrdom.⁴⁶

The justification that was made for enduring persecution was that it was an inescapable part of being a member of the true church. The belief was stated repeatedly in the writings of the Protestant polemicists in exile, and was demonstrated in its most explicit form by George Joye who made persecution the exclusive mark of the true church's identity:

take away persecucion out of Englande and so take awaye the worde of the crosse euen the gospell, the chirche of Christ and all true preachers [...] for never was there any chirche, so litle, so hole, so perfit, but it had an aduersary to persecute it.⁴⁷

The definition of the church as a persecuted congregation was undoubtedly provoked in part by the polemicists' own experiences of exile and persecution. English Protestant writers were dispersed across Europe. George Joye survived years of hiding in Antwerp, avoiding searches made for him by the imperial authorities.⁴⁸ John Bale's years of exile in the Low Countries caused him to identify his plight with that of St John the Evangelist, whom he believed (incorrectly) to have been the author of the book of Revelation. Both

⁴⁴ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 194. J. Bale, *Mysterie*, sig. L3r, C8r.

⁴⁵ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 219.

⁴⁶ J. Bale, *Mysterie*, sig. L3v. J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. A4v.

⁴⁷ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A4r-v. Also see *Consolacion*, sig. B5r and C4r. J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. B8r. J. Bale, *Mysterie*, sig. 18v. J. Bale, *Select works*, pp. 280-1, and pp. 76, 132, and 436.

⁴⁸ C. C. Butterworth and G. Chester, *George Joye 1495?-1553*, pp. 205-6.

men had been exiled from their native lands for a religious cause which they continued to profess from exile in writing.⁴⁹ However Bale's personal identification with St John's sufferings, powerful though it was, was insufficient on its own to account for his definition of the whole church's vocation as that of a persecuted community. Neither was state persecution in England intense enough to justify this. Only six people ever suffered the death penalty demanded for heresy by the Six Articles.⁵⁰ A recent study lists the total number of evangelical martyrs in 1541-5 at no more than twenty-one.⁵¹ This number was hardly high enough to warrant the description of the church as a body defined by its experience of persecution. It was a sufficient number, though, to allow Protestant writers to link their co-religionists into a historical paradigm of the church as a persecuted body. Persecution may not have been a typical mark of the Protestant congregation in England, but those few who did suffer could be shown to be typical of the Christian church's experience over the centuries. Protestant polemicists hoped to formulate a self identity for the Protestant community through a series of biblical and historical precedents that would encourage Protestants to identify themselves with persecuted, dissenting communities; this in turn would fuel their desire to maintain an identity separate from Henrician religion.

Protestant writers realised the importance of martyrdom before they compiled their martyrologies. The construction of martyrologies by Protestant writers was provoked by the need of the Protestant community to maintain a separate identity from their Catholic opponents. Bale's accounts of the Lollard martyr Sir John Oldcastle (1544) and of the sacramentarian Anne Askew (1546), were both prefaced by a summary of the historical identity of the two churches.⁵² The reader was expected to read the accounts of the martyrs in the light of the paradigm of the true church as a body persecuted by the false church.

At the centre of Protestant justifications of persecution as a sign of election was the historical figure of Christ. Christ's earthly incarnation had shown the identification of God with the poor persecuted flock, or community of the faithful. Christ had suffered persecution and ultimately martyrdom for the sake of the gospel, at the hands of evil men of

⁴⁹ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 251-260.

⁵⁰ J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p. 421.

⁵¹ A. Ryrie, 'Persecution, survival and compromise: English protestantism and the state 1539-47.' (St Andrews University M.Litt., dissertation, 1994), appendix I.

⁵² J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 5-14, 137-144.

the false church. This was an identification that Christ had bequeathed to all his disciples in the gospels.⁵³ The Protestant polemicists concluded that the suffering of persecution was an assumption of a true-church succession left by Christ to his apostles, and then to every subsequent generation:

Is there any other reward folowyng the trewe servants of God nowe than hath bene before? No surely, unlesse Christ hath now of late changed hys former promyse and is now become a speaker agyenst himself which is so unpossible as he not to be God.⁵⁴

The continuity of this succession was assured by the nature of the relationship between the church's head and the church's congregation. Christ's incarnate life as part of the persecuted congregation in first-century Israel had been the temporal expression of his eternal nature as God. Christ's eternal nature was embodied in the spirit which unified the church community into one body of the faithful under Christ. Thus the true church by maintaining Christ's spirit in their midst would continually show forth his identity as the suffering servant for the sake of righteousness. God's eternal spirit would not change during the course of human history. Therefore Bale could assert that the identification of the true church with persecution always had and always would be a constant mark of this church throughout every age of post-ascension history: Bale was convinced that the prophetic imagery of the book of Revelation showed this historical tradition clearly:

The universal troubles, persecutions, and crosses that the church suffered in its primitive spring, what it suffreth now, and what it shall suffer in the latter times.⁵⁵

Those who were persecuted for the same doctrine as that espoused by Christ wore 'Chrystes lyuerie', since they identified with his cause. They were 'lyke me[m]bers to their head for hys churche is a spouse that suffreth.'⁵⁶ Christ's eternal nature did not only extend forwards from the ascension, but back into history before the incarnation. In this way it became quite possible for figures from the Old Testament as well as the New to be members of the true church. The true church in the Old Testament had displayed the same vocation as that shown by Christ and all his church in the New Testament and beyond. It

⁵³ See Luke 21: 12-19 John 15:18-25 and 16: 1-4.

⁵⁴ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. C1v.

⁵⁵ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 253.

⁵⁶ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. C1r. J. Bale, *Mysterye*, sig. K7r. *Select Works*, p. 277. G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. A4r, D4r.

was upon these ideological assumptions that the polemicists used the Old Testament and the precedents of later history to construct a traditional identity for the mid-Tudor Protestant community.

In 1545 Bale accused his Catholic opponents in England of being a historical fragment of the greater church of Antichrist. Bale articulated his sense of Catholic association with the false church tradition by describing them with a paraphrase of the words from Jeremiah 2. This biblical passage was the address by the prophet Jeremiah to the faithless Israelites whose irreligious actions had alienated them from God:

They which have the law in theyr handes knoweth me not. They have walked after their own fantasies and are now become all vayne. They have defyled my pleasant lande (sayth the Lorde) and turned myne heretage into abomonicio[n]. The prestes haue dishonoured me and the preachers haue done their homage to Baall. They haue forsaken me the well of luyunge water, and dygged them broken pyttes that will holde no moystre. They haue called a stocke their father and the stone their creator. They haue stained my wayes with blasphemie, thei haue taught theyr own malycyous mischief.⁵⁷

The continuity of this false church between the Old Testament and the sixteenth century was mirrored by the co-existence of the true church. Despite the attempts of the Henrician church to wipe the Protestant community out by persecution, a remnant had survived. Moreover this group had preserved their distinctiveness as a church, by a refusal to compromise with their enemies' religion: 'A remnant is there yet left which hath not bowed their knees to your false God Baal.'⁵⁸ Though unattributed, these words were clearly an allusion by Bale to the account in I Kings. The fierce persecution by the Baalist queen Jezebel of the orthodox Jews under her rule in ancient Israel caused the prophet Elijah temporarily to despair of God's cause. Yet Elijah is told by God that a small remnant had survived; all those who had remained consecrated to God by remaining separate from the religious contamination of Baalism: 'I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all who have not bowed the knee to Baal, all whose lips have not kissed him.'⁵⁹ Though implicit, the inference that Bale intended his readers to draw from this historical precedent in the Old Testament appears obvious. The faithful remnant of the Old Testament and of mid-Tudor England were two historical expressions of the same spiritual church, and faced the same

⁵⁷ Jeremiah 2 paraphrased by Bale in *Mysterie*, sig. C5v-6r.

⁵⁸ J. Bale, *Mysterie*, sig. L2v.

⁵⁹ I Kings 19:18

sort of persecution. In both cases only those who resisted all signs of outward conformity with Antichrist's church were worthy to be members of Christ's, even if this resistance resulted in persecution.

The same points were forcibly made in George Joye's work of the same year, An Exposition of Daniel the prophete. Joye used the account in Daniel 3 to highlight the persistence of the two churches' identities in history. In Daniel 3 the faithful Israelites, Meshach, Sedrach and Abed-nego, were commanded to bow to a golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. They refused to comply on the grounds that such an action would transgress the first and second commandments of God against committing acts of idolatry. As a result they were bound fast and cast alive into a heated furnace. This confrontation in the Old Testament was mirrored in its re-enactment by each church's ideological descendants in Henrician England in the 1540s. English Protestants were encouraged to identify themselves with Daniel and the faithful remnant, while the Catholic clergy were cast as Nebuchadnezzar's evil counsellors and pagan priests. Joye continually juxtaposed the two time periods of Babylon and sixteenth-century England in order to apply the conclusions of the account in Daniel 3 to the contemporary situation in England. The English Catholic bishops, wrote Joye, would have advised Meshach, Sedrach and Abed-nego to avoid persecution, in the same way as they advised English Protestants to conform with the English religious settlement:

(as they teach us to crepe to the crosse and kysse it) without any godly worship or transgression the first nor second commandments [...] to haue kneled to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image yea and haue kyssed his feet to[o], with a certayn utwarde reuere[n]t behaiour, honouring God nethelesse in spirit.⁶⁰

Yet God had taught them 'and us', wrote Joye meaning his readers, not to bow or adore images since:

Euerye utwarde reuerent behaiour is a token of an inwarde worship and reuerence of the same thing.⁶¹

Joye argued that the true nature of the divisions in England could only be truly discerned by a return to the examples of scripture. The account in Daniel showed the actual

⁶⁰ G. Joye, Exposition, sig. E2r--v.

⁶¹ G. Joye, op. cit., sig. E4v.

issue that faced Protestants every time they were told to bow to an image. The distinction made in the King's Book between an image and an idol was a false one. It was part of an attempt by the false church to entice the members of the true church into denying their theological identity through a mixture of coercion and subterfuge. Like their ideological forebears, English reformers should reply as the Jews had in Daniel 3; that they would not bow to an image, since they had God to worship and him alone.⁶² Like Bale's use of Jeremiah 2 and I Kings, Joye's use of Daniel sought to show that in an irreligious state only the willingness to undergo molestation and even martyrdom could ensure that true-church doctrine was maintained. In all these Old Testament accounts, though the historical detail varied, the underlying division was the same: that of a true church, that by nature was persecuted, and a false church, that was by nature a persecutor. The connections drawn between biblical precedents and the divisions of the sixteenth century were a deliberate attempt to encourage English Protestants to identify themselves with this biblical tradition of godly dissent.

Bale traced the persistence of these traditional roles into the post-ascension history of the church. In The Image of Both Churches, Bale's commentary on the book of Revelation, Bale asserted that the images depicted in Revelation 11 were similitudes representing the role of the true church after Christ's ascension. God's two faithful witnesses of Revelation 11:3 were symbols denoting the continual historical witness of the true church to Christ's doctrine:

These two witnesses hath continued with the people of God since the death of Stephen for the most part secretly.⁶³

The martyrdom of these witnesses by a beast in Revelation 11:8 was the church's persecution by Antichrist in every age since the ascension. Thus the two churches and their conflict underlay the church's history after the incarnation as well as before it in the Old Testament. Bale's search for historical forebears was helped by his identification of the papacy as a manifestation of Antichrist. The opponents of the papacy could be expected to be members of the true church, since the true church existed in diametric opposition to Antichrist's papal church and as a result Bale's genealogy of the church was predominantly

⁶² G. Joye, *op. cit.*, sig. E5v.

⁶³ J. Bale, Select Works, p. 387.

a collection of dissenters. These dissenters had been the victims of papal persecution, and Bale placed them doctrinally in a direct line of ideological descent with the sixteenth century. The true church included a whole collection of individual dissenters, such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome of Prague and Savanorola, who were placed alongside Bale's contemporaries, Frith, Tyndale, Barnes and others, to show the true-church affinity between them. They were 'God's servants' and Antichrist's persecution of them was because he knew that 'they have heavenly doctrine'. Most of these men had died as martyrs: 'fervent, constant and immovable' in their doctrine. The preservation of this doctrine, in the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, as in the Old Testament, had been ensured by those willing to die for it.⁶⁴ Other ancestors of Bale's church were the Waldensians and Albigensians. Their massacre by the papacy was immediately compared to the martyrdoms of Bale's contemporaries by Antichrist. Many thousands of Waldensians had died for refusing to abjure the faith:

that is seen now in this age so many poor innocents murdered. For nowhere is it lawful rightly without superstition to confess the name and verity of Christ.⁶⁵

The separation of the true church from the false was not just a doctrinal duty, but a historical one. The historical precedents in the Bible for such a division clearly identified the godly with a small persecuted minority. Bale's manipulation of the prophetic imagery of Revelation allowed the extrapolation of this biblical model into later historical periods. In each case the polemicists explained these historical divisions in terms of their importance as didactic examples for the godly community in their own age. Bale's commentary on Revelation was written:

to admonish Christ's flock by this present revelation of their past perils, and the dangers to come for the contempt of the gospel, which now reigneth there above all in the clergy.⁶⁶

The intention in each case was to persuade Protestants in England to identify themselves with a model of the true church that encouraged the consolidation of the Protestant community around a self identity that survived in and through dissent and persecution.

⁶⁴ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 326, 394, 398.

⁶⁵ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 322.

⁶⁶ J. Bale, *Select Works*, p. 255.

Poor persecuted flock or favoured clique?

The definition of the church as a separate body under perpetual persecution betrayed Protestant writers' alienation from political authority in England. Increasingly, rather than placing their hopes in alliances with secular rulers, polemicists placed their hopes in a resolution of the contemporary situation through the *parousia*. This was a reflection of the church's defensive posture. Protestant writers began to doubt their ability to convert the world. Instead they took refuge in biblical prophecies in which the church's persecution by the world was a catalyst which provoked the intervention of God on the church's behalf against her enemies. The same prophecies used by polemicists to identify the true church as a persecuted minority also showed that the true church would be justified, but not until the *Eschatos*. Daniel in exile in Babylon had been told in a prophecy of the final days that his people would be delivered and the elect would be born into everlasting life.⁶⁷ In Revelation the triumph of the church as the bride of Christ and the destruction of Antichrist would not occur until the end of the world.⁶⁸ Polemicists therefore put their hope in the fulfilment of a providential plan.⁶⁹ The war of the two churches was not strictly Manichaeian, Antichrist's rule had been allowed by God, but God would ultimately destroy him.⁷⁰ But the church could hasten this destruction by their own sacrifices. Revelation 6:9-11 showed that God had limited the duration of the persecution that his church would have to endure. When a certain number of martyrs had been killed then, and only then, would God intervene in the *parousia*:

Each [...] were told to rest a little longer until the tally should be complete of all their brothers who in Christ's service who were to be killed as they had been.

In addition, these martyrs implicated their persecutors in the final judgement of Antichrist through the imputation of blood guilt. Derived from Old Testament texts, blood guilt stipulated that God would demand expiation for all the innocent blood shed from those

⁶⁷ Daniel 12:1-3.

⁶⁸ Revelation 19:7-22:17.

⁶⁹ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 433, 625. G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. B4r, D3r. G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. F6r, Gg3r- Gg7v.

⁷⁰ J. Bale, *Select Works*, pp. 282-3, 485. G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. F3v.

who had shed it.⁷¹ In Revelation blood guilt is cited by the elect as the reason that God will judge the world. The saints who had been persecuted and slain would ultimately be avenged upon their persecutors by God himself.⁷² Martyrdom was thus in one sense an aggressive act; it hastened the onset of the last judgement and brought down damnation upon the head of a persecutor:

When our aduersaries and persewers thinke to slaye us thei slaye themselves bodye and soule with the deathe of everlastyng damnacion.⁷³

The persistent and widespread imputation of blood guilt by Protestant polemicists to their Catholic opponents showed something of the hopelessness of their earthly position.⁷⁴ Joye delighted in thinking the last days were at hand, since he foresaw in them the destruction of the Catholic religion in the flood of God's wrath. He was sure the church would survive this deluge. The 'ark' of the church, all those united in *sola fide* justification, had been assiduously built up over a number of years by many godly Noahs including Luther.⁷⁵ Yet arguably Joye's desire to see the last days expressed a certain pessimism about the present. Tired with the world's judgement upon the church of God, Joye longed to see the judgement of the world and the exaltation of the church. However Joye's pessimism had one advantage. If the last days were approaching, he told his readers, it was more vital than ever that they isolate themselves from Roman religion, lest they were mistakenly included in its eradication by divine wrath.⁷⁶

Yet even as the polemicists sought to persuade and frighten their co-religionists into maintaining religious detachment, the contemporary situation had begun to change. Through late 1546 Henry VIII's health declined and by late January 1547 he was dead. The new English king was a child, a pawn in the hands of a faction that favoured further

⁷¹ Old Testament texts dealing with blood guilt are Genesis 9:6, Numbers 39:33 Ezekiel 22: For a modern appraisal of the subject see P. Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', *Journal of British Studies*, 16 (1977), pp. 41-54.

⁷² Revelation 6:10-11 and 18:24.

⁷³ G. Joye, *Consolacion*, sig. F8v.

⁷⁴ A few of those imputing blood guilt to Catholics in England were: H. Brincklow, *The Complaynte of Roderyck Mors* [1545], ed. J. M. Cowper, *EETS* extra series 22, (1874), p. 59. J. Hooper, *Early Works*, p. 220. J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. E5v, F1v. J. Bale, *Mysterie*, sig. K7v. J. Bale, *Epistle exhortatorie*, sig. C3r-v. G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. E5v-7v.

⁷⁵ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Hh1v-Hh2r. Bale used the same image for the church congregation see, *Select Works*, p. 403.

⁷⁶ G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. Y1v.

Protestant reform in the English church. As a result the Protestant polemicists were catapulted from the beleaguered status of a persecuted remnant to a position of tolerance and patronage from the new government. In such circumstances the identification of the elect church with persecution proved to be a two-edged sword. The identity by its very nature was not designed to adapt to changing political circumstances. The place of the church as a persecuted minority had become inextricably linked to its historical identity as a church. This historical tradition was an expression of the constant and unchanging nature of Christ in his true church and its battle against Antichrist. Protestants felt unable to argue that Christ in his church could suddenly change just because the English king had. Protestant writers had become prisoners of their own paradigm. Even worse was the discovery that English Catholics during Edward's reign could turn the model of the persecuted elect back upon the reformers. In 1548 Crowley complained that Shaxton:

Upon occasion geue to speake of persecucion affirmed that the good bysshoppes of Wynchester and London, and such other, were the onely sufferers of persecution in these dayes.⁷⁷

Nor was Shaxton alone in his judgement. In 1550 the Catholic writer Richard Smith published a book in which he lauded Gardiner and Bonner for enduring persecution at the hands of heretics and schismatics for the sake of true doctrine.⁷⁸ Shaxton and Smith surely had a point. The logic of associating persecution in Edwardian England with English Catholics, rather than with the Protestant community, was strongly justified by events. The imposition of a programme of Protestant reform in the English church by Edward VI's government involved a systematic reduction of all Catholic opposition by threats or imprisonment. The repeated imprisonments suffered by Bonner and Gardiner were the most conspicuous individual examples of this.⁷⁹

Though Protestants were no longer in danger of political prosecution for their

⁷⁷ R. Crowley, The Confutation of the Xiii articles wherunto Nicholas Shaxton, late byshop of Salisburie subscribed [London, J. Day and W. Seres, 1548], sig. A3v. STC 6083.

⁷⁸ J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials (Oxford, 1822), vol. II. pt. 1 pp. 65-6.

⁷⁹ The objections of Gardiner to the Homilies and the authority of the visitation commission in 1547 led to his imprisonment in the Fleet in September 1547 where he remained until January 1548. Refusing to conform with the religious settlement Gardiner was sent to the Tower in June 1548 where he was to remain for the next five years of Edward VI's reign. Bonner, bishop of London was sent to the Fleet in August 1547 for questioning the authority of the visitation commission of the same year to enact iconoclastic reforms in his cathedral. Though later released Bonner's refusal to disown the mass led to his reimprisonment in September 1549 this time in the Marshalsea.

religion, they continued to assert their place as Christ's persecuted little flock, but they found this increasingly hard to justify.⁸⁰ John Bale found his true-church destiny in 1553, but only by leaving England and transferring to Catholic Ireland. Appointed to the bishopric of Ossory, Bale attempted to impose Edwardian Protestantism on the native Catholic population. Unsurprisingly, Bale found plenty of persecutors among his unappreciative Irish diocese. Bale himself was threatened and his servants murdered.⁸¹ Back in England Latimer attempted to adapt the definition of what constituted persecution in order to accommodate the tolerance enjoyed by the godly under Edward VI. In a sermon of 1552 Latimer said that although persecution could mean interrogation and constraint, it also had other forms:

Whosoever suffreth any thing for any manner of righteousness sake, blessed is he. The quest monger doing uprightly his duty in discharge of his conscience, if he shall have displeasure happy is he and he shall have his reward of the Lord (my emphasis).⁸²

This was a long way from Bale's genealogy of true-church martyrs. Other polemical writers attempted to locate Antichrist in the covetousness of the civil magistracy. Protestant preachers and polemicists battled with Antichrist in this new form, using the same terminology to describe Edward's nominally Protestant government, as polemicists had once used to describe Henry VIII's Catholic bishops.⁸³

All these arguments were attempts to resolve the disparity between the Protestants' self identity and their actual status as a clique favoured by government.⁸⁴ The dilemma would only be resolved by the resumption of persecution, martyrdom and exile during queen Mary's reign.

⁸⁰ C. Davies, "'Poor persecuted little flock" or "Commonwealth of Christians"; Edwardian Protestant conceptions of the church', in P. Lake and M. Dowling, (eds.), Protestantism and the national church in sixteenth-century England (London, Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 78-101.

⁸¹ Bale's own autobiographical account of this is related in his work: The vocacyon [1553], eds. J. King and P. Happe, The vocacyon, in RETS, vol. XIV (New York, 1989).

⁸² H. Latimer, Sermons, p. 488.

⁸³ See Chapter 6.

⁸⁴ It is in this light that the Protestants' continued descriptions of themselves as a persecuted minority should be read, not as literal admissions of their real status as a minority group. To read the comments in this way is to mistake propaganda for observation. For an example of this see C. Haigh, English Reformations, p. 202.

Chapter 4

The Protestant writers and the Government of Edward VI

During the reign of Henry VIII royal authority had been used to condemn the writings of the Protestant polemicists. Protestant writers were compelled by the heresy laws to flee into exile on the continent. Those who remained in England either sought to escape detection and prosecution through silence, or continued to write and risked forced recantations and imprisonment. Upon Edward VI's accession it soon became obvious that the religious climate had changed. Those who now occupied the highest places in Edward's government betrayed their religious affinity with the Protestant writers by using the same biblical terminology with which to describe their reform objectives. This shared terminology was expressive of a shared set of religious assumptions. The concrete expressions of these abstract links were soon evident in the preferment of known Protestants to positions of trust. This was most obvious in Somerset's household. In addition Somerset deliberately created conditions in England conducive to the propaganda of reform by systematically suppressing Catholic polemic and offering patronage or encouragement to Protestant polemicists to evangelise in print. This was achieved either through his own personal patronage or by Protestants at court.

Such an assertion would not have surprised contemporary commentators who observed with interest (or alarm) Somerset's close connections with individuals committed to reform. But it goes clearly against the grain of more recent historical comment. Indeed the trend of historical writing in recent years has been clearly aimed at re-examining Somerset's role in reform in an essentially unsympathetic light. According to M. L. Bush's portrayal of the Somerset regime in his Government Policy of Protector Somerset, the Lord Protector's religious convictions were no more than skin deep: religious reform was an almost incidental by-product of years where the Protector's own attention was fixed firmly on the completion of the subjugation of Scotland, his first and in Bush's view, almost his only priority.¹ Bush's hypothesis was always speculative and highly contentious, but echoes persist even in the late

¹ M. L. Bush, The Government policy of Protector Somerset, pp. 100-126.

synoptic treatment of the English Reformation by Christopher Haigh. Here again reform proceeded largely outside the area of Somerset's personal concern. Haigh, for instance, concludes his discussion on Somerset's early reforming measures thus: 'Somerset had blundered into a total ban on images in London and he had got away with it.'² To contemporaries such conclusions would have appeared perverse, in defiance of all they observed of those who moved in and out of Somerset's own circle, the deliberate signals given by the prominent appointments of evangelicals, and the language used to describe the regime's intentions. Yet if the depth of the regime's commitment to reform is still regarded as open to question, it is worth reviewing somewhat more systematically than has previously been attempted the evidence for the web of connections which bound Somerset and his associates to the Protestants who were urging the regime to introduce bold reform. Individually none of these fragments of evidence is conclusive; together they present a compelling picture of a regime totally committed to harnessing the skills and advancing the careers of those most committed to a bold programme of Protestant change within the English Church.

Protestant writers never tired of pointing out to the young King Edward how his elevated status as king gave him certain biblically-defined duties both to the spiritual health of his people and to his God. Polemicists regaled the young king with the examples of Old Testament monarchs, those beloved of God for their piety, and others accursed by the almighty for their false religion. The exemplars most often cited came from the historical books of the Old Testament, that dealt with the establishment and degeneration of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, rich narrative journals that provided many role models for the king of England. Nor were such political uses of scriptural exemplars confined in their use to the Protestant polemicists. By the 1540s many of the episcopacy were using the same examples to describe their desired model for reform. The examples that were cited reflected the diametric divisions that were inherent in two-church theology; they were attempts to place the young king in the true church. Consequently the role models they suggested allowed no compromise with what Protestant polemicists considered to be the religion of the

² C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 170.

false church. For Protestants this false church was manifest in the religious system of the Catholic church in England. Those Old Testament kings used to describe a programme of reform to Edward were predominantly iconoclastic kings, whose reigns had been notorious for their destruction of the existing religious order, in favour of its replacement by another.

Modern historians can only understand the full extent of the destruction that the Protestants intended in Edward's England, and their motivations for it, by returning to the Old Testament texts from which Protestants first derived these exemplars. The biblical accounts depict an iconoclastic reform that was absolute in nature, including not merely statues or idols, but every sacral object that had been used in the rituals and devotions of the false church. The polemicists' use of these accounts to describe their own reform objectives was provoked in part by their desire to consign Catholic religion in England to oblivion. Protestants were well aware of the powerful hold exerted by Catholic religion over the English people, and sought to destroy this hold through the destruction of the system that enabled it to exist. Protestant writers were convinced that the reform of religion in England could only be achieved if the Catholic system of religion was first removed. In order to attain this they used a biblical strategy drawn from the Old Testament where iconoclasm preceded the theological reform of the church. They of course would not have seen it like this. To Protestants iconoclasm was as much a part of the reintroduction of God's law as the construction of written formularies of faith.

There was thus within the reform process of Edwardian England a theological determinism which some historians have too readily overlooked. The iconoclastic fury that accompanied the reform of the church, and the articulations of the need to reform by iconoclasm, were also derived from the Bible accounts. Protestant polemicists were convinced that the rites of the false church were concrete embodiments of a spiritual evil, and that this evil was a dangerous corruptive. The destruction wrought by Old Testament kings was thus never merely an exercise in extirpation, but one of religious purgation. It was this biblically comprehensive model of reformation that the Protestant polemicists wanted to suggest to Edward VI and which they recommended with such insistence every time they compared him to an iconoclastic king of the Old Testament.

King Edward VI as Josiah: the king as a minor

Among the Protestant writers of the sixteenth century it was commonly held that the scriptures were an immutable source of truth: 'The gospel is as yt Lord is, everlastyng.'³ Such a belief common to Protestant writers such as John Bale, Robert Crowley, Knox and Lever, was endorsed by the weighty sanction of the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁴ Hebrews asserted that Christ was the same through all eternity being the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.⁵ If God was constant then his historical reaction to men's sins and virtues would be constant. It did not seem strained or artificial to the printer and writer Robert Crowley, that he could describe the sins of Tudor England, and God's reaction to them, using exactly the same words that Ezekiel had used to describe Israel centuries before.⁶ This bore witness to the bibliocentric world view of these writers. But just as important is that the applicability of scriptural examples to contemporary events was greatly heightened; they had a didactic significance in the here and now and were not merely convenient analogies.

The fact that authors did not always give an extended explanation of the analogies they used, means that the comprehensive nature of these biblical images is often lost on the modern audience. Often merely the name of an Old Testament king would be mentioned before Edward, and a lesson drawn from this example. But writers could use biblical imagery to convey broad allusions to their readers. A system of ideas could be encapsulated and conveyed through the utilisation of shared associative concepts.⁷ Writers and preachers expected the king and their other readers to go back to the Bible and read about the exemplars they mentioned. Such exemplars suggested roles that a king should adopt, and others that he should avoid. Thus to be called Josiah was a great compliment, since scripture admitted Josiah to have been a great reformer in the eyes of God. To be called Ahab was, in contrast, wholly unflattering since it conveyed a picture of vacillation, sanction of idolatry,

³ J. Bale, A dialogue or communication to be had at table betwene two chyldren [London, R. Foster, 1549], sig. A3v. STC 1290.

⁴ R. Kyle, 'John Knox and Apocalyptic thought', SCI, 15 (1984), pp. 458-9.

⁵ Hebrews 13:8-9.

⁶ Crowley cited Ezekiel 34 in R. Crowley, The Way To Wealth Wherein Is Taught A Most Present Remedy For Sedition [London, 1550], rptd. in The Select Works of Robert Crowley, ed. J. M. Cowper, EETS, extra series, 15 (1872), p. 139.

⁷ C. Hill, The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution (Oxford, 1993), pp. 51-7.

and ultimately untimely death.⁸ In other words, English Protestant writers addressed a biblical audience, one fully equipped to understand the significance of what may now appear to us no more than passing allusions.

The most commonly quoted example was that of Josiah, the late seventh-century BC king of Judah and a zealous reformer.⁹ The example recommended itself partly as an endorsement of reform by a king and his council when the king was still in his minority. The nature of reform during Edward's reign posed a dilemma for English Catholics. The obedience of a subject to his king was defined as a religious duty from the subject to God's representative. Yet when that king commanded acts to be committed against God's religion, acts that seemed little short of sacrilegious, was the subject justified in resisting them, or should he obey? In the attempt to avoid this awkward question Catholics resorted to a variant of the mediaeval 'evil counsellor' argument. These counsellors had managed to gain an unrivalled position around the king which enabled them to enjoy a virtual monopoly of government. The idea was not a new one: exile Protestants during the later reign of Henry VIII had criticised that king's religious policy using the same philosophy. However Edward VI's minority added a new potency to the evil counsellor argument. Whereas Henry VIII had been a mature statesman by the time he began to exercise his prerogative as Supreme Head of the Church of England, Edward succeeded to this authority at the age of nine. As a child Edward could not be expected to exert the same amount of control over his counsellors as Henry had, in fact many claimed that Edward's counsellors were controlling him. Latimer preached that he knew of 'wicked' people who spoke of Edwardian religious change by arguing 'Tush, this gear will not tarry it is but my Lord Protector's and my Lord of Canterbury's doing: the king is a child and knoweth not of it.'¹⁰

One of these 'wicked' people was the Catholic bishop of Winchester Stephen Gardiner, who wrote repeatedly to the Lord Protector and Cranmer, warning of the possible unrest among the English commonalty if religious changes were undertaken by Edward's

⁸ See, I Kings 16:21 to I Kings 22:40 for an account of Ahab's reign.

⁹ 2 Kings 22 and 23 and 2 Chronicles 34 and 35. The use of Josiah as an exemplar, proffered by the reformers to the young king Edward VI are numerous. See chapter 5 below. Also see J. Hooper, 'Sermon of Lent 1550', in *Early Writings*, ed. S. Carr, (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), pp. 436-7. H. Latimer, 'Sermon of April 5th' 1549 in *Sermons*, pp. 175-8.

¹⁰ H. Latimer, 'Second Sermon Before the king's majesty', 15th March 1549', in *Sermons*, p. 118.

Privy Council during the king's minority. The bishop's tone of concern hardly concealed his polemical intent. Gardiner emphasised the fact that Edward could, under the law, later change his mind and use the Supremacy against Cranmer. Edward could display his father's wisdom, which had been shown in a hatred of those very heretics that by 1547 Cranmer was known to be patronising.¹¹ With his accustomed subtlety Gardiner was implying that those religious policies that were at variance with the Henrician religious settlement, were not the product of kingly sapience, but of evil counsellors manipulating a king who had yet to grow into his ancestral wisdom. The same sentiment was expressed with considerably less tact by one Henry Brabon to the fervent Protestant John Bale:

[Edward] was but a poore child (sayd he) unknowne is it to him what actes are made nowadays. But when he commeth ones of age, he will hang up an hondred of suche heretyke knaves. Meanyng the preachers of our tyme and their maynteyners be lyke.¹²

Bale was singularly unimpressed and later denounced Brabon as a 'frantycck papyst' and a seditious slanderer to the Privy Council, who put Brabon in the pillory.¹³ But the views expressed by the frantic papist were not quite as irrational as Bale would have had his readers believe. By late 1547 Lord Protector Somerset had effectively centralised all political power into his own hands, controlling both the access to the young king's person, and the formative decisions that made government policy. Somerset had used the semi-regal jurisdiction he had gained over the Privy Council to exclude any opponents, including Catholic Privy councillors such as Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who was purged from the Privy Council in March 1547.¹⁴ Somerset's monopoly of power and Edward's lack of years

¹¹ S. Gardiner, *Letters*, pp. 291, 306-7, 310-12.

¹² J. Bale, *An expostulation or complaynt agaynste the blasphemyes of a franticke papyst of Hamshyre* [London, J. Daye, 1552?], sig. B1r. STC 1294. [Hereafter, *Expostulation*].

¹³ For an account of the proceedings against Henry Brabon see J. R. Dascent (ed.), et al., *Acts of the Privy Council* (new series; 46 vols. London, 1890-1964), vol. IV. p. 4. Also see M. Hogarde, *The Displaying of Protestants* [London, 1556], sig. M5r and M5v. STC 13557.

¹⁴ Made Lord Protector and Governor of the king's person on January 31st 1547, Somerset excluded Wriothesley 8th March 1547; by letters patent of 13th March 1547 he gained control of the composition of the Privy Council and the frequency of its meeting, and by Letters patent of 24th December 1547 Somerset absolved himself of the duty to gain the endorsement of the Council to decisions he took in the formation of government policy. By 1548 the Council was virtually redundant and business traditionally dealt with by the Privy Council was being channelled through Somerset's own private household. See, D. E. Hoak, *The King's Council in the reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 235-7, 239 and pp. 95-102. For Somerset's control of all access to Edward through control of the Privy Chamber see J. Murphy, 'The illusion of decline: The Privy Chamber, 1547-1558', in D. Starkey, *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (New York, 1986), pp. 122-7.

invited the Catholic charge that the Protestant reforms of Edward's reign were the orders of an unscrupulous political clique controlling a child king. In a parliamentary debate the Catholic Dr Storey lamented the religious changes: 'Woe unto thee O land when thy king is a child.'¹⁵

The government moved to silence criticism of the regime. Hugh Latimer preached to the court in March 1549 that the intrinsic authority of kings was not impaired by age. Joas and Josiah, kings of the Old Testament, had both been children, and were biblical precedents for the belief that: 'Young kings though they be children yet they are kings notwithstanding.'¹⁶ This was particularly so when as in Edward's case, the young king was gifted with a prodigious 'learning' and 'godly wit' well in excess of that which one would normally expect of a child: 'More learning and godly wit than twenty of his progenitors that I could name had at any time of their life.'¹⁷ It was this myth of the learned child Edward that allowed Latimer to counter Storey's lament by citing another verse from the same book of the Bible: 'blessed is the land where there is a noble king.'¹⁸ The obvious intention behind this myth of Edward's learning was to show that Edward was actively involved in the religious changes instituted by his servants, and to compel acquiescence in these changes. Obedience to the king and his reforms would be synonymous. It was with this intention in mind that Somerset sent his private secretary William Cecil to see Gardiner shortly before the latter's public sermon of June 1548. The Lord Protector was eager to elicit a public endorsement of the reforms of 1547-8 from one of the foremost English Catholics, especially since Gardiner had been a major apologist for the authority of the Royal Supremacy in the 1530s. By endorsing Edward's full authority to rule as a minor Gardiner would have been implicitly admitting a duty of obedience to Edward's programme of religious reform. Cecil visited Gardiner in prison where he showed the Catholic prelate a set of notes, reputedly written by king Edward himself, demonstrating the young king's intellectual grasp of the authority of

¹⁵ Ecclesiastes 10:16

¹⁶ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 117. Latimer repeated this sentiment in a later passage, see *Sermons*, p. 132. For the use of the same imagery by other reformers to justify the minority see, J. Hooper, *Later Writings*, p. 437. Bartholomew Traheron to Bullinger, letter of 28th September 1548 in, *OL* I. p. 321. Also see pp. 108 ff. below.

¹⁷ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 118. Hooper also wrote that Edward was 'exceptionally learned', in a letter to Bullinger, 27 March 1550, in *OL* I. p. 82.

¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 10:17

kings as it had been explained to him by Protestant preachers. These papers were meant as a proof that Edward himself personally identified with the exemplar of kingship which the Protestant reformers had suggested to him. Cecil told Gardiner that when he dealt with the authority of kings in his forthcoming sermon: 'Ye must join counsel withal.'¹⁹ Somerset tried the same argument thirteen months later when he tried to persuade another high profile English Catholic to conform, the exile Cardinal de la Pole. Somerset had obviously been impressed by Latimer's sermons of three and four months before, for he expressed his thoughts according to the same biblical imagery as Latimer had used. King Edward was in every respect a king, whose status was not lessened by his age, just as 'Josiah and Solomon at his best were not old.' If Pole appreciated this fact, Somerset wrote, then he hoped Pole would conform to Edward's religion out of loyalty to Edward as King: 'It was to be hoped that you now had respect to your native country, your king, and Christ's word here.'²⁰

Iconoclastic reform and the king

The images used by Latimer and his co-religionists were not only used in order to justify the young king's authority to reform, but also sought ways to define how the king should use this dominion. The fact is all the positive exemplars including Josiah, which the polemicists suggested to Edward, had one thing in common: they were iconoclasts. This was not a message the Protestants wanted Edward to overlook, and thus they made it explicit. Bale, dedicating his Apology against a ranke papyst (1550) to Edward, listed the destructive reforms of Jehu, Ezekias, Asa, Jehosaphat and Josiah. He ends the preface by drawing the lesson that:

Sufficient are these most worthy examples of the scripture, to declare what the duty of a king is concerning the affairs of our Christian religion. ²¹

The evidence from the polemical literature suggests that reformers were willing to take the comparison between Old Testament precedents and contemporary events very near

¹⁹ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. p. 68.

²⁰ C. S. Knighton (ed.), The Calendar of State Papers Domestic (HMSO, 1992), p. 265. [Hereafter CSPD] In addition to Josiah, Latimer had also used Solomon as an exemplar in a sermon to Edward on 5th March 1549, in H. Latimer, Sermons, p. 125. In a sermon of 5th April 1549 Latimer criticised Pole as a dissenter, from the king's religious settlement, in Sermons, pp. 173-5.

²¹ J. Bale, The apology of Johan Bale agaynst a ranke papyst [London, J. Daye, 1550?], sig. A3v. STC 1275.

to the logical conclusion the comparison demanded. Just as Josiah had reformed absolutely so should Edward. In the words of Becon: 'He [Josiah] never stopped until he had reformed his whole realm.'²² The very totality of reform demanded betrayed the influence of the biblical accounts of the suppression of idolatry by Old Testament kings, as it was meant to. Josiah had destroyed not only statues because they were idols, but had attacked any object associated with false worship: groves, altars, buildings, even creatures.²³ Many reformers balked at killing idolaters, indeed the Edwardian writers were virtually unanimous in their agreement that the destruction of false worship must not include the murder of the idolaters. But this apart English Protestants' definition of what constituted idolatry could be just as wide as that of the authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles.

The beginning of Edward's reign saw a huge upsurge in such polemical writings as the advocates of evangelical change moved swiftly in an attempt to take control over the religious agenda. If this was the nature of the advice being given to the Edwardian regime, then an understanding of the potential impact of such writings will affect any general judgements on the nature of the Edwardian project. There was nothing measured or moderate about the reforms being professed here. Further, in proposing such radical action polemicists were attempting to strike at the heart of the structure of Catholic devotional religion.

Dr Eamon Duffy in his book The Stripping of the Altars (1992) has drawn attention to the fact that mediaeval religion in England functioned as a comprehensive whole: that the religious life of the community was propagated by a visible and tangible machinery of Catholic worship.²⁴ Protestants in the 1540s were well aware of this, it seems. Many of these Protestant writers enumerate a long list of Catholic rites and ceremonies which they regarded to be abuses.²⁵

²² T. Becon, The flower of godly prayers [London, J. Daye, 1550], in Prayers And Other Pieces By Thomas Becon, ed. J. Ayre (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848), Preface. [Hereafter, T. Becon, Prayers].

²³ 2 Kings 23.

²⁴ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars.

²⁵ J. Bale, The Epistle exhortatorye, sig. I7v. STC 1291. Another Protestant polemicist using the same terms and to the same intent was Gilby. See A. Gilby, An Answer to the deuilish detection of Stephane Gardiner [London, S. Mierdman, 24th Ian 1547' (1548)], sig. G6r. STC 11884. 'The baggage of popeishe inventions: the farthynges whereof your religion wholely standeth'. Gilby saw Catholic religion as one overall system composed of many tiny parts.

Cranmer wrote that all non-scriptural religious practice:

Their idolatry besides, yea and also contrary to the word of God, as invocation and praying to Saints, worshipping of images and relics, with pilgrimages and offerings, and the sacrifice of the mass, and pardons to deliver men's souls from Purgatory; holy bread, holy water, ashes, palms, and other such baggage.²⁶

A similar listing was repeated in the Injunctions of July 1547:

They shall take away, utterly extincte, and destroye, all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlestickes, tryndelies or rolles of waxe, pictures, payntynges, and all other monumentes of fayned miracles.²⁷

The inclusive nature of these lists showed an appreciation of the potency of visual imagery and ceremonial religion for the common man. Reformers appreciated the attractions of mediaeval parish religion. In John Bale's, A dialogue or familiar talke betwene two neighbours a Catholic neighbour tells his reforming colleague that:

[It] is a goodly sight to se[e] the swete images, well paynted wyth fayre lightes afore them, a very good smel, to feele the perfumes and odours, whe sir Iohn senceth. (sic)²⁸

The thing that strikes one about this passage is its emphasis on the senses of sight, smell, and touch. Bale, distrustful of sensual reactions in religious matters, expressed it in typically two-church form as a seduction by error, but an understandable seduction all the same: 'The gorgeous, glittering, apparelled woman', Bale wrote of the Catholic church, had led many astray, but, 'Take away the rites and the ceremonies, the jewels and ornaments, the images and lights [...] and what is their Holy whorish church anymore?'²⁹

Such lists also indicated the aim of sweeping away a whole system of popular religion. Reform was not adapting a system, but destroying it in favour of another, as two-church theory demanded, and as Josiah had done. Mixed reform, said Hooper in a Lenten sermon of 1550, was neither wholly good or wholly bad, but achieved the same as no reformation at all. He appealed to the king for full reform and cited Jehu as a warning. This king had compromised himself and the law of his God by only partially destroying idolatry

²⁶ T. Cranmer, The Confutation of Unwritten Verities, rptd. in PS II, p. 63.

²⁷ C. Buchanan (ed.), Background documents to liturgical revision 1547-9 (Grove, 1983), p. 10.

²⁸ J. Bale, A dialogue or familiar talke betwene two neighbours [J Daye, London, 1554], sig. C5r. STC 10383.

²⁹ J. Bale, Select Works, pp. 511 and 509, respectively.

and not utterly.³⁰ Latimer criticised the reformation in Germany as a 'hotch-potch' and 'mingle-mangle', that contained both true religion and popery. The overall effect was that 'they marred all together.'³¹

Destruction in Edwardian England can thus be explained in part as what Dr Duffy has called a 'sacrament of forgetfulness.' To remove all traces of Catholic ritual would deny to people the means of practising traditional piety.³² It would also break what reformers believed to be ingrained habits of devotion, made familiar by long term practice. Since childhood people had, by association, come to revere what they had seen others honouring.³³ Robert Crowley told Miles Hogarde:

You compt it no strange sight to se the sacramet (sic) honoured with deuine honor, because in your time it hath ben so honoured. In dede to the bodilie eie this sight is nothing strange because it is a continuall obiect and dayly renewed Image.(sic)³⁴

Destruction would end this pattern. Bale for one hoped that by eradicating the revered parts of Catholic worship, he would end at source, the superstitions they had given rise to, thus preventing any further error: 'For had there been no ceremonies', he wrote in 1543, 'neither had there been any superstitions [...] it will be easier to bring the one back if the other remain.'³⁵ Just as king Hezekiah (I Kings 18) had destroyed the brazen serpent wrought by Moses, so a king who reformed by iconoclasm: 'Took away the occasion with the superstition, lest they should rise again.'³⁶ Latimer had said the same thing in his sermon to Edward VI's court in March 1549:

Restore again the true ministry of the church, in case ye remove away all the monuments, tokens and leanings of Papistry: for so long as any remaineth so also the occasion of relapse into the abolished superstition of Antichrist.³⁷

³⁰ J. Hooper, *The Early Writings*, pp. 435-437.

³¹ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 147.

³² E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 480-483.

³³ D. Freedburg, *The power of Images* (Chicago, 1989), p. 5.

³⁴ R. Crowley, *A confutation of the mishapen aunswer to the ballade called the abuse of ye blessed sacramet* [London, J. Daye, 1548], sig. A7v. STC 6082. [Hereafter, *Confutacion*].

³⁵ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. A5r.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. M6r.

³⁷ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 438-40. In a letter from the reformer Peter Martyr to Bullinger on 1 June 1550, Martyr explained the need for an absolute reformation of religion. Martyr wrote that Satan could maintain his influence within the church through the church's retention of 'popish rites'. Such rites allowed the knowledge of false religion to survive, thereby aiding people's return to it. In *OL* II, p. 482.

Far from being the unfortunate ideological offspring of a extremist wing, iconoclasm was the desire to build a new religious system of worship and thereby central to the reform process itself. The attack on the devotional system of mediaeval religion in the reforms of 1547-9 was, wrote John Bale, something that, 'Chiefly pertaineth to religion.'³⁸

Two years of steady pressure against the rites of traditional religion had made sure that Edward had fulfilled the biblical vocation that Cranmer had suggested to him in 1547. Thomas Becon, writing after the death of Somerset, chose to remember his iconoclastic policy as his crowning glory:

What shall I speak of that godly and mighty prince Edward, duke of Somerset, that in the time of his protectorship, did so banish idolatry out of this our realm, and bring in again true religion.³⁹

What is interesting about this comment is its assumption that the suppression of idolatry was not only an integral part of reform, but a necessary pre-requisite for any reform aiming at the restoration of true religion. It was an ordering of reform discernible in the writings of Bale, Crowley and even Cranmer:

The error of idolatry was so spread abroad that not only the unlearned people, but also the priests and teachers of the people [...] were corrupted [...] until three noble kings, Jehosaphat, Ezekias and Josiah, God's elect ministers, destroyed the same clerely (sic), and reduced the people from their feigned inventions to the very commandments of God.⁴⁰

Most instructive of all is that it corresponds to Old Testament accounts, where kings always destroyed idols and idolatry before a return to the law.⁴¹ The consensus between Edwardian polemicists and the writers of the Old Testament accounts seems to have been that any reform would fail if idols were not first removed.

This should make us suspicious of some recent theories on the English Reformation. The recent book by Dr Christopher Haigh, argues that Somerset's reforms of 1547-9 were proof of the Protector's preoccupation with the war in Scotland. Building on the theories of M. L. Bush, Dr Haigh sees the reforms in ceremonials as *ad hoc* reactions of an English

³⁸ J. Bale, *Expostulation*, sig. C2v.

³⁹ T. Becon, *A comfortable epistle to the afflicted people of God* [1554], rptd. in *Prayers*, p. 205.

⁴⁰ T. Cranmer, 'Homily on Good Works', in *PS II*, p. 145.

⁴¹ See especially 2 Kings 23:24 Josiah put away 'Images and Idols that he might perform the works of the law.'

government to the pressure exerted by a minority of reformers.⁴² Implicit in this interpretation is the assumption that the reforms of 1547-9 were a series of compromises that shirked the important issue of theological change in favour of externals. Such ideas not only overlook Somerset's active patronage of this minority, but infer that reform of religious practice was of secondary importance to theological reform.⁴³

Here the reformers would have disagreed with him. As early as 1548 the reformer and polemicist William Turner, physician in Somerset's household, recognised that a reform process was under way and described its principle characteristics. The time of persecuting the professors of the truth, by means of the Six Articles, was over, for it was the king's 'Intent and purpose at the beginning of his reign to purge and cleanse the church of all abuses and enormities ... [to] examine and try with the touchstone of God's Word.'⁴⁴ The reformers were well aware of the central role played by the king in state-motivated reform. The specific role that they repeatedly gave Edward as an image breaker was not because the issue was held to be a matter of indifference, but because it was believed to be vital. If Josiah taught anything by way of example, it was that the purification of religious practice and the return to true religion were inseparable.

Another problem with Haigh's presentation, is its division of ceremony and theology into separate compartments. Polemical Protestant writing does not draw the hard and fast distinctions between destruction of idols and the abolition of theological error that modern scholars seem to find so convincing. For instance John Bale's definition of an idol could include statues, but was also used to describe the vow of celibacy.⁴⁵ Just as statues lead us from spirituality to sensuality so the spiritual intent of the vow, a theological idea, had become a disguise for extra-marital sex and sodomy. In effect the vow was an idol since it offered an approximation to the truth, while in fact it was nothing less than a vehicle that perpetuated sin, a sin cloaked in seeming virtue. Theologically the error of vows was that they placed their trust in the power of the human will to keep them rather than in the

⁴² C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 170. On the Feb. 1548 ban on images: 'Somerset had blundered into a total ban on images in London and he had got away with it.'

⁴³ On the patronage links between the inner circle of Somerset and the polemicists see pp. 114 ff. below, also my M.Litt. Dissertation, 'Aspects of Edwardian Religious Polemic' (St. Andrews, 1993), appendix I.

⁴⁴ W. Turner, *A newe dialogue wherin is contayned the examinatio[n] of the messe*, sig. A7v-8r.

⁴⁵ J. Bale, *The apology of Johan Bale agaynst a ranke papyst*, sig. A3r-4r, B2r-3r.

redemptive power of God's grace. However the effect was described as idolatry ' By this vow thou becomest of God's creature, an idol of thine own'.⁴⁶ The point was, where did the idol end and the theological error begin? Often ceremonies were described as both heresies and idolatries. What the polemicists were saying was that idolatry itself was merely theological error enacted. The mediaeval church had put its theology into the medium of visual imagery. Therefore error was not abstract but a tangible reality. If this were indeed the case what would be the use of reforming theological ideas until the visual opposition to these ideas had been rooted out? Perhaps the best example of this was the issue of the mass, which reconciled visual imagery and a theological article of belief. As a result transubstantiation was often termed the 'idol of the altar', by Protestants and denigrated in the same terms as an image because of its theological claims. Luke Shepherd's polemical work was the best example of this sort of criticism.⁴⁷

False gods and dungy idols

The rhetoric of corruption used to criticise the mass and all supposed idols, bespoke the conviction that to reformers idols were not mere reminders of error. Idols were embodiments of false doctrine, because somehow they had become imbued with the corruption of the doctrines that they represented. Thus in a way Dr Duffy's explanation of the reasons for iconoclasm are not comprehensive enough, at least to explain the reaction of polemicists to popular religion. There was a violence in polemicists' writings which suggests that more than a 'sacrament of forgetfulness' fuelled the image-breaking.⁴⁸ Bale, on one of his habitual hunts for Roman errors, gives a clue on this score as to the motive of his iconoclastic fury. Describing his visit to a Hampshire church in September 1550 he related his horror at discovering papist ceremonial in a parish church. Just as bad was the surviving statuary. However this imagery had been removed from the church and stored in the steeple and belfry. The images were out of sight and, to an extent, out of mind. But to Bale the

⁴⁶ J. Bale, The apology of Johan Bale agaynst a ranke papvst, sig. B3r.

⁴⁷ T. Hancock, 'The Autobiography of Thomas Hancock: minister of Poole' in Narratives of the Reformation, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Society, 77, 1859), p. 73. 'The idol of the altar'. On the mass as corruption and an apotropaic charm see, L. Shepherd, The Vpchering of the Mass [London, J. Daye, 1548?] See chapter 5.

⁴⁸ For an instance of this see, J. Bale, The apology of Johan Bale agaynst a frantick papvst, sig. A3r.

point was that all images: 'Should not only be removed out of the churches of England and Ireland, but also that they should be defaced, mangled and utterly destroyed for their abominations.'⁴⁹

The destruction wrought on idols by Josiah had been of a comparative thoroughness and vehemence. 2 Chronicles wrote of graven images and groves, 'Stamped into powder', and 'He made dust of them'.⁵⁰ In I Kings 23 the vessels of Baal are burnt in purificatory fire, and the ashes scattered. Altars were stamped to powder, and the dust cast to the wind. The accounts are quite clear that this had been a purging of contaminants. The corruption of theological error had somehow impregnated every particle of the idols' matter. Such filthiness demanded utter destruction. The term 'purge' is used both in the Old Testament account and when Bale praised Edward VI's reforms in 1552, both Josiah and Edward having purged their respective Judahs.⁵¹ Bale compared the unclean nature of idols to excrement. In A dialogue or Familiar talke, written in 1554, Nicholas, the personification of the orthodox English Catholic, tells his fervent reformist neighbour Oliver, that since images were ever wont to make the church pleasing to the eye this was sufficient reason to keep them in the churches; during the late king's reign the deprivation of church interiors meant that the church had looked like 'an old barn.' Stung by this reply Oliver angrily retorts that to deck God's house with idols, was analogous to a man invading Nicholas' house and 'Paint[ing] the walls with dong'. No more', he said, 'do the si (sic) image makers please God but provoketh his anger.'⁵²

Elsewhere the statues of Roman saints are described as '*Stercoreos deos.*' (dungy gods),⁵³ and were held by Protestant writers to be embodiments of the inherent perversion of Roman Catholic doctrine. Bale described Roman priests wallowing in the theology of prayers for the dead as pigs wallowing in their own dung, who had wantonly deserted the

⁴⁹ J. Bale, Expostulation, sig. C2r. For a similar concern shown by the Edwardian authorities see the deposition of a parishioner of Sandhurst to the commissary general in Canterbury on 29th May 1548, in C. E. Woodruff, 'Extracts from documents illustrating the progress of the Reformation in Kent', Archaeologia Cantiana, 31 (1915), p. 95.

⁵⁰ 2 Chronicles 34:4 and 2 Kings 23:6 and 12.

⁵¹ J. Bale, An expostulation, sig. A2r. Also see J. Bale, Scriptorum illiustrum maioris Brytannie, quam nunc Angliam et Scotium uocant: Catalogus, pt. 1. fol. 673-4. [Hereafter Catalogus]

⁵² J. Bale, A dialogue or familiar talke ['Roane' (London), J. Daye, 1554], sig. C5r-C5v. STC 10383.

⁵³ J. Bale, Catalogus, fol. 673.

clean river of God's Word for the noxious mud.⁵⁴ In the Votaryes the historical error was described as: 'Their owne vile dong' which would be cast in their faces by God.⁵⁵ A marginal reference to Malachi 2 in Bale's Votaryes was designed to draw the readers' attention to the spiritual nature of such earthly imagery, for the chapter described Israel's false sacrifices as defecation which would be cast in their faces by God. The use of such metaphors was to suggest that false doctrine was a contaminant. Those who worshipped dungy gods could not be pure as all true Christians should be. Ridley was only one of many who compared the idols of Catholic ceremonial to sexual depravity and defilement, the involvement of the worshipper and the false god in the partnership of illicit practice:

Idols being *meretrices*, *id est* whores, for that the worshipping of them is called in the prophets fornication and adultery. [They] ought to be banished and especially out of the churches where the spiritual fornication hath been most committed.⁵⁶

This comparison was reiterated in official church pronouncements of doctrine in the 1547 homilies.⁵⁷ The true church could have nothing to do with idols.

He who supped with the Devil could never find a spoon sufficiently long with which to escape the corruptions of the association. Those who were contaminated were swiftly perverted, becoming like their idols. Bale applied the direct lesson of the Old Testament when he wrote that idolaters became idols. Describing the recantation of Tolwyn, vicar of St Antony's in London in December 1541, Bale attributes Tolwyn's failure to be faithful at least in part to the influence of idols in the church of St Antony's. The church was named after a statue of the St Antony: 'A prophane and beastlye idoll and so are all they which stande up in tabernacles within hys templeth.' Tolwyn had been at the greatest risk as he had been pastor of the evil place:

To be the vyceregent or represent the persone of such an idoll is non other (I suppose) than to be an idoll in dede [...] Wherefore I wish the said poor man [Tolwyn] no

⁵⁴ J. Bale, An answere to a papystycall exhortacyon pretendynge to auoyde false doctryne [S. Mierdeman, Antwerp, c.1548], sig. A8v. STC 1274a.

⁵⁵ J. Bale, The actes of Englysh votaryies [London, S. Mierdman, 1551], sig. B1r. STC 1273. For another use of exactly the same image see A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. Bb2r. Gilby described the mass solemnities (chants, collects and consecration) of Catholics as 'dong' which would be cast in their faces and cited Malachi 2.

⁵⁶ N. Ridley, A Treatise on the worship of Images, in The Works Of Nicholas Ridley, ed. H. C. Christmas (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), p. 87.

⁵⁷ R. B. Bond (ed.), Homilies, p. 184.

longer to be under soche tyttles and offices as cane not be used without daunger of sowle.

Bale added that to continue to do so was to be a part of Antichrist. Idols, in other words took over the worshipper's individual identity, in favour of their own ideology.⁵⁸ The Pope, Bale wrote, had become the greatest idol of all, the great Baal Peor of Rome, the embodiment of the pervasive force of idolatry and its attendant sexual corruption. In using this example, once again Bale had drawn the precedent for the metaphor from Old Testament accounts.⁵⁹

Error as a corruptant was pursued into the metaphor of the church as a body. Hooper wrote of the need to: 'Purge and cleanse the soul from all unwholesome and contagious disease, and sickness of sin.'⁶⁰ This idea was further expanded in the 1547 Homilies that likened error to a corrupt and bitter humor infecting a person's body.⁶¹ It is worth remembering in this context, that the prescribed way to expurgate evil humors and impurities was with a purge. The terminology is strongly reminiscent of the Old Testament accounts. This biblically grounded viewpoint concerning contamination, may explain why the reformers tried to root idols not only out of the churches, but out of private homes as well.⁶²

All over Protestant Europe evangelicals in the first phase of reform were obsessed with what they perceived to be corruption in Catholic worship. Reformation was necessarily seen as a process of purification, and the removal or eradication of the existing form of worship a first priority in the building of a new evangelical polity. From what we have seen of the way that evangelical writers urged Somerset and his colleagues to Reformation, English Protestant authors were as conscious of this as any of their continental brethren. The removal of Catholic imagery was not a subsidiary concern, nor even secondary to the wider

⁵⁸ J. Bale, *A dysclosynge*, sig. B7r-B7v. A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. Z8r. Gardiner was addressed as a bishop and an idol.

⁵⁹ J. Bale, *Expostulation*, sig. A2v.

⁶⁰ J. Hooper, 'Sermons upon the ten commandments', in *Early writings*, p. 286.

⁶¹ *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) And A Homily Against Disobediecc and Wilfull Rebellion (1563) A Critical Edition*, ed. R. B. Bond (Toronto, 1987), p. 6.

⁶² Commissioners were told to make enquiries about statues in people's homes in the 1547 visitations, see the 1547 Injunctions. *Background documents on liturgical revision* (Grove), p.10. For an instance of Protestant perceptions of Catholic practices surviving in the home see, W. Baldwin, *Beware the Cat: The first English Novel*, eds. W. A. Ringler and M. Flachmann (California, 1988), pp. 38-39. The statue in this account is described as if it were alive.

process of theological reconstruction. The reforms of Protector Somerset far from being an intermediary period before proper reform were part of a recognised process connected with the later theological changes. The Old Testament kings had shown the way to purify and then return the law to the realm. It is clear that Protestant writers and preachers did not see their own actions as *ad hoc* reactions. How far this was true of their patrons in government will be explored further in the next section of this chapter. Certainly the formulators of religious change, Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper and Ridley, all used the same exemplars when suggesting role models for the young king. Margaret Aston tells us that Edward himself penned verses against idolatry, which he presented to his uncle, the Lord Protector.⁶³ The iconoclastic nature of reform legislation during Edward's reign suggests that the governing elite if not the king himself had accepted the biblical role that court preachers and polemicists had so often proffered to Edward.

Ideological consensus

On 20th February at Edward VI's coronation Thomas Cranmer gave a speech in which he outlined the young king's duty as God's representative on earth. Cranmer's advice to Edward VI at his coronation had been to 'see with your predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped and idolatry destroyed.'⁶⁴ By identifying Edward's reform programme with that of Josiah, Cranmer was alluding to the definition of idolatry that the biblical account had associated with Josiah's Reformation. This definition had included not merely religious imagery, but the complete machinery of worship used to perpetuate the existing religious system. In effect Josiah's aim had been to destroy the existing system of religion and replace it with another. Cranmer's speech was no less than a declaration of total war upon the system of traditional religion in England. It was also a clarion call to arms addressed to the Protestant community who would have readily understood Cranmer's biblical allusion. Virtually all the Protestant reformers used the same biblical language in general, and the Josiah exemplar specifically. Protestant polemicists and prelates, court evangelicals and

⁶³ M. Aston, England's Iconoclasts, p. 275. For Edward's French verses on iconoclastic passages from the Bible see MS. Trinity College Cambridge R. 7. 31.

⁶⁴ T. Cranmer, 'Speech at the coronation of Edward VI', in PS, II. p. 127.

continental theologians all used the Josiah exemplar to describe Edward VI and the nature of the Reformation needed or achieved in his church. By articulating their religious objectives in this way all these groups demonstrated their close religious affinity to each other.

Protestant writers who identified Edward and his reform programme with that of Josiah were numerous. In 1548 the polemicist Philip Nicholls advised Edward's government to reform according to God's Word: 'destroye the images of Baal, plucke downe the idols [...] leave nothing.' In order to clarify his instructions Nicholls cited 4 Kings 23 (2 Kings 23) in the marginalia, which was the biblical account that described Josiah's purgative reform programme in Judaea.⁶⁵ Edward VI, Nicholls explained was a 'young Josias', himself. The Lord Protector, the council and the young Josias were all engaged in a holy war against the religion of the papal Jeroboam, wrote Nicholls, conflating papal authority with Catholic religion. Jeroboam's religion was expressed in a multiplicity of religious rites all of which must be eradicated: 'mass, matyns, dryges, holy bread, holy water, palm ashes,' as well as 'idols' and 'new sacraments'.⁶⁶ Nicholls's advice was repeated in 1550 by Thomas Lancaster. Edward was like Josiah preferrer of God's word who had overthrown not a part, but all of Antichrist's kingdom.⁶⁷ John Bale praised Edward as a king who had taken away the 'abhomyncyons of the ungodly' and had had the intent to set up 'true worshippings agayne'. For this reason Edward appeared to be a 'very Josias' to Bale and his co-religionists.⁶⁸ Bale used the Josiah exemplar repeatedly to describe Edward's role and the nature of the reformation achieved by his government.⁶⁹ The polemicist John Mardeley was a client of the Lord Protector. In 1548 Mardeley dedicated a book to Somerset and in the dedicatory preface called Edward 'Josias' a king who returned the church to its 'pure' or 'primery state'(sic).⁷⁰

⁶⁵ P. Nicholls, Here begynneeth a godly newe story of xii men [London, 1548], sig. C3r-v. STC 18576.

⁶⁶ Op. cit., sig. E2r, D6v-8r.

⁶⁷ T. Lancaster, The ryght and trew understandyng, sig. A2r.

⁶⁸ J. Bale, The laboryouse journey & serche [...] for Englandes antiquitees [London, S. Mierdeman, 1549], sig. A5v. STC 15445.

⁶⁹ J. Bale, A Christen exhortacion [W. Hill, 1548], sig. A4r and v. STC 1280.5. J. Bale, The acts of the votaryes, pt. I. sig. K5r. J. Bale, Catalogus, pt. I. fol. 673-4.

⁷⁰ J. Mardeley, A declaration of thee power of Gods worde [T. Raynald, 1548], sig. A1v. STC 17317.

Polemicists who were directly associated with prominent figures in Edward's government described Edward's role in the Reformation of the English church in exactly the same terms as other polemical writers. In 1547-8 the preacher and polemicist Thomas Becon was appointed as chaplain to the households of Thomas Cranmer and Lord Protector Somerset.⁷¹ Such a dual appointment was unprecedented and undoubtedly intended to give the clearest possible signal of the two men's commitment to driving forward the cause of reform. Becon's position in both these households would have enabled him to observe at first hand the formation of the religious policy of Edward's government as it was conceived by the Lord Protector and the Archbishop of all England.⁷² When Becon came to describe Edward and his Reformation in 1550, he compared Edward to Josiah. Like Josiah, Edward had persevered in the destruction of the many manifestations of 'antichrist's tyranny'. Precisely what Antichrist's tyranny was was left in no doubt as Becon listed in exhaustive detail the ceremonies, rites and doctrines that altogether had constituted Catholic traditional religion in England. What is interesting is Becon's conviction as Cranmer's chaplain, that if Edward and his council ordered any further reforms to be enacted their motive would be their desire to fulfil the example of Josiah:

If anything be behind I doubt not that the King's most excellent majesty, and his godly, wise and honourable council will see it reformed, after the example of good king Josias.⁷³

The truth of Becon's observation is borne out by the wide use of the Josiah exemplar by those who were at court or writing to figures at court. In a sermon to Edward and his court Latimer praised the completeness of Josiah's destruction of idolatry. In a sermon of 1550 Hooper publicly admired the fearlessness of Edward and his council who had followed the role model of Josiah, having reformed according to biblical precepts, despite the opposition of the people. The Genevan reformer John Calvin addressed his advice specifically to Lord Protector Somerset and Edward VI. In a letter dated 22 October 1548

⁷¹ D. S. Bailey, *Thomas Becon and the Reformation of the church in England* (Edinburgh, 1952), pp. 54-6.

⁷² Thomas Becon has left us a possible example of just this occurring. In a later polemical work Becon describes how during the reign of Edward VI he sat at Cranmer's table with Drs Redman, Tong, Taylour, Haynes and others, while all discussed the validity of compulsory vows of celibacy for the priesthood. T. Becon, *The Booke of Matrimony*, in *The Worckes of Thomas Becon* [3 vols. London, J. Daye, 1564], fol. 00o6r. STC 1710.

⁷³ T. Becon, *Prayers*, pp. 3-4.

Calvin told Somerset that though he deserved praise for those reforms he had already achieved in England, Edward's Reformation of the English church was not yet complete. Only when Somerset had destroyed every vestige of the Roman Antichrist's religion, would Edward's reign fully resemble that of Josiah, as it had already begun to. Fifteen months later Calvin wrote to Edward himself. Josiah, Calvin wrote, was a fine example for Edward to follow: 'Aim at the mark which is set before you in the example of this holy king.'⁷⁴ This meant the eradication of both manifest impieties and of anything which tended to the nourishment of superstition. Similarly in the third part of his Decades, which were dedicated to Edward VI, Bullinger described the example of Josiah and recommended him as a role model to the young king of England. Josiah, Bullinger wrote, had been the 'Flower and especial crown of all the kings of Judah'.⁷⁵ Continental Protestant theologians also corresponded with each other about Edward VI, describing him as king Josiah. In a letter of 1550 Peter Martyr informed Rudolph Gualter of the religious zeal of Edward VI who was 'our Josias'. The French Reformed clergyman Francis Burgoyne told John Calvin in a letter of 1550 that Edward was 'Our Josiah, the king of England'.⁷⁶ In 1553 John Terentianus wrote to John ab Ulmis telling him that Edward had been Josiah 'our earthly hope'. Bartholomew Traheron, writing to Bullinger, praised the young Edward as a second Josiah who was 'learned and pious beyond his age'.⁷⁷

Writing retrospectively in 1553, the Protestant propagandist and diplomat Richard Morison attempted to encapsulate the nature of the religious changes made during Edward's reign:

The greater change was never wroughte in so short space in any countreye sith the world was. Had we not a Josias, a Kinge, an Edwarde, that sought in God's booke first to know the will of God and after with all diligence to see it done⁷⁸

⁷⁴ H. Latimer, Sermons, pp. 175-7. J. Hooper, Early Works, p.437. See also pp. 438, 440 and pp. 201, 204-5. G. C. Gorham, Gorham's Gleanings, pp. 65-9. OL II. pp. 708-9.

⁷⁵ H. Bullinger, Decades, ed. T. Harding (4 vols. Parker Society, Cambridge, 1849-51), vol. II. p. 325. This explained that Josiah was an example of the duty of an Old Testament king, and how he was limited by God's law. Also see the dedicatory preface of the third part of the Decades.

⁷⁶ Francis Burgoyne to John Calvin, 4th December 1550 in OL I. p. 730. The same image was used to describe Edward VI in a letter of Peter Martyr to Rudolph Gualter on 1st June 1550, in OL II. p. 485.

⁷⁷ Bartholomew Traheron to Henry Bullinger 28th September 1548 in OL I. p. 321.

⁷⁸ R. Morison, A discourse written by Sir Richard Morison [...] anno 1553 (BL Ms Harl 353 fol. 130) rptd. in Remains vol. I. pp. cccxxiv.

The exemplar was also used by Morison's contemporary, Nicholas Udall. Udall had been allied to the evangelical circle at Henry VIII's court, through the patronage of Henry's evangelical consort, Queen Catherine Parr. From 1543-1548 Udall was involved with the translation of Erasmus's Paraphrases. In the dedicatory preface of 1548 Udall described Edward as a 'feithfull Josias' whose reform programme was: 'a ferther good ordre for mattieres of religion.' This new order meant destroying the existing order, or as Udall put it breaking down the: 'Image of Baal' and: 'rootyng up of all Idolatry.' Edward's government ordered the paraphrases together with its anti-Catholic preface to be placed in every English church, a public boast of their intentions.⁷⁹ In 1550 the organist of St George's chapel Windsor, John Marbeck, dedicated his concordance to Edward VI. A close friend of Cranmer's chaplain Richard Turner, Marbeck had narrowly avoided prosecution for sacramentarianism in 1543, but had remained at Windsor into the new king's reign. Marbeck compared Edward in 1550 to the:

Godly king Josiah, who restored the law of God to the Israelites and manfully by his most godly proceedings (as manifestly in the holy Scripture appeareth) prosecuted and defended the same, destroying their images and pulling down their hill altars: And also for that most evidently your highness' proceedings are agreeable with the same Josiah's.⁸⁰

The Lord Protector was not deaf to the repeated counsels of Mardeley, Becon, Calvin, Latimer and Hooper. All had explained what a use of the Josiah exemplar implied. When Somerset used the same biblical imagery, he must have been aware of the allusions that it conveyed. Seven months after receiving Calvin's letter and three months after Latimer's aforementioned court sermon, Somerset wrote a letter to Cardinal Pole. In this epistle Somerset asserted that Edward had full regal authority to reform the church through the Supremacy, by citing the exemplar of king Josiah. To clarify his case Somerset included a copy of the Book of Common Prayer with his letter. Somerset's attempt to justify the reform

⁷⁹ DNB vol. LVIII. N. Udall (ed.), The first tome or volume or the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the New Testamente [London, E. Whitchurch, 1548], sig. A6v and A7r. STC 2854. P. Hughes and J. Larkin (eds.), Tudor Royal Proclamations (Yale, 1964), pp. 393-5.

⁸⁰ J. Marbeck, A Concorda[n]ce, that is to saie a worke wherein by the order of the letters A.B.C. ye maie redely finde any worde conteigned in the whole Bible [1550], sig. A2r. Cited in R. Leaver, The Work of John Marbeck (Abingdon, 1978), p. 89.

programme of 1547-1549 by identifying it with Josiah betrayed his own assumptions about the nature of the reforms effected.⁸¹

A similar bibliocentricity informed the proceedings of the Privy Council against Princess Mary in the same month as Somerset wrote his letter to Pole. The council were attempting to compel Mary to forsake her devotion to the mass. The council argued that Edward's authority to compel Mary's obedience and his authority to reform the church was unaffected by the fact that he was a minor. On the contrary, scripture showed that child kings commonly instituted the most godly reformation of religion:

Scripture plainly declareth it, that not only young children to have been kings by God's special ordinance, but also (which is to be noted) to have had the best success in their reign and the favour of God in their proceedings: yea in their first years they have most purely reformed the church and state of religion.⁸²

Edward himself added his agreement to this verdict of his own godliness, telling his sister that scripture showed that 'almost the best ordered church of the Israelites was by kings younger than we be.'⁸³ Both Edward and his Council must have been thinking of Josiah. Only two biblical kings were younger when they were reforming their churches than Edward was when he wrote his letter to Mary in 1550, Joash and Josiah. Though both Joash and Josiah had won favour with God on account of their religious reforms only Josiah had persevered in his allegiance to true religion. 2 Chronicles 24 relates how the promising start shown by Joash was largely due to his chief counsellor, not to Joash himself. When that counsellor died Joash's later religious policy reverted to a support of Baalism, which resulted in the execution of one of God's prophets. This can hardly have been the sort of message that the Privy Council or Edward would have wanted to convey, either about the direction of Edward's reform programme or his personal involvement in its execution.

The use of the Josiah exemplar by Edward's government was highly significant. It demonstrated that the formulators of religious reform in Edwardian England were not merely open to the reform theology of Protestant polemicists, but were using it themselves to justify their programme of religious reformation, and to describe its objectives. The government's

⁸¹ *CSPD Edward VI* (1992), no. 265, p. 108.

⁸² J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. VI, p. 9.

⁸³ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. VI, p. 12.

adoption of the example of Josiah as an interpretative framework for Edwardian reform was not a coincidence. Polemicists were closely associated with some of the most senior figures in Edward's government, most notably the governor of the King's person and Lord Protector of his realms, the Duke of Somerset.

Polemicists and the household of Protector Somerset

The closest point of contact that can be discerned between the Protestant polemicists and the Edwardian regime are those instances where Protestant writers were directly associated with the households of prominent figures in the government. Somerset's household at Sheen was a centre of polemical talent during Edward's reign. The Protestant poet William Grey lived at Sheen where he wrote works which he dedicated to the Lord Protector, two of which still survive in manuscript. William Samuel described himself as 'seruaunt to the Duke of Somerset hys grace', and wrote three verse tracts during Edward's reign, one of which he dedicated to Anne Stanhope, Duchess of Somerset.⁸⁴ This work was a series of poems drawn from verses in the Old Testament Pentateuch. Samuel's work was printed by Robert Crowley.⁸⁵ Crowley himself seems to have been closely allied to the Seymour family and its retainers. As well as printing Samuel's poems Crowley printed a work by Lady Elizabeth Fane, the wife of Somerset's retainer Sir Ralph Fane, and in 1550 dedicated a work of his own to Lady Fane, his Pleasure and Payne.⁸⁶ Somerset's chaplain was Thomas Becon. Becon had been an active Protestant propagandist during the later years of Henry VIII's reign publishing eleven books in 1541-3 alone.⁸⁷ The Edwardian regime realised Becon's talents and used them on its own behalf; Becon was commissioned to write a homily for the book of Homilies before their publication in July 1547, and may have been involved with the production of the 1548 Catechism.⁸⁸ Becon was also a chaplain in

⁸⁴ J. N. King, 'Protector Somerset, patron of the English Reformation', Papers of The Bibliographical Society of America, 70 no. 3 (1976), pp. 311-12.

⁸⁵ J. N. King, 'Robert Crowley: A Tudor gospelling poet', Years work in English Studies (1978), p. 222. W. Samuel, The abridgement of goddes statutes [the pentateuch] in myter [R. Crowley for R. Grafton, 1551], STC 21690.

⁸⁶ J. N. King, Protector Somerset, p. 321. R. Crowley, Pleasure and payne Heaven and Hell compyled MDLI [R. Grafton, for R. Crowley, 1551], STC 6089.

⁸⁷ D. S. Bailey, Thomas Becon, p. 23.

⁸⁸ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, p. 387.

Cranmer's household and a preacher at Canterbury, and it was probably through Cranmer that Becon was recommended to Somerset.⁸⁹

In August 1549 Somerset invited the preacher and polemicist John Hooper to be a guest in his house.⁹⁰ By this date Hooper's career had proved his reformist credentials. Hooper had fled from England to avoid prosecution under the Six Articles and had settled in Zurich where he became a close friend and protégé of Henry Bullinger.⁹¹ By 1549 Hooper had written three polemical works one of which he had dedicated to Somerset in 1547.⁹² In this book Hooper asserted the centrality of justification by faith alone, which he used as the theological basis from which to attack the roles of intercessory saints, religious imagery and the transubstantiative mass, a work that left no doubt of Hooper's theological stance. It was significant, therefore, that Somerset's purpose in inviting Hooper into his home seems to have been to gain Hooper's religious fellowship. During his time at Sheen Hooper never held any official post, but he preached to the Seymours, and was clearly popular with them, being frequently in their company. The strength of the ties between Hooper and his 'patron' as he called Somerset, became evident at the time of Somerset's fall from power. When Somerset fell Hooper feared both for the cause of godly reform in England, and for his own welfare.⁹³ Hooper would later describe Somerset as 'my singular good lord and master'. Somerset for his part returned his protégé's admiration.⁹⁴ Hooper's time as a guest in Somerset's house must have given the Lord Protector ample time in which to discern the precise nature of Hooper's religious belief. This knowledge encouraged Somerset actively to promote Hooper's career in the English church. By Somerset's order Hooper preached in London and before the king's court. In May 1550 Somerset supported Hooper's appointment

⁸⁹ For Becon's career in Kent as a polemicist and the gentry circle he was patronised by see Bailey, *op. cit.*, chapter 3 and especially p. 139. This group was part of a larger network of Protestants in Kent, that was headed by Thomas Cranmer. See P. Clark, English provincial society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, politics and society in Kent: 1500-1640 (Hassocks: Harvester, 1977), Chapter 2.

⁹⁰ OL I. p. 68.

⁹¹ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. p. 637.

⁹² This was Hooper's work, The declaracion of Christe and his offyce [Zurich, 1547], STC 13745. Rptd. in Early Works.

⁹³ OL I. pp. 69-70.

⁹⁴ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. V. p. 764.

to the see of Gloucester, by arguing his suitability against the 'opposition of almost all the bishops'.⁹⁵

The close religious links between Somerset and Hooper were mirrored in the case of William Turner. The polemicist William Turner had been forced into exile in late 1540-early 1541 by the Act of Six Articles. He had fled first to the cities of north Italy, and from there to Zurich, the Rhineland and finally East Friesland.⁹⁶ While in exile Turner had distinguished himself as a bitter opponent of the Henrician church and as a personal enemy of Stephen Gardiner by a series of polemical works. Two of these were by Turner himself, another was written in collaboration with John Bale.⁹⁷ When Edward succeeded to the throne Turner returned to England where he received preferment at the hands of the duke of Somerset, being appointed physician to his household at Sheen. The interesting thing about Turner's appointment was that it was clearly based on a previous association with Somerset in the later years of Henry VIII. In a work of 1549 Turner gratefully admitted Somerset's interest in his welfare before Turner entered his service in 1547:

Because your grace hath always borne so great fauour and good wyll to me, eue[n] before I was called to your graces seruyce.⁹⁸

In a later book Turner described how Somerset had 'called' him from exile 'into Englande to his seruyce'.⁹⁹ Though very little is known about this association it makes it extremely likely that Somerset knew about Turner's career as a polemicist before he appointed him to his household.

Though Somerset never explicitly endorsed his physician's polemic his approval of it was implicit: he made no attempt to prevent Turner writing two polemical works while Turner was in his service. One of these works was an attack upon the mass, the other was written to deny the authoritative status of Church tradition.¹⁰⁰ Further, all the evidence

⁹⁵ *OL* II. p. 410.

⁹⁶ W. R. D. Jones, *William Turner, Tudor Naturalist, physician and Divine*, pp. 13-19.

⁹⁷ These works were: W. Turner, *The Huntynge and fyndynge oute of the romyshe fox* [Basyl, 1543], STC 24353. W. Turner, *The rescuyng of the romyshe fox* [Bonn, 1545], STC 24355. The collaborative work was J. Bale, *A dysclosynge* [Antwerp, 1543], STC 1243. The text was Bale's and the appendix by Turner. See *OBS*, vol. V. (1940), pp. 215-16.

⁹⁸ W. Turner, *A new Herball* [S. Mierdeman, 1551], sig. A3r. STC 24365.

⁹⁹ W. Turner, *A booke on the nature of the natures and properties [...] of the bathes* [Cologne, A. Birckman, 1562], sig. A2r. STC 24351.

¹⁰⁰ W. Turner, *A new dialogue*. W. Turner, *The olde lernynge and the new* [London, 1548], STC 20840.

suggests that Somerset was well aware of Turner's skills as a controversialist. On 4 November 1547 Turner was returned to the first parliament of the reign of Edward VI, as the MP for Ludgershall. The seat was controlled by Somerset who must have been responsible for Turner's recommendation as the candidate.¹⁰¹

Turner would have been expected to represent his patron's best interests in parliament, and this would have included parliamentary bills dealing with religious legislation. It said a lot about the level of religious affinity between the two men that the Lord Protector had been willing to gain this appointment for Turner. The appointment hinted at a shared religious agenda between the Lord Protector and his Protestant physician. One instance where this collaborative relationship could be seen working may be afforded by the preparations made for the Lords' Debate in December 1548. The event gives a possible glimpse of the sort of influence Somerset's Protestant retainers and guests may more commonly have had on the formation of his religious opinions. The Debate, which ran from 15-19 December 1548, was part of a long term strategy by Somerset's government to achieve a Protestant conformity of doctrine in the liturgy of the English church. The Debate's purpose was to display the impression of a doctrinal consensus on the issue of the Eucharist in the Lords. This, it was hoped, would ease the passage of the Act of Uniformity through Parliament and into statute in January 1549. This meant the Debate had to be carefully planned and stage managed. During the progress of the discussion the Protestant party among the bishops, led by Cranmer, and the laymen, Somerset, Warwick, and Sir Thomas Smith, maintained a united front against their conservative opponents. One possible source of this consensus was a manuscript translation of a Eucharistic tract by Peter Martyr.¹⁰² Dedicated to Somerset, the tract includes a preface written by an anonymous translator which summarises under ten points the pivotal doctrinal conclusions which are outlined at greater length in the tract overall. These points covered the same theological ground as that covered by the arguments of the Protestant party in the Lord's Debate. The translator's intention was probably to provide Somerset, who led the Debate, with a well ordered concise resume of the main points at issue and the conclusions reached upon them by the Protestant party.

¹⁰¹ Bindoff, vol. II. p. 491.

¹⁰² The copy of this tract is in BL Ms Royal 17 CV.

The identity of the translator of the tract is unknown but the internal evidence of the text itself suggests that it was William Turner.¹⁰³ The translator's preface was dated: 'the first day of december.' In order for Somerset to have used the tract he must have received it, read it and taken account of its arguments within the fortnight between the work's composition and the Debate in the Lords. As Somerset's physician Turner would have had easy access to the Protector's person implied by such a timetable. In addition, like Turner the translator of the tract seems to have been beholden to Somerset for some recent preferment. The preface praised the Lord Protector as one who possessed the godly gift of rendering: 'recompense of those that faithfully serue the king and desire of God's true worship'. The translator was also uncommonly well informed regarding Somerset's devotion to the cause of reform during the dark days of the Henrician persecution.

Therefore seing your grace hath of long season before you came to the haith [Height?] of this honour [the protectorship] not only fauord but fundered the truth of God and his glory in most recent tymes.¹⁰⁴

It was as a consequence of this knowledge of Somerset's past, that the translator felt able to say that Somerset's motives in reforming the church were derived from personal convictions which he identified with:

God hath now [...]given you your godly desire to se[e] that openly openly done which all good Christians hath in all ages inwardly desired.

The length and proximity of Turner's association with Somerset makes it quite conceivable that Turner could have written these words. Somerset's patronage of Protestants within his own house was an important indication of his identification with their religious viewpoint. It was symptomatic of the general attitude of his government during the Protectorate to Protestant polemicists and their work.

¹⁰³ This is the considered opinion of A. Gasquet and E. Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1928), p. 126 fn. 2. Also D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 403 footnote 166. For a notable dissenter see McLelland in P. McLelland and G. Duffield, *Peter Martyr* (Courteney, 1988), p. 142. McLelland asserts that Martyr translated the tract but this is clearly wrong. The tract is by Martyr and the translator's preface admits 'I enterprise not myne owne worke of the sacrament of thankesgeuing, whiche myght iustely have had small authoritic.' BL Ms Royal I7 C V fol. 5v.

¹⁰⁴ Op. cit., fol. 4v-5r.

Polemicists and the Government

The earliest example of a link between Edward's government and the Protestant polemicists was in Lent 1547. The Lenten season witnessed a combined attack by Protestant polemicists and Protestant preachers on the church's traditional observances. The preachers were closely associated with Cranmer. Hugh Glasier, a canon and prebendary of Canterbury, preached in April 1547 at St Paul's Cross that Lent was a 'politic ordinance of men' and as such could be dispensed with by men as religious adiaphora. During Lent other reformers added their voices to Glasier's calls for reform. John Joseph and Roger Tonge preached that Lent had been one of Christ's miracles: God had never ordained that ordinary Christians should imitate Christ's Lenten fasts in their own devotional lives.¹⁰⁵ John Joseph was a trusted chaplain of Cranmer: he was also a preacher at Canterbury Cathedral and his involvement in the anti-Lenten campaign was almost certainly with Cranmer's approval.¹⁰⁶ While Tong and Joseph preached, the printing presses 'sette fourth ballads to deprave Lent'.¹⁰⁷ At least one contemporary was astute enough to see that this was not a coincidence. In a letter to the Duke of Somerset, Stephen Gardiner drew the Lord Protector's attention to the similarity of aims between the preachers and the polemicists. Both aimed to 'prouoke a publike diffamation of lent.' Gardiner pointed out that Somerset was personally responsible for these initiatives against the Catholic religion in England, because as the country's ruler, he was allowing it to happen: 'you shal shadow mens doings if they be don which is one incommodite of high rule.' One of the responsibilities of ruling was to ensure a conformity in religion. Yet Somerset's reply to Gardiner was a refusal to prosecute the Protestant polemicists:

There have been foolish and naughty rhymes and books been made and set forth [...] but yet after our mind it is too sore and too cruelly done to lay to our charge, and ask as it were account of us of them all.¹⁰⁸

The reason for this apparent leniency was that Protestant preachers and polemicists were Somerset's chosen instruments with which he would achieve religious reform. He told

¹⁰⁵ J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials (Oxford, 1822), vol. II. pt. 1 p. 40. J. Fines, Biographical Register. S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 280.

¹⁰⁶ Roger Tonge was a royal chaplain in the household of Edward VI. Remains, vol. I. pp. 80, 105.

¹⁰⁷ S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 280.

¹⁰⁸ S. Gardiner, Letters, pp. 280, 278. J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. p. 34.

Gardiner that any resistance to the efforts of these Protestant groups to evangelise, would be suppressed by the king's authority:

With quietness the magistrates shall keep them well in order whom contentious preachers might irritate and provoke to disorder and strife.¹⁰⁹

The English were going to be preached to by Protestants whether they liked it or not. To help the preachers and polemicists in their task, Edward's government moved swiftly to silence their Catholic rivals in the press. On 15 May 1547 the prominent Catholic polemicist and theologian Richard Smith was forced to recant his books at St Paul's Cross. This included an affirmation of the Supremacy's authority to reform the church according to scripture. Smith subsequently tried to use his second recantation at Oxford to retract his first. When the government learnt of his duplicity they forced him to recant a third time in July 1547 and gave his Oxford chair of theology to Peter Martyr. In June 1547 the preacher and polemicist William Perrin was forced to recant. Perrin's reputation as a polemicist and his defence of the Catholic cult of images from his London pulpit made him too active an opponent for the government to leave alone. The cases of Smith and Perrin were symptomatic of the overall attitude of Edward's government to Catholic propaganda. When the Catholic polemicist Miles Hogarde attempted a defence of the transubstantiative mass in 1548, his work was suppressed and its author prosecuted.¹¹⁰ A second attempt to defend the mass in print did not even get to the printing presses.¹¹¹ Such was the level of control by Edward's government of the printing industry that even though over 200 editions were printed in 1548 alone, of which two-thirds dealt with religious matters, only four Catholic works survive for the whole period, 1547-1553. English Catholics aptly typified their plight in an anonymous ballad entitled 'Little John nobody that durst not speak'.¹¹²

Protestant polemicists who sought means to spread their doctrines in print could expect help and encouragement from high ranking figures in Edward's government. The

¹⁰⁹ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. VI. p. 28.

¹¹⁰ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. II. pt. 1 pp. 61-7. J. N. King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 216-7. C. Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 173.

¹¹¹ M. Hogarde, *The assault of the sacrament of the altar [...] written in 1549, now newly imprinted* [R. Caly, 1554], STC 13556. The title page explains that the tract was written in 1549 and dedicated to Lady Mary, but that at that time '(heresie then reigning) it could take no place.'

¹¹² J. N. King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 88-9, 217.

polemicist John Mardeley wrote three tracts in 1548 of which one, A Declaration of thee power of Gods Worde, was written against the 'blasphemous mass' and was dedicated to Protector Somerset. Somerset himself certainly knew of the work and approved of its author. A manuscript copy of the Declaration still survives among the Seymour papers at Hatfield house, while Somerset promoted Mardeley to the post of clerk in the Southwark mint. In 1549 Mardeley was made a co-censor of the press along with Somerset's retainers Sir William Cecil and Sir Thomas Smith. Mardeley's appointment was an indication of what sort of polemical works the government wished to sanction, and which it wanted to stop.¹¹³

Those who were in any doubt were soon informed as to what sort of polemic the regime approved of. When Luke Shepherd's irreverent anti-mass dialogue Jon Bon Mast Parson, appeared in print in 1548, it provoked an angry response among the Catholic population in London. The Lord Mayor Sir John Gresham, acting upon the Catholic complaints, examined the printer of the tract John Daye, in an attempt to find and punish the tract's anonymous author.¹¹⁴ Gresham later recounted his endeavours to the London hot gospeller Edward Underhill. His intent in doing so was that Underhill: 'might report at court the diligence of the Lord Mayor in his office.' Contrary to expectations Underhill told Gresham that the tract 'was a goode booke' and that 'ther were many off them in the courte' where the courtiers 'wore them in their pockets.' Gresham, slightly embarrassed by his unintentional opposition of the court consensus, hastily asked Underhill for a copy of the book, read it and decided that he approved of it too. The printer of the tract John Daye was released, 'who els had goone to presone', a freedom he used to print another five tracts by Shepherd in the same year.¹¹⁵ Obviously Gresham had been unaware that Shepherd was a

¹¹³ J. N. King, Protector Somerset, p. 320.

¹¹⁴ John Daye was arguably the foremost English printer of the Elizabethan age. Most famous for printing John Foxe's Acts and Monuments (1563), Daye was a committed Protestant whose personal creed was evident in almost all his printing ventures. In 1571 Daye printed a collected edition of the works of the English reformers William Tyndale, John Frith and Robert Barnes, with the intention of bringing their polemic before a wider audience. As Underhill's account shows Daye's career had already begun early in Edward VI's reign. Even at this early stage Daye's religious sympathies were obvious in his printing projects. A year later he was to print an edition of Tyndale's New Testament. For further information on Daye's life and work see C. L. Oastler, John Daye, the Elizabethan printer. OBS, Occasional publications, 10 (1975).

¹¹⁵ These five works were, L. Shepherd, The Vpchering of the messe [London, J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548?], STC 17360. Pathos, or an inward passion of the pope for the losse of hys daughter the masse [J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548?], STC 19463. Antipus. To heare such thinges ye be not wont [J. Day, 1548?], STC 683. The comparison betwene the Antipus and the Antigraphe [J. Day, 1548?], STC 5605a. A Pore helpe, the bukлар and defence of mother holy kyrke [2nd edn. J. Day and W. Seres, 1548?], STC 13051.7.

close friend of Underhill, but he had been right in assuming that Underhill had friends at court. Underhill had known the Privy councillor the Earl of Bedford ever since he had saved his son Francis Russell from drowning in the Thames. Thereafter Russell and Underhill had been on terms of, 'intimacie' in 'mattiers of relygion'.¹¹⁶ Underhill also got to know the courtier George Ferrers during Edward's reign as well, describing him as his friend and a Protestant. Ferrers was a 'gentleman of my Lord Protector's' serving with Somerset on the Scottish campaign in 1547.¹¹⁷

Shepherd was not the only polemicist with contacts at court. The polemicist John Bale was in contact with Edward VI's tutor John Cheke. When Bale decided to revise his 1548 Summarium he used a manuscript copy of John Leland's De Catalogo virorum illustrium to help him. Foxe had seen the manuscript in Bale's hands while both of them were guests at the Duchess of Suffolk's house in London. The date was around 1548.¹¹⁸ Foxe claims the manuscript had been lent to Bale by Sir John Cheke:

I do know and was privy, that the said John in recognising his centuries followed altogether the history of Leland, De Catalogo Virorum illustrium, which book being borrowed of Master Cheke, I myself did see in the hands of the aforesaid John Bale.¹¹⁹

Cheke may also have been the anonymous friend of Leland whom Bale praised in his 1549 work, A Laboryouse journeye. This man had sent a printed copy of Leland's works from England in 1546 to John Bale when he was in exile on the continent.¹²⁰ Bale used Leland's printed work in the compilation of his 1548 Summarium which was then printed in Wesel. Bale's 1548 book seems to admit this debt to Cheke. The Summarium's title-page includes a woodcut that depicts Edward VI seated on a throne in the presence chamber at court (see figure 1). Bale, on bended knee, is presenting his book to its dedicatee, Edward.

¹¹⁶ J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. II. pt. 1 pp. 181-3. ed. J. G. Nichols, Narratives, pp. 146, 171-2. At the same time as Shepherd's tracts were circulating the court was staging masques where the Corpus Christi procession was being openly ridiculed. See W. K. Jordan, Edward VI: The Threshold of Power (London, 1970), p. 99.

¹¹⁷ Bindoff, vol. II. pp. 129-31. ed. J. G. Nichols, Narratives, p. 163.

¹¹⁸ This date is the considered conclusion of both L. P. Fairfield, John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation (Lafayette, Indiana, 1976), p. 90, and H. Mc Cusker, John Bale Dramatist and Antiquary, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. III. p. 705.

¹²⁰ J. Bale, Laboryouse Journeye, sig. B3v.

ILLVSTRIVM

MAIORIS BRITANNIAE

SCRIPTORVM, HOC EST, ANGLIAE, CAMBRIAE,

ac Scotiae Summarium, in quasdam centurias divisum, cum diversitate doctrinarum atque annorum recta supplicatione per omnes aetates a Iapheto sanctissimi Noah filio, ad annum domini. M. D. XLVIII.

AUTORE IOANNE BALAEO SVDVOLCA.



EXCVDEBATUR PRAESENS OPVS, ANNO A NATIVITATE unica illius pro peccatis uictima, patri in crucem oblata, quadragesimo octavo supra millesimum & quingentesimum, pridie Calendas Augusti,

Sit lingua mea, calamus scribae velociter scribentis: ps. 45. 2.

Robt. Wright

Figure 1

John Bale presenting his book to Edward VI while John Cheke looks on from behind the curtain of the presence chamber. Titlepage of John Bale's, *Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorum summarium* [Wesel, D. van der Straten, 1548], STC 1295.

Behind Edward's throne Sir John Cheke peers at the scene around the presence chamber curtain.¹²¹

Works of polemic were also produced from Protestant circles in and around the court itself. In 1548 Edmund Geste dedicated his Treatyse agaynst the preuee masse to God and Sir John Cheke.¹²² The author and at least one of his dedicatees would have been acquainted with each other, since Geste was the vice-provost of King's College, Cambridge and Cheke was the college Provost. The likelihood of the work having been produced at the request of someone in Edward's government seems high. David Selwyn has pointed out that Geste's work bears a marked theological similarity to two other polemical works written in the same period in autumn 1548.¹²³ All three works were concerned with the same questions about the Eucharistic presence and the effect this had upon the adoration and reservation of the consecrated host. One of the works was Richard Bonner's A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge.¹²⁴ Dr MacCulloch has argued convincingly that Richard Bonner was a pseudonymous front, either for Cranmer or for one of his chaplains. The third work was Peter Martyr's manuscript treatise On ye ryght honourynge of the sacrament, which has already been mentioned in connection with Turner and the House of Lords' Debate of December 1548. All three works were part of the government's 'strategy of propaganda' in preparation for the Lords' Debate of December.¹²⁵

Cranmer was surely involved in the production of another piece of polemic that came from the court. This was the 1549 translation of Ochino's Tragoedie or Dialoge.¹²⁶ Ochino had been invited to England by Cranmer, who had secured him a prebendary in Canterbury Cathedral and a royal pension of 100 marks a year. Ochino did his patron the honour of assigning to him a pivotal role in the Tragoedie. Cranmer is shown convincing Henry VIII that the Pope is indeed Antichrist and must be expelled from England. This made Cranmer

¹²¹ This identification is made by J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. II. pt. 1 p. 228.

¹²² E. Geste, A treatyse agaynst the preuee masse [W. Hill, 1548], STC 11802.

¹²³ D. S. Selwyn, 'The Book of Doctrine', JTS, vol. 40 (1989), pp. 456-61. Dr Selwyn's conclusions about these three tracts provenance and purpose differs from the conclusions reached here.

¹²⁴ R. Bonner, A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge and wourshyppyng of our sauoir Christ in the sacramen[t] of brede and wyne [N. Hill, 12 Nov., 1548], STC 3287.

¹²⁵ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 399-403.

¹²⁶ B. Ochino, A tragoedie or dialoge of the uniuste primacie of the bishop of Rome Trn. J. Ponet [N.Hill, 1549], STC 18770. This and the work by Geste and Bonner were all printed by the same printer.

the catalyst that caused Henry to begin the Reformation that Edward would bring to full completion. The translator of the tract was also a close friend of the Archbishop's, his chaplain John Ponet.¹²⁷

Figures from the court were also connected with Protestant circles that functioned outside it. The Protestant printer Edward Whitchurch had a long association with Thomas Cranmer. Whitchurch had printed the first edition of the Great Bible in April 1539 and a year later the edition which contained Cranmer's exhortatory preface to the reader.¹²⁸ Thereafter Whitchurch had been involved in a series of publishing projects during the Henrician years at Cranmer's bidding all of which had aimed at the furtherance of the reform agenda through the medium of the printing presses.¹²⁹ The association continued into Edward's reign when Whitchurch was given the task of printing the first and second volumes of Erasmus's Paraphrases on the New Testament. The first volume printed in 1548 was prefaced by Udall's dedication to Edward VI counselling him to follow the example of king Josias in his religious reforms. One of the contributors to this volume was John Olde. Whitchurch approached Olde and commissioned him to undertake the translation of almost the whole of the second volume; a task which Olde completed during 1548-9 while he worked as a corrector of the press at Whitchurch's Fleet street print shop.¹³⁰ Olde was a close friend of Cranmer's chaplain Thomas Becon. After Becon's recantation in London on 8 July 1543 he had fled north. Olde had given Becon shelter at his home in Staffordshire. The two men had subsequently travelled together to Baxterley in Warwickshire where they had become part of a Protestant circle that met in the house of John Glover.¹³¹ The leader of this group had been Hugh Latimer. Latimer had been an intimate friend of the Seymours for many years,

¹²⁷ B. Ochino, op. cit., sig. Y2r-Cc1r. On Ponet, J. Fines, Biographical Register. Ochino had arrived in England with Peter Martyr on 20 Dec 1547 at Cranmer's invitation. M. Di. Gangi, Peter Martyr Vermigli (Lanham, MD, 1993), p. 83.

¹²⁸ The byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scrypture [1st Great Bible] [R. Grafton and E. Whitchurch, April 1539], STC 2068. The byble in Englyshe [...] with a prologe by Thomas [Cranmer] [E. Whitchurch or R. Grafton, April 1540], STC 2070.

¹²⁹ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 238, 283, 327, 335 352 358.

¹³⁰ J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. II. pt. 1 (Oxford, 1822), p. 47.

¹³¹ Becon has left an account of his travels in his work The Jewel of Joy [1550] in Prayers, pp. 419-27. John Glover's brother was married to Latimer's niece. A.G. Chester, Hugh Latimer (New York, 1975), p. 156.

and during Edward's reign he used this influence on Olde's behalf.¹³² Latimer recommended Olde to the Duchess of Somerset who preferred him to the vicarage of Cubbington in Yorkshire on 23 March 1549. In the second volume of the Paraphrases Olde admits his debt, both to his 'singular friend', Hugh Latimer and to the Duchess of Somerset, to whom he dedicated his translation.¹³³ While working in Whitchurch's shop, Olde may have come into contact with John Rogers who was working there at the same time. Rogers had prepared Tyndale's translation of the Bible for the press in 1536. By the summer of 1548 he was living with Whitchurch in Fleet Street where he translated Melanchthon's comments on the Interim of 1548.¹³⁴ While they were in Whitchurch's company Olde and Rogers would almost certainly have met the Protestant polemicist and playwright William Baldwin. Baldwin described himself in his own work of 1549, issued from Whitchurch's press as 'seruaunt with E. Whitchurch'. However the association went back at least as far as 20th January 1547 when Whitchurch had printed Baldwin's Treatise.¹³⁵ The association seems to have been symbiotic; Whitchurch had printed Baldwin's book in January, in April Baldwin contributed a commendatory sonnet to Whitchurch's imprint of a treatise by Christopher Langton. It seems probable that during 1547-9 Baldwin would have worked as a corrector of the presses and a compositor of texts in Whitchurch's shop. This situation brought Baldwin into contact with other reformers besides Olde and Rogers who must have hung around Whitchurch's shop. One of these was the Protestant printer John Daye. In his satirical work Beware the Cat Baldwin described, through the fictional character of Streamer, 'a friend's house' where the owner had often given him lodging. Streamer gave the exact location of this house, which was easily recognisable as John Daye's printing shop in Aldersgate. Streamer also described in great detail the interior of the house even including the views that could be gained from the various windows.¹³⁶

¹³² Seymour had entertained Latimer at his house in London as early as 1539, shortly after the passing of the Six Articles. M. L. Bush, The Government policy of Protector Somerset, p. 102.

¹³³ J. Old, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, vol. II. new series (1873), p. 203.

¹³⁴ E. I. Feasey, 'William Baldwin', Modern Languages Quarterly, 20 (1925), p. 410.

¹³⁵ W. Baldwin, The Canticles or balads of Salomon [W. Baldwin, seruaunt with E. Whitchurch, 1549], STC 2768. W. Baldwin, Treatyse of Moral Philosophie [E. Whitchurch, '20 Jan., 1547'], STC 1253.

¹³⁶ W. Baldwin, Beware the Cat: A critical edition (California, 1988), pp. 9, 10, 23, 25, 27, 59.

Polemicists believed the basis of their patron-client association was one of shared religious affiliations. Many of the Protestant polemicists felt convinced that Somerset was strongly committed to their cause. Writing in 1550 Thomas Becon, described how he had led the household at Sheen in prayers petitioning God for Somerset's deliverance from prison. These prayers clearly identified Somerset's plight with the captivities that had been suffered historically by God's chosen prophets and spokesmen:

As thou deliveredst Jonas out of the Whalles bellye, Danyell from pryson, Peter thy apostle out of warde, so in lyke maner wilt thou delyuer and set at lyberte thy seruaunt.¹³⁷

Somerset was not only a co-religionist, but one of God's main spokesmen for reform. The reformer John Calvin was similarly convinced of Somerset's personal holiness as well as the pivotal role it played in the English Reformation:

God be praised you have not to learn what is the true faith of Christians and the doctrines they ought to hold; since it is through your means that the true purity of the faith hath been restored.¹³⁸

The conviction that Somerset's reform had been motivated by the Duke's own personal religion explains why the Protestant writers continued to revere his memory long after he was dead and could no longer give them patronage. In 1554 Whitchurch attempted to print his Memorial. This was ostensibly a reprint of Lydgate's Fall of Princes with new verse poems added in order to bring the volume up to date. However the new additions to the book were no more than literary vehicles through which the authors discussed the Protestant protectorate of Somerset and how it compared to those commonwealths that had followed it.¹³⁹ Somerset was cast in the historical disguise of the Good Duke, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, protector of his young nephew Henry VI. Gardiner was thinly disguised as Cardinal Beaufort who like Gardiner was bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.¹⁴⁰ These images would have been widely understood as attempts to cast Somerset as the good

¹³⁷ O. Wermuller, A spyrytuall and moost precyouse Pearle [With Prayers at the end by Becon] [S. Mierdman, 1550], sig. O2r. STC 25255.

¹³⁸ C. Gorham, Gorham's Gleanings, pp. 61, 62.

¹³⁹ P. Budra, 'The Mirror for Magistrates and the politics of readership', Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, 32 (1992), p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ A Memoriall of suche princes as since the tyme of king Rycharde the seconde hath been unfortunate STC 1246. E. I. Feasey, 'The Licensing of the Mirror for Magistrates', The Library, 4th series 3 (1922-3), pp. 181-6.

duke. Latimer had praised Somerset in a sermon at court in 1549 by using the same historical allusions.¹⁴¹ In the future John Foxe would also liken Somerset to Humphrey of Gloucester.¹⁴² One who realised the intention behind the work was the Lord Chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, who had the work suppressed in 1554.¹⁴³ The Memorial was obviously the product of a pro-Somerset circle of reformers. The author of three of the new tracts was George Ferrers, while another poem was by Sir Thomas Chaloner. Both men had been with Somerset on campaign in Scotland in 1547, and Chaloner had helped Somerset in the prosecution of Gardiner and Bonner during Edward VI's reign. William Cecil may well have been one of those men 'both honourable and worshipful' that had first voiced the idea of extending the historical range of the work to the printer Edward Whitchurch.¹⁴⁴ Cecil was a close friend of Chaloner and Whitchurch had printed his manuscript of Catherine Parr's Lamentacyons in 1547.¹⁴⁵ Cecil's own devotion to Somerset had been proved not merely by over two years of service in Somerset's house, but by the fact that Cecil kept in contact with Somerset virtually up until his death in 1552.¹⁴⁶ Robert Crowley had printed his tracts for religious rather than monetary reasons. The preface to Crowley's edition of William Salesbury's Batterie of the Popes Botereux, commonly called the hygh Altar admits that the purpose in printing the book was to provoke support among the public for the government's removal of altars in 1550.¹⁴⁷ A similar motive moved Crowley between 1549-1551 to print his five commonwealth tracts that argued for social reform. As J. N. King shows Somerset

¹⁴¹ H. Latimer, Sermons, p. 119.

¹⁴² J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. p. 296.

¹⁴³ W. Trench, 'A Mirror for Magistrates. Its' origin and influence.' (Edinburgh, 1899). Cited in E. I. Feasey, 'The Licensing of the Mirror for Magistrates', The Library, 4th series 3 (1922-3), pp. 178. The later history of the Memorial is as fascinating as that dealing with its initial composition and is set out in Ms Feasey's article mentioned above. After being suppressed in 1554 the text lay fallow until 1559 when revised and augmented it was printed as The Mirror For Magistrates. However the three verse tragedies that dealt with Somerset were excluded, mainly through the influence of Lord Stafford the work's patron. Stafford had been one of those who had condemned Somerset to death in 1552 and he probably found the Mirror's descriptions of Somerset's unjust death embarrassing. As a result the offending texts were excluded. Not until 1578 was the full text of the three tragedies printed.

¹⁴⁴ W. Baldwin (ed.), The Mirror for Magistrates [London, T. Marshe, 1559], sig. A1r. STC 1247.

¹⁴⁵ C. Parr, The Lamentacion of a sinner, made by the most vertuose Ladie, Queen Caterin (Preface by W. Cecil) [London, E. Whitchurch, 1547], STC 44827.

¹⁴⁶ M. Graves, Thomas Norton (Oxford, 1994), p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ J. W. Martin, 'The publishing career of Robert Crowley: A sidelight on the Tudor book trade', Publication History, 14, (1983), p. 87.

was a covert supporter of Crowley's enterprise.¹⁴⁸ His support of a printing project from religious rather than profit motives seems to have impressed Crowley. Somerset had been dead seven years when in his Epitome of Cronicles Crowley wrote of Somerset in laudatory tones casting him opposite Northumberland, who is his antithesis of corruption and irreligion. Northumberland's miserable end on the scaffold stands in contrast to the martyr's death of Somerset.¹⁴⁹ John Foxe had been present at the execution of Somerset on 22 January. Such was his belief in Somerset's status as a godly prince that he was moved to describe Somerset's execution and death in terms that were strikingly reminiscent of those biblical accounts which described the death of Christ. The comparison was obviously one that Foxe's readers had readily drawn from Foxe's account. In a later edition of the same work Foxe felt he needed to qualify the passage by telling his readers that they should not think that he was comparing Somerset to Christ.¹⁵⁰ Also at the execution were a great many friends of Calvin. Burgoyne wrote and told the reformer about the death of Somerset on the very day it happened.¹⁵¹ Calvin had certainly considered Somerset an ally of godly reform and perhaps a friend as well. We hear later that Calvin had been 'exceedingly distressed' at the news of Somerset's death, which had also kindled his anger. Pollanus advised him against writing a work against the perfidy of the English.¹⁵² The work never appeared but the reformer did not forget Somerset. He later contacted Richard Vauville, a minister of a Reformed church in London, to find out what had happened to Somerset's children. A reply was forwarded by the duke's former secretary Thomas Norton.¹⁵³

Calvin's personal esteem for Somerset is clear while the conduct of other noble patrons of reform often left him jaundiced and disillusioned (the Huguenot leadership in France most noticeably). Calvin never wavered in his conviction of Somerset's good faith. The high esteem in which the Lord Protector was held lived on apparently undimmed into the second half of the century. In 1554 the Genevan council embarked on a campaign to 'purify'

¹⁴⁸ J. N. King, Protector Somerset, p. 331.

¹⁴⁹ R. Crowley, An epitome of Cronicles to the reigne of Quene Elizabeth by Robert Crowley [W. Seres, 1559], sig. Eeee 3v- 4r and Ffff 1v. STC 15217. [Hereafter, Epitome].

¹⁵⁰ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. pp. 293-5 and vol. VIII pp.736-7.

¹⁵¹ Francis Burgoyne to John Calvin, 22 Jan., 1552, in OL II. pp. 731-7.

¹⁵² Valerandus Pollanus to John Calvin, 7 March 1552, in OL II. pp. 737-9.

¹⁵³ Thomas Norton to John Calvin, 13 Nov., 1552, in OL I. p. 339-42.

Protestant calendars and almanacs of Roman Catholic superfluities. The historical anniversaries provided to substitute for the removed Catholic holidays have a certain random quality (including on 24 January the death of Caligula). But throughout the 1560s the surviving Genevan almanacs all note the anniversary of the execution of the Duke of Somerset on 22 January.¹⁵⁴ The inclusion is instructive, for it is clear that however much historians have laboured to destroy the reputation of the 'Good Duke', that contemporary Protestant opinion was never shaken in its conviction of the sincerity of Somerset's commitment to the cause, nor the magnitude of his achievement.

¹⁵⁴ P. Chaix, Recherches sur l'imprimerie a Geneve de 1550 a 1564. Etude bibliographique, economique et Litteraire (Geneva, 1954), p. 122. I am indebted for this reference to Professor A. Pettegree.

Chapter 5

The Question of the mass

The previous chapter has emphasised the extent to which reformers drew their inspiration from the kings of the Old Testament. Inspired by their readings of scripture they saw the reform of the allegedly idolatrous worship of the Catholic church as their first priority. But they were also not oblivious to the ideological underpinnings of the Catholic sacramental system. At the centre of this system was the Catholic mass. In parallel to their attacks upon the externals of the Catholic religious worship the Protestants writers launched a frontal attack upon the Catholic mass.

This assault began in the first months of the reign and continued up to and through the publication of the First Book of Common Prayer in 1549. As with the attack upon Catholic ceremonials it involved polemical writers at all levels of the church hierarchy, and a wide range of literary forms. The purpose of this chapter will be to explore the extent to which popular criticism of the mass and the more elaborate and ambitious writings of the more important leaders of the Edwardian church complemented each other in the campaign against the Catholic mass. The ultimate purpose was much the same as the denigration of idols; the population of England had to be moved from an intense devotion to an institution with which they felt completely at ease. To this end Protestant writers employed their full armoury of denigration and ridicule. At the other end of the argument, the Protestant leadership faced equally formidable opposition.

The nature of the mass was arguably the most contentious issue upon which Roman Catholic and dissenter polemicists wrote. During the last two years of the reign of Henry VIII and through the reign of his son, works that dealt with the mass continued to be printed, thirty-one in 1548 alone.¹

¹ J. N. King, English Reformation Literature (Princeton, 1982), p. 287.

The centrality of the mass in Roman Catholic sacramental theology was reflected in its place at the heart of the liturgy. The pre-eminence of the mass over all the other sacraments rested upon the belief that it was the sacramental figure of a divine reality, but was also made that reality itself. It was the sign, and that which the sign signified. The consecrated Host contained the very body and blood of Christ. As such the mass was the greatest expression of the numinous available to mediaeval and early modern English Catholics, and because of this was the object of their devotion. Not surprisingly therefore, attacks upon the mass would often be greeted with extreme hostility or blank incomprehension. Among conservatives the institution also found its most eloquent defenders. The reign of Edward VI thus witnessed an almost continuous polemical debate conducted at many different levels; in the popular press and in long and learned treatises exchanged between prominent conservatives such as Stephen Gardiner and the Protestant Archbishop Cranmer.

But it would be wrong to regard these different media as also different in their theological concerns. As this chapter will demonstrate, and somewhat against the trend of much recent writing upon Cranmer's Eucharistic theology, one can identify an essential unity between the Archbishop, his Episcopal colleagues and the popular writers, whose works provide a resonant echo of the academic debate.

None of the Protestant writers who addressed the central issue of the mass would have been in any doubt as to the formidable obstacles they faced in their campaign against the rite. Religion for the early modern English Catholic was centred around the mass rite, and manifested in organisations such as the lay fraternities.² Lay fraternities or guilds, were associations of laymen and women whose collective finances provided the means to give another member of the association a decent burial in this mortal life, and a decent chance in the next life. The fraternities paid for regular prayers and masses to be said for the souls of the departed. The fraternity itself was a material expression of a belief in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, the intercession of Saints, and the mass as a propitiatory sacrifice

² J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1994), Ch. 2.

for sin. All these rites and devotions were geared to one end, to alleviate the sufferings of the deceased in purgatory. Fraternities were widespread and also numerous; they were patronised by all classes and both sexes of the laity, who had an active role in the way these foundations flourished and were maintained. Nor were fraternities an isolated phenomenon. Such manifestations of devotion to the mass were evident in the monetary commitment and religious piety of ordinary men and women at the parochial level as well.³

Many historians have agreed that the loyalty of the English to traditional religion, and to the mass that was at the heart of it, was not in decline on the eve of the Reformation, though they disagree about the pace of the decline thereafter.⁴ Contemporary Protestant polemicists themselves were in little doubt about the prevalence of what they believed to be this pernicious aspect of the sixteenth-century English character. They frequently lamented the love the English manifested for the 'popish mass' and their resistance to 'pure doctrine' despite the best attempts of polemicists to discourage them.⁵ The large number of anti-mass works were motivated by the desire to discourage this devotion.

On a crude level this polemic was deliberately iconoclastic, that is it sought to destroy devotion by associating the mass with the invective that it used to describe the rite. This de-sanctification was most evident in the short and 'popular' tracts. However both these popular tracts and the more scholarly works by major prelates, made their own interpretative conclusions synonymous with the truth of the scripture

³ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars.

⁴ Historians agreeing with this verdict include, J. J. Scarisbrick, op. cit. R. Whiting, The Blind Devotion of the People (Cambridge, 1991). E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars. C. Haigh, English Reformations (Oxford, 1993). For a notable dissenter from this view see A. G. Dickens, The English Reformation (London 1989, 2nd ed.)

⁵ J. Veron, Certayne litle treatises set forth[...] for the erudition and learnyng of the symple [London, 1548] sig. E8v. STC 24676. T. Cranmer, A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ [1550], in Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, Relative to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, ed. J. Cox (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844), pp. 228-9. [Hereafter PS I.] W. Turner, A new dialogue wherin is conteyned the examination of the messe, sig. B2r. STC 24363. Also see Thomas Becon who wrote that not only the ignorant and the unlearned but also those of wisdom and learning were devoted to the mass. T. Becon, Jewel of Joye [1550], The Catechism of Thomas Becon, ed. J. Ayre (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844), p. 448. [Hereafter Catechism.]

that they appealed to. This both simplified the debate over authority and interpretation, allowing Protestants to construct and impute contradictions to Catholic theology that were not there. The intention was obviously to provoke disbelief and contempt for traditional Catholic religion. Upon this one question turned many issues and polemicists were aware of the importance of the mass question.⁶ The precise nature of the Eucharist was not an isolated point of theology. Conclusions about the mass had wide implications for the theologies of justification and, thereby, to the place of the church in communicating Christ's salvation to men. The debate upon the Eucharist was an argument for the possession of the objective truth of God. If English Catholics could justify their belief in the spiritual and corporal presence of Christ himself in the consecrated Host and wine it would endorse both Roman Catholic tradition as an authority that had transmitted the true interpretation of divine truth across history, and the place of that church whose sacral power showed Christ to the world.

The Catholic Sacramental system

The Catholic sacramental system stressed the mediatory place of the church and its sacraments, as the means whereby Christ communicated his grace to mankind. Christ himself, when incarnate upon earth, had instituted the sacraments of the new Covenant between God and man, and his church extended this office of the incarnation, as Christ's body upon earth, by continuing to perform these sacraments with Christ's authority, across human history.⁷ The one perfect sacrifice of Christ had won for men the free gift of grace. But this grace was imputed by Christ to his church, and was operative through his sacraments, if received with faith. The sacraments were in other words conduits of grace, to those who believed.⁸

⁶ L. Shepherd, The Vpcheringe of the messe, sig. A3r-A4v. STC 17360. L. Shepherd, A Pore helpe, the bukler and defence of holy mother kyrke [London, R. Wyer? 1548?], sig. A4v-5r. STC 13051.7 T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 6. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. Dd6v. STC 11884. Gilby wrote that The mass was the centre of all Catholic religious practices.

⁷ P. Clarke, The Eucharistic sacrifice and the Reformation (London, 1960).

⁸ P. Clarke, *op. cit.*

In 1546 during a discussion on justification with the Protestant dissident George Joye, the Catholic bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, explained the church's doctrine. Gardiner was asked how he considered the benefits of Christ's Passion to be effective to his justification, and replied:

Fyrst I beleued it was and is effectuall unto me in my baptisme, wherein I obteyned remission of synnes and renouation of lyfe. I haue beleued and beleue it also effectuall unto me in the sacrament of penance, whereby to recouer the state of grace, from which syth my baptisme I haue dyverse tymes fallen by synne. And lykewise I haue beleued and beleue that it hath pleased God to ordeyne them, Christes passio[n] is made effectuall by the work of God in the[m], to conferre grace unto us.⁹

The conferring of this grace was a free gift of God. By this grace we were sanctified, made more like God by participating in the virtues of Christ:

So as Christ merited throughly (sic): we by perticipation in using his giftes, merite and deserve.

Thus the sacraments did not add to the benefits already won for us by Christ's one perfect sacrifice upon the cross, but by faith the sacraments allowed us to gain the grace that enabled these benefits to be used as they should be used. As Gardiner wrote, the effects of the Passion were not in question, but the use we made of it was. Thus the church and the individual were given an active part in the process of the individual's salvation, not to effect it but to let it happen or not.¹⁰ God calls us, but we have to accept. God's grace was free, but we have to want it and to pray for it. Thus the whole church prayed, Gardiner wrote:

*Omnipotens sempiterne deus da nobis fidei, spei et charitatis augmentum, et ut mereamur assequi quod promittis, fac nos amare quod precipis.*¹¹

So God worked with man, not in spite of him, to draw man to felicity. This was achieved by grace administered through the sacramental organ of the church.

Nowhere was this more true than in the mass.

⁹ S.Gardiner, A declaration of Such true articles, sig. N1r. STC 11589.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Almighty everlasting God give to us faith, hope and add to our charity, and in order that we may deserve to gain (ie follow after) what you have promised, make us to love that you teach.

Once the priest had pronounced the words of consecration over the elements of bread and wine, it was believed that Christ was present in those elements, in both body and spirit. The reality of this presence was in the invisible substance of the elements which had changed or 'transubstantiated' into the substance of Christ, God and man, but the outward appearance of the elements, the accidents, remained.¹² Thus unlike the other sacraments, the Eucharist was both a sign, and that it signified. Those who received with faith, received Christ's body and blood, spiritually and carnally, and were sanctified themselves in both these respects. Whatever else laymen comprehended about the mass, they must have known that somehow it brought Christ's objective presence among them; this was reflected in the whole liturgy. The elevation of the Host was a high point in the mass liturgy, at which the congregation would adore the Host as Christ in an act of intense personal devotion.¹³ Something of the divine paradox of the incarnation was evident in the mass itself:

What is he to receive? Assuredly Jesus Christ, truly God and man who made everything out of nothing; and truly the man who died for us on the cross, in the form of bread.¹⁴

The mass was made the objective presence of God, a proof that God had not cut himself off from humanity at the Ascension, but continued to share their corporal existence, as Christ had during his incarnation. The comfort of these was that it showed Christ's continuing love for us; as Hogarde wrote:

That Christ to us was so louinge
Not onely for us deathe sufferinge
But also left us his flesh and bloude
Of bodi and soule to be the foode.¹⁵

¹² S. Gardiner, A detection of the deuils sophistic, wherwith he robbeth the vnlearned people of the true beleef in the sacrament of the aulter [London, J. Herforde, 1546], sig. C6r. STC 11591.3. [Hereafter Detection]. For professions of the same belief see Nicholas Shaxton, cited in R. Crowley, The Confutation of Xiii articles wherunto Nicholas Shaxton, late byshop of Salisbury subscribed, sig. B7r. The King's Book [1543], rptd. in C. Lloyd, Formularies, pp. 262-3.

¹³ E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pp. 95 and 189.

¹⁴ The Lay Folks Mass Book (13th century) Cited in R. N. Swanson, Catholic England (Manchester, 1993), p. 79.

¹⁵ M. Hogarde, An answer unto a ballad called the abuse of ye blessed sacramet of the of the aulter ptd. in R. Crowley, A Confutation of the mishapen answer to the ballade [London, J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548], sig. A2r. STC 6082. The same is expressed in S. Gardiner, A Detection, sig. H8r.

At least one reason for the emphasis on the corporeal presence of Christ, was the reaction against the Manichaeian dualism of the Cathars of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Their division of the realms of matter and spirit into respective realms of evil and good seriously compromised the Christian theology of the incarnation.¹⁶ Certainly by the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic polemicists closely identified the defence of the mass with a defence of the doctrine of the incarnation. This was obviously useful as a polemical weapon. When Gardiner suggested that all writers and railers against the mass were sacramentarians and all sacramentarians little more than Arians, he drew a furiously self-justificatory reply from the Protestant dissident, Antony Gilby. Gilby devoted two pages of his 1548 work to a profession of his belief in the Trinity in reply to Gardiner's accusation. Pointedly, Gilby used the same methods to prove the truth of the Trinity, as he had used to disprove the mass, namely Hebrew scholarship, citing the Hebrew plural used by God to describe himself in Genesis 1.¹⁷ But the polemical use of this identification between sacramentarians and Arians should not be allowed to detract from the fact that the polemical comparison itself was based on a sincere identification of the consecrated mass as God himself. Gardiner scornfully referred to Cranmer's doctrine of the true spiritual presence at the Eucharist as the real absence. This was not only to enrage the archbishop into asserting the reality of the spiritual presence, though it did indeed provoke this and not only from Cranmer. Rather it was a demonstration of how the corporal presence in the mass was vitally important to English Catholics, for it was at this point that the objectivity of God and the existence of man touched, that the care that God had taken for man in the miracle of the incarnate Christ was displayed again to his people. In the mass God through Christ showed himself to his church and drew them to him. It is a great mistake therefore to consider Catholic polemic upon the mass as dealing with a theological point alone. To English Catholics it was the very centre and inner sanctum of religion.

¹⁶ *CWTM* (London and New Haven, 1990), vol. VII. pp. ccxxxviii-ccxxxix.

¹⁷ A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. F5r and F5v.

Christ, present in the Eucharist elements, was offered up by the church as a propitiatory sacrifice to God, hoping to induce God to grant the church that grace needed to allow them to repent and thereby to be forgiven, so that the guilt and punishment due to the church for their sins would be remitted.¹⁸ The mass was thus a 'repository of supernatural power' for it was a means whereby the merits, holiness and sanctifying power of Christ, given in the Passion, were made available to all subsequent generations of history.¹⁹

Christ did that for oure sake,
and not for thapostles (sic) at that tyme alone
For priests for that purpose then he did make
Geuyng power to them al euerye on[e]
to consecrate his body when he was gone.²⁰

Priests held Christ's authority to perform the Eucharist, an authority that had descended from the apostles and through the church to its priesthood; priests held this authority, and priests alone. The office of priest held an especial sanctity, and this was reflected in the Eucharistic ceremony.²¹ The priest repeated Christ's words used at the Last Supper, Hogarde wrote, to the intent that God's power would transubstantiate the bread and wine.²² Though the priest was God's instrument he also stood in the place of Christ, offering the sacrifice to God. The attire of the officiating priest as well as his gestures during mass deliberately reinforced this identification of the role of Christ and that of the priest when he was saying mass as the founder and the continuer of the new order of priesthood.

¹⁸ P. Clarke, *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*, pp. 93-5. P. Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1992), p. 50.

¹⁹ P. Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-6.

²⁰ M. Hogarde, *An answer unto a ballad*, sig. C8r.

²¹ M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi, the Eucharist in late mediaeval culture* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 71. P. Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood*, p. 44.

²² M. Hogarde, *An answer unto a ballad*, sig. D7r and D7v.

Protestant opposition to the mass

The objections of those who dissented from this Roman Catholic sacramental system were founded primarily upon their differing view of the place that God had allotted to man in the process of justification. The polemical battle between Gardiner and Joye demonstrated how the doctrine of *sola fide* justification negated both the need and the possibility of the active participation of men with God in applying the redemptive benefits of Christ to the individual. The mediatory place of the church and the growth to sanctity was replaced by the personal response to God and the acceptance in faith of what God had already accomplished for mankind through the Cross. The debate between Joye and Gardiner lasted only three years (1543-6) yet in many ways it foreshadowed the clash of Gardiner with the Protestant polemicists during Edward's reign. From 1547-1553, Cranmer, Hooper and Gilby, as well as a host of other writers, printed polemical attacks upon the mass, all of which rested upon the same doctrine of *sola fide* justification that Joye had argued for.

The ascendancy of a Protestant clique during Edward's reign allowed Protestants to bring their theology to bear upon official sacramental theology in the English church and the liturgy used to express it. The central place of Thomas Cranmer as the motivating force in the government formation of liturgical revisions and formularies of faith has long been appreciated. The interpretation of what precisely Cranmer's Eucharistic theology was, and its relationship both to the Catholic tradition that preceded it and to Cranmer's contemporaries on the continent, has become a historical and theological battleground. In defining Cranmer's own theological beliefs, writers have hoped to show what the theological direction of the English reformed church was, during this early and formative period in its history.

Writing as an Anglo-Catholic C. W. Dugmore stressed that Cranmer's theological belief, and thereby his liturgical intent, was that of a 'reformed Catholic'.²³ Cranmer's Eucharistic theology avoided the use of late mediaeval speculative

²³ C. W. Dugmore, The Mass and the English Reformers (London, 1958), p. 157.

philosophy, and the transubstantial presence and propitiatory theology that had grown out of it. Cranmer's personal scrutiny of the church fathers caused him to re-assert a dormant Augustinian strand of Eucharistic thought, typified as 'realist symbolism'. In Cranmer's case this was interpreted as a pseudo-Ratramnian doctrine of a locative spiritual presence of God in the Eucharist. This 'non-papist Catholic' position was also held by Bishop Ridley of London.²⁴ Dugmore sought to distance Cranmer from those he termed the 'Zurichers', followers of Bullinger, men like John Hooper, who was described as a 'Proto-Puritan'. Hooper's theology of receptionism was the cause of a long-running conflict between Cranmer and Hooper right up until their deaths.²⁵

This emphasis is followed by Basil Hall who, in a recent study, argues that Hooper, described as a 'spiritual ancestor of puritanism', and his attendant Zurich faction were pitted against Cranmer because of a fundamental disagreement over the nature of Eucharistic theology.²⁶ Hooper believed that the Eucharistic elements were merely outward symbols or signs of an inward faith, a belief that clashed with Cranmer's own belief in an objective spiritual presence of Christ at the Eucharistic feast. A closer study of the theologies of Hooper and Cranmer suggests a different picture. A recent study of John Hooper by Dr Paul Wilson, has criticised Hall both for his restricted use of sources to explain Hooper's Eucharistic belief, and his use of a source now known not to have been written by Hooper himself. In addition the internal consistency of Hall's case rested upon his denial that Cranmer had been involved with the forty-two articles and the *Reformatio*, an assertion for which Hall had little evidence except that the works were not consistent with what he believed Cranmer's own overall view had been. Wilson's conclusion is that Cranmer and Hooper disagreed on the pace of reform, but that they were in agreement in regard to the nature of reform, including Eucharistic doctrine.²⁷ Cranmer's most recent

²⁴ C. W. Dugmore, *The Mass and the English Reformers*, pp. 182-3, 200.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 149-50.

²⁶ B. Hall, 'Cranmer, the Eucharist and the Foreign Divines in the reign of Edward VI', in P. Ayris, and D. Selwyn, (eds.), *Thomas Cranmer Churchman and Scholar* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 217-23. For the comment on Hooper as a puritan see footnote on p. 222.

²⁷ P. Wilson, 'John Hooper and the English Reformation Under Edward VI. 1547-1553' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Queen's University, 1992), pp. 207-14.

biographer is in substantial agreement with such a view. By 1550 Hooper had realised that his own Eucharistic views and those of Cranmer agreed. Though he castigated the archbishop's caution concerning the pace of reform, Hooper did not disagree with Cranmer over the nature of reform needed.²⁸ The clashes which did occur between the two men, most notably those concerning the Ordinal and Vestments, were centred on the issue of the authority to decide the pace of reform, not on the theological assumptions at the heart of Hooper's case.²⁹

As will be demonstrated, a comparative study of Cranmer and Hooper's Eucharistic theologies does indeed reveal a common creed, both regarding the role of the sacraments in the religious life of the receiver, and as a result in the nature of Christ's presence at the Eucharistic feast. What is more surprising is the striking similarity of thought between the Archbishop and various peripheral writers, particularly Antony Gilby and Thomas Lancaster.³⁰

The question of Justification

The disagreement between Joye and Gardiner was essentially upon the precise interaction between faith and charity in the process of justification.³¹ For Gardiner justification was a process whereby God led man, by grace, through a series of conditions that led him to faith, the assent to the gospel message. This faith was expressed in good acts which by repetition made those who committed them holier. In this way men were sanctified and drawn towards what God intended them to be. Thus love, or *caritas*, was an active partner to the profession of faith, and both were part of the process that reconciled us to God, and made us acceptable to him.

Gardiner made no attempt to suggest that man was justified by his own acts, arguing

²⁸ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 453-455, 465.

²⁹ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 471-5.

³⁰ Anthony Gilby was later a translator for the Geneva Bible. Thomas Lancaster was Protestant Bishop of Armagh, and later Dean of Ossory, one of those who presided at the consecration of Bale as bishop of Ossory. DNB vols. 7 and 11.

³¹ This discussion covered three books, each one longer than the last. G. Joye, George Joye confuteth Winchester's false articles ['Wesil in Cliefe land' (Antwerp, widow of C. Ruremond) 1543], STC 14826. S. Gardiner, A declaration of such true articles as George Joye hath gone about to confute as false [London, J. Herforde, 1546], STC 11589. G. Joye, The refutation of the byshop of Winchester's derke declaration [London, J. Herforde, 1546], STC 14828.5. [Hereafter Derke declaration]

that all our good acts were ultimately centred in God himself prompted by his grace that was only given to us because Christ's sacrifice had won God's favour for man. In writing this Gardiner was fully conforming with official doctrine as set out late in Henry VIII's reign. The King's Book gave a simplified version of what Gardiner was later to write in his own works of religious controversy. Its overall emphasis was that man was at war throughout his life, with his own propensity to sin as well as external forces of evil in the world and the Devil, but that in this war to increase his sanctity he had the help of God, notably through the church.³²

For Joye and many of his co-dissenters there was no participation of humanity in God's redemptive acts. Integral to this idea was not only that man sinned, but that habitual transgressions were constant facets of the human character, that corrupted even our best actions:

All oure best dedes be corrupt and filthilie stained wt sin, so yt they be not able nether to deserue any reward gostly, ne to sustaine ye iudgement of God, but wil condempne you before hym.³³

The grace of God did not work with the human will, but against it: 'The mercy and grace of God preve[n]ti[n]g thy wyl wt his grace'.³⁴ Man was at war with God.³⁵ Man's foul acts were a direct affront to the justice and righteousness of God. These attributes were intrinsic to God's nature and he could not ignore the demands of justice and righteousness in his dealings with man, despite his intent to show man his mercy by saving humanity. The guilt and punishment that was due to man for his sins had to be paid. God paid it in Christ, who by his one supreme sacrifice had placated the righteous wrath of the Father and had made it possible for God to look with favour upon us.³⁶

³² The King's Book [1543], in C. Lloyd, *Formularies*, pp. 221-5.

³³ G. Joye, *Derke declaration*, sig. C5v- 6v. For the same idea expressed elsewhere see T. Cranmer, *PS II*, p. 129, and T. Cranmer, *A Defence*, [1550], in *PS I*. (Cambridge, 1844), p. 40. Also see T. Becon, *News out of Heaven* [1541?], in *Early Works*, pp. 46-50.

³⁴ G. Joye, *Ibid*. The same idea is expressed in the Second Book of Common Prayer (1552) See the Collect for Easter Day, in *Two Liturgies*, ed. J. Kettley, (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844), p. 248.

³⁵ J. Hooper, *A Declaration of Christ and his office* [Zurich, 1547], in *The Early Works*, p. 22. [Hereafter *Declaration*].

³⁶ J. Hooper, *Declaration*, pp. 48-50. T. Cranmer, *A Defence*, in *PS I*, p. 128.

In what is arguably the most lucid part of Joye's book, the author eloquently underlines how man rather than participating in the application of Christ's merits is a bankrupt supplicant before God. No contemplation of sin will move us to a repentance that will be sufficient to effect our release from that sin. It needed more than our conscience, or even a mortal knowledge of God's law, to reach true repentance. By contemplating the cross we perceive the depths of our own depravity, by seeing the sacrifice that Christ had to make to redeem us from it. No man or angel could even express the sufferings of Christ, endured on our behalf.³⁷ Yet Christ endured this pain and death for us while we were yet sinners. This demonstrated the extent and height of divine love, by its unconditional nature, and in the believer inspired sorrow that Christ had so suffered because of our acts. Man was shown what he was, and what God was, and was reduced to silent supplication at the knowledge. This was the way the cross fed our faith, and by which faith led to amendment of life.³⁸ This was powerfully done. The intent was not to deny that man could ever do good acts by God's help, but that only Christ was good enough to achieve the acts that justify us.³⁹ Justification was an office of God not man.⁴⁰ No virtue of man achieved this, even charity; charity and all virtues were passive attendants in the act of faith, which itself was only a means to apply a remission, the cause of which was Christ's sacrifice alone.⁴¹ The benefits of Christ's sacrifice were imputed to us, not because we were righteous, but because for Christ's sake God would reckon us to be righteous. Joye described this graphically as Christ covering us with his cloak of righteousness, if we believed in the efficacy of his sacrifice to redeem us.⁴² The divide between Gardiner and Joye was shown when Joye denied Gardiner's assertion that the issue was not one of the effects of Christ's Passion, there was no doubt of that,

³⁷ J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 48.

³⁸ G. Joye, Derke declaration, sig. C7v-8r. Gilby wrote the same theology two years later. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. X4v.

³⁹ G. Joye, op. cit., sig. E2r.

⁴⁰ T. Cranmer, Homily of Salvation [1547], in PS II. p. 131.

⁴¹ J. Hooper, Declaration, pp. 50-1 Also T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 207, 209.

⁴² G. Joye, Derke declaration, sig. E1v. For a similar image describing imputed righteousness see T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 221. In baptism we were 'Clothed' with Christ.

but the use we made of them. Joye claimed that the question was the effect the Passion had on our justification. The use of the effects of the Passion presupposed our possession of them, and since this possession was only gained by faith, faith must precede any work or condition attached to the use of the Passion.⁴³ The only condition was a belief in God's promise.⁴⁴

The Mass

This had a revolutionary effect on the doctrine of the mass and the definition of the priesthood that performed the mass rite. Protestant polemicists were unanimous in asserting that Christ's one sacrifice on Calvary had been fully sufficient to remit all the sins of humanity. It had been a historically unique sacrifice that could not and need not be repeated, there was no need for any further sacrifice for sin.⁴⁵ Christ's act was God's promise that He would save us and the benefits of it were imputed to us by God through faith in the promise, and not by mortal actions in performing a rite.⁴⁶ The Last Supper and the Eucharistic rite that grew out of it were not metaphysically connected to the sacrificial act of the crucifixion:

For upon the cross Christ was carnally given to suffer and die, at his Last Supper he was spiritually given in promise of his death; and in the sacrament is he daily given in remembrance of his death.⁴⁷

The sacrament was not a re-enactment of a sacrifice, but a figurative rite, whose purpose was to 'preach' the redemptive message of the cross.⁴⁸ The Eucharist was a sacrament of remembrance certifying to us that Christ had by his one act taken away our sins. With this knowledge, we feed our souls and strengthen our faith.⁴⁹

⁴³ G. Joye, Derke declaration, sig. C6r.

⁴⁴ G. Joye, op. cit., sig. F4v-F5r.

⁴⁵ J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 60. T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty and sophistical cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner [1551], rptd. in PS I, p. 344. [Hereafter, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation.] H. Latimer, The sermon of the plough [1548], rptd. in Sermons, pp. 72-4. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. U8r and U8v. R. Crowley, Confutation, sig. B7v.

⁴⁶ J. Hooper, Declaration, pp. 60-61.

⁴⁷ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I, p. 24. See also Hugh Latimer, Conferences between Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer, in The Works Of Nicholas Ridley, p. 112.

⁴⁸ T. Cranmer, op. cit. pp. 34-5. Hooper, An answer unto my Lord of Wynchesters booke [1547], in Early Works, pp. 177-80. [Hereafter Wynchesters booke].

⁴⁹ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. E3v-4r, X4r.

All man could do was to accept a pardon that had already been won for him by Christ, and offer thanks for this.⁵⁰ No man could control or apply God's free gift by repeating God's act in the mass rite.⁵¹ By pretending that Christ's sacrifice needed to be applied through the mass the pope had gained control of both the access to heaven and the salvation from hell, for he alone through his church controlled the flow of Christ's hard won grace to man.⁵² Arguments against the real presence in the mass, such as that Christ had ascended and could not be in two places at once, were formed primarily to disprove the sacrificial nature of the mass. As Gilby wrote, if Roman Catholics could prove Christ's body to be truly in the Host, then they could feasibly offer up Christ in the mass, as a sacrifice propitiatory for sin.⁵³ Gilby argued that believers should not be taught as papists taught, to rely on the objectivity of the rite, but on the objective fact that the rite signified:

It is fayeth therefore in Christ crucified that maketh us blessed, and not to eat the bodie carnally, bodilie and naturally, for then should we haue two waies to lyfe, the one by fayth and the other by this bodilie eateinge.⁵⁴

The role of the priest was not to sacrifice. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had used the biblical passages dealing with Melchisedech (Genesis 14 and Psalm 110) to argue for the superiority of the Christ's priesthood, prefigured by Melchisedech in the Old Testament, over the priesthood of the Aaron and the Levites. Cranmer denied the Roman Catholic claim that their priesthood was spiritually descended from that of Melchisedech.⁵⁵ This Old Testament priest had instituted the sacrificial system of the old law in Genesis, which had to be continually renewed

⁵⁰ A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. E3r. The 1549 Book of Common Prayer changed the old Sarum rite so that all association of the elements as the vehicles of an oblation offered by the church to God, was avoided. D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, pp. 413-414.

⁵¹ W. Turner, *A new dialogue wherein is conteyned an examination of the messe*, sig. A3r-v.

⁵² A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. C6v-7r.

⁵³ A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. B8r, C7r. See also, N. Ridley, The propitiary sacrifice of the mass: 'This kind of oblation standeth upon transubstantiation', in *The Works of Nicholas Ridley* p. 23. Also see Latimer *Conferences*, cited in *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, p. 122. Also T. Cranmer, *The Defence*, Preface to the 1550 ed. PS I. p. 6. Transubstantiation was the root of the whole Catholic sacrificial system. Also T. Cranmer, *An Answer unto a crafty cavillation*, in PS I. p. 12. *The Defence*, pp. 46-47. J. Hooper, *Early Works*, pp. 66, 112.

⁵⁴ See R. Crowley, *A Confutation*, sig. B5v-B6r. Also A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. E2r.

⁵⁵ Cranmer's argument was drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter five onwards.

because it was performed by mortal men who died as time passed. The imperfections of mortal priests meant that they had to offer sacrifices to atone for their sins as well as those of the people overall.⁵⁶ These tainted offerings had never been sufficient to remit the sins of humanity.⁵⁷ The priesthood that had offered these sacrifices had been but a pale foreshadowing of Christ's sacerdotal office, wherein he fulfilled and ended Melchisedech's order of priests, and the purpose they had been ordained for, in his own person.⁵⁸ For Christ had been without sin, and was thereby a perfect priest who did not have to offer for himself. In himself Christ had offered the one pure sacrifice that fully atoned for the people's sins.⁵⁹ The priesthood and its sacrifices were at an end, as Hebrews 10 wrote, for Christ was now our one eternal priest our 'bishopp'.⁶⁰ He held the cure of our souls and petitioned by his one sacrifice to the Father on our behalf.⁶¹ Christ alone was the mediator of our prayers to God.⁶² The offering of the mass by human priests, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, usurped Christ's office as priest and mediator. This was a 'blasphemy': 'To make such an oblation and sacrifice as never creature made but Christ alone'.⁶³ Crowley made the same objection in a cruder way.⁶⁴ To repeat the crucifixion inferred that the original sacrifice of the Lord had been of insufficient effect to impute righteousness to all men, whereas scripture told us otherwise.

The English reformers sought to reduce the Eucharistic sacrament to a parity with the other sacrament of baptism by subjecting both to the theology of *sola fide* justification.⁶⁵ This opened the problem of paedobaptism. There were New Testament examples of the favour Christ had shown to infants. In the gospels Christ

⁵⁶ T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 86, 158, 345. See the Epistle to the Hebrews 5: 1-11 and 6: 20.

⁵⁷ T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 345-6. R. Crowley, A Confutation, sig. B7v. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. G7v-8r.

⁵⁸ Hebrews 7 and 8. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. U8r and U8v. T. Cranmer, PS I. p. 158.

⁵⁹ T. Cranmer, PS I. p. 347. A. Gilby, *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. C7v-8r. T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 34, 346.

⁶¹ J. Hooper, Declaration, pp. 11, 33-5. T. Cranmer, PS I. p. 13. See Hebrews 9: 25-8.

⁶² Hebrews 9.

⁶³ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. p. 345. The same indignation was voiced by J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 35. N. Ridley, The Works of Nicholas Ridley, p. 23.

⁶⁴ R. Crowley, A Confutation, sig. B6r.

⁶⁵ C. W. Dugmore, The Mass and the English Reformers, also see T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 25, 183.

had called children to him and said that the kingdom of heaven was made of such as these.⁶⁶ Children had their own guardian angels in Heaven who continually watched over them. However this itself did not justify the need for an outward rite to confirm God's free grace. Hooper wrote that the effects of the Passion of Christ would extend to infants. Innocent of culpable sin, infants were only guilty of the original sin, inherited from Adam. As Adam by descent had bequeathed to mankind the stain of original sin, so now Christ, by his redeeming acts had fulfilled the Covenant and made it possible, by baptism, to be born into the descent of the faithful.⁶⁷ The 1552 Book of Common Prayer deliberately excised those parts of the ancient rite which had seemed to infer that the baptismal rite itself was a rite of exorcism, including those parts which had survived in the 1549 Book. Instead the 1552 rite stressed the reliance of the child on the faith of the church, upon those present. Baptism was an 'external' or 'exterior' sign or 'seal' of our loyalty to God.⁶⁸ It confirmed God's promise to us and was performed as a rite, because God had commanded us to do so.⁶⁹ Baptism was effective because it was preceded by our faith in the applicability of Christ's Passion to our justification. The rite of baptism had no intrinsic power without faith to purge us of sin.⁷⁰ In the case of the child the operative nature of the sacrament was in the faithful status of the Covenant community; through their faith the child was received by God. The child gained Christ's merits for the sake of the father, Hooper wrote.⁷¹ The Book of Common Prayer instructed the minister to call upon the congregation to pray that the child may be made a part of the church community, that God would graft the child into the church. Therefore Cranmer argued that the lack of intellectual cognisance on the part of the child to comprehend and accept faith

⁶⁶ Mark 10, Matthew 19, Luke 18, cited by T. Cranmer, A Confutation of unwritten verities, in PS II, p. 60. Also in The Book of Common Prayer (1552) in Two Liturgies, pp. 287, 290.

⁶⁷ J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, pp. 129-31.

⁶⁸ J. Hooper, A Declaration, p. 74. Wynchesters booke, p. 128.

⁶⁹ J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 129.

⁷⁰ G. Joye, Derke declaration, sig. D4r. R. Crowley, A Confutation, sig. B7v. T. Cranmer, PS I, p. 347.

⁷¹ J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 131.

did not prevent him possessing the 'similitude' of faith, by the sacrament.⁷² The independence of this sacrament from the active faith of the child was justified on the grounds that God's Covenant with Abraham had been with Abraham and his descendants, shown in the rite of circumcision, which was the typological predecessor of baptism (Exodus 17).⁷³ The Old Testament accounts of Noah, stressed that Noah and his family were in the ark, and that the ark was analogous to the body of the church. The prayers petitioned that the child would be made an heir of the inheritance of Christ.⁷⁴ In other words baptism, like circumcision before it, was a sign of God's imputed righteousness, freely given by God, and applied by faith. The mentions of both Noah and the Red Sea were suggestive in this context, since both were signs of God's favour to his Covenant people, acts that affected both adults and children. The predestinarian overtones of this justification of paedobaptism, are very close to those doctrines which recent research has suggested were at the centre of other writings by Cranmer.⁷⁵ Predestination was the only way the reformers could maintain what otherwise would have been conflicting aims. One was the construction of a coherent biblical and theological justification of paedobaptism, through the use of Old Testament typology. The other aim was to use the figurative nature of baptism, to argue for a redefinition of the mass presence and this sacrament's function in the believers spiritual life. In doing this they subjected both sacraments to their theology of justification:

For no more is Christ in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper than the Holy Ghost is in the water of baptism.⁷⁶

⁷² T. Cranmer, A Defence, in PS I. p. 125.

⁷³ The justification of baptism on the grounds of its similarity to circumcision was argued by Cranmer, PS I. p. 60. J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 124. A point asserted in the later polemical campaign against the Anabaptists. See W. Turner, A Preseruatiue or triacle agaynst the poyson of Pelagius [London, A. Hester, 1551], sig. F6r. STC 24368.

⁷⁴ The Second Book of Common Prayer [1552], rptd. in Two Liturgies, pp. 285-6, 290.

⁷⁵ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, p. 427

⁷⁶ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. p. 306.

Christ was eaten only by those who had belief.⁷⁷ As Brooks writes, Cranmer's whole doctrine of the true spiritual presence in the Lord's Supper depended for its reality on the justifying faith of the recipient.⁷⁸ Hooper argued essentially the same belief when he wrote that the instrumentality of faith in the sacramental receiving was alone able to apply the crucified Christ's merits to us.⁷⁹ Both authors in effect used justification by faith as the theological ground from which to redefine the nature of the sacraments in the individual's relationship to God. In both Cranmer and Hooper's writings it will be argued, the sacraments were not 'vehicles' of grace. The action of God's grace, the place where the objective presence of God touched the believer, was not strictly speaking in the sacrament at all. The sacrament was reduced to the status of a visual catalyst that served to enliven the faith of the Christian, to stir faith in the heart of the believer.

The Lord's Supper: Cranmer, Hooper and their contemporaries

Both Hooper and Cranmer pointed out that the churches of the Old and New Testament or 'Covenant' were historical communities which both derived their identity from one historical event, namely the crucifixion.⁸⁰ Just as the Old Testament priesthood had foreshadowed the one unique sacrifice of Christ, so the faith of the Old Testament had been centred around this one act. Hooper wrote that it was:

Christ the stone that conjoined the church of the apostles' time with the church of the present time.⁸¹

⁷⁷ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. L1v-2r. T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, PS I. pp. 227, Defence, in PS I. p. 307.

⁷⁸ P. N. Brooks, Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist (London, 1965), p. 23. For examples of this theology in Cranmer's works see T. Cranmer, PS I. pp. 25, 39-40, 43, 183.

⁷⁹ J. Hooper, A Declaration, pp. 48-5, 50, 52. J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 225.

⁸⁰ Christ had appeared once and for all at the 'climax' of history. Epistle to the Hebrews 9:26. The importance of Covenant theology in the thought of Hooper and his indebtedness to Bullinger has been set out by J. H. Primus, 'The Role of the Covenant Doctrine in the Puritanism of John Hooper', in Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis. New series 48 (1967), pp. 54-68.

⁸¹ J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 127.

Christ unified the Old and New Testaments by being the object of the faith of both. Those who confidently looked forward to the time when Christ would fulfil the Covenant were the Prophets and Patriarchs, and were in the same church as those Christians who since the ascension believed that Christ had already fulfilled the Covenant of the law. In his 1547 homily A short declaration of the true and lively faythe Cranmer explained that though this common faith was not explicitly stated it was there:

This is the Christian faythe whiche these holye men had, and we also ought to have. And although they were not named Christian men yet was it a Christain faythe that they had, for they looked for all benefits of God the father, through the merits of hys sonne, Jesus Christ, as we now do. This difference is betwene them and us: for they looked when Christ should come, and we be in the tyme when he is come.⁸²

Roman Catholic writers agreed that those in the Old Testament had eaten the body in the 'truth of promise'. Christ's bodily presence with his church was promised, but not yet achieved. However there was this essential difference, that Roman Catholics asserted that the crucifixion had given a new reality to the church of the New Testament, that now ate in the 'truth of presence'.⁸³ Christ was physically present with his church at the crucifixion, and had been ever since in the Eucharistic sacrament. This qualification was suspiciously absent from Cranmer's homily, when the Archbishop compared the faiths of the New and Old Testament. In the homily faith has placed an equality between the old and new Covenants, in the access to and the gaining of the benefits of Christ's Passion: 'In effect they and we be al[ll] one.'⁸⁴ The place of the mass was not even mentioned. The threat this posed was not missed by the ever astute Gardiner.⁸⁵ In the following year Cranmer compiled the Defence, which he was to have printed in 1550, and this followed what Gardiner had rightly

⁸² T. Cranmer, 'A Short declaration of the true, lively and Christian faith', in Certain sermons or Homilies (1547), ed. R. B. Bond (Toronto, 1987), p. 95. For the same theology see, G. Joye, A contrayre (to a certayne manis) consultation: that adulterers ought to be punyshed wyth deathe [S. Mierdman for G. Joye, 1549], sig. D2v. STC 14822.

⁸³ S. Gardiner, An Explication, in T. Cranmer, PS I, p. 74. Also see M. Hogarde, assault of the sacrame[n]t. of the altar [1554], sig. B2r. STC 13556.

⁸⁴ T. Cranmer, 'A Short declaration of the true, lively and Christian faith', in Homilies, Ibid.

⁸⁵ S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 362.

written was the implicit logic of Cranmer's Homily of salvation, that *sola fide* justification must negate the Roman Catholic theology of the mass.⁸⁶ Both Hooper and Cranmer used the book of Hebrews to interpret the Old Testament sacraments in the Christological light of the new in order to prove that the value of the Old Testament sacrifices had not been in their intrinsic substance, but in their place as prefigurements of Calvary.⁸⁷ Integral to Hooper's systematic Covenant theology was the Christological use of the Old Testament sacraments as didactic models for the definition of the sacraments of the New. Cranmer cited Augustine's repeated use of such typographic symbolism as an endorsement of this continuing tradition in the church.⁸⁸ Both writers then used this to argue that the purpose of the Old and New Testament sacraments, like their faith, was the same, and thereby so was the figurative nature of their sacramental symbols.⁸⁹ In effect the old Covenant had:

The same Christ and mediator that we have [...] so did they spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood as we do, and spiritually feed of him, and by faith he was present with them, as he is with us.⁹⁰

Christ was not corporally present upon earth to the patriarchs, he was in heaven; just as in the Christian church, Christ was not corporally present upon earth but had ascended to the right hand of the Father.⁹¹ Gilby tried to buttress this theology by lending the weight of his linguistic scholarship to argue for figurative

⁸⁶ S. Gardiner, Letters, p. 305. Dr Haigh on the contrary fails to see in the homilies any implicit threat to traditional religion. They were 'tracts for troubled times' According to this model the homilies were the product of a government whose tentativeness of religious reform was motivated by a fear at the possible unrest that radical reform may cause. C. Haigh, English Reformations, p. 170. This theory overlooks the way the homilies redefined the theology on which the traditional religion of England was based and thus prepared the way for the later justifications of wholesale religious change.

⁸⁷ J. Hooper, A Declaration, p. 48. T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 347.

⁸⁸ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. pp. 75-77. Hooper and Cranmer drew on Hebrews 7, 9 and 10. Cranmer also drew on Hebrews 11 the images from which also appeared in the Book of Common Prayer.

⁸⁹ T. Cranmer, PS I. p. 348. J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 49.

⁹⁰ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I pp. 77, 234. J. Hooper, A Declaration, p. 50. Wynchester's booke, p. 200. Gilby writes almost identically to Cranmer on this subject: A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. X4r. Also see T. Becon, A newe nosegay [1542] in Early Works, p. 214. 'Differance is there none between them and us except that they believed in Christ to come and we believe that Christ is come [...] All saith St Paul (he speaketh of the fathers of the Old Testament) did eat all one spiritual meat, that is to say with us'. This comment is one indication of the radical nature of Becon's theology even at this early period.

⁹¹ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, p. 77. Also T. Cranmer, A Defence, in PS I. pp. 93-7.

sacraments. The term for mass in the Old Testament, '*missah*' was derived from the Hebrew root for 'sign', according to the authority of the major mediaeval Jewish commentators.⁹² The typology that was part of this system, however, was used to great effect by a number of other polemical writers, notably Gilby, Cranmer and Lancaster.

Hooper wrote that there were two sorts of sacrament mentioned in the scriptures. The first were those that had been appointed for repeated use in the continuing ministry of the church because they were annexed unto the Covenant.⁹³ In the Old Testament these had been circumcision (Genesis 17) and the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12). Hooper argued, citing Romans 4, that circumcision had been a sign of God's imputed righteousness to man, gained by faith.⁹⁴ Similarly the Passover commemorated the deliverance of Israel from both the angel of death and from the bondage in Egypt. Both were signs of the Covenant of God with Israel. The Mosaic Covenant was inaugurated in Exodus (19 and 20) where Israel had undertaken to obey God's commandments and to worship him alone, while God had promised to be their God and to make Israel his people, 'a possession for himself'. The re-enactment of the Passover was a symbol of thanksgiving to God, for the deliverance he had wrought, and circumcision was a sign of loyalty to him and to the Covenant he had made with his people. In the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper replaced the old sacraments as the Covenant was renewed.⁹⁵ The second sort of sacrament were those that were signs of God's favour, not themselves part of his Covenant with his people, and consequently not to be used as a repeated rite within the church's ministry. The ark in the clouds (Genesis 9) the rainbow and the celestial fire that consumed the sacrifices in Genesis 4 had been examples of this.⁹⁶ This distinction of sacraments was evident on the title page of Cranmer's 1550 work on the

⁹² A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. Aa5r, Aa5v.

⁹³ J. Hooper, *Wynchester's booke*, p. 198.

⁹⁴ J. Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁹⁵ J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, p. 200.

⁹⁶ J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, p. 194. Cranmer saw the ark as an Old Testament Covenant sign as well, T. Cranmer, *Defence*, in *PS I*, p. 135.

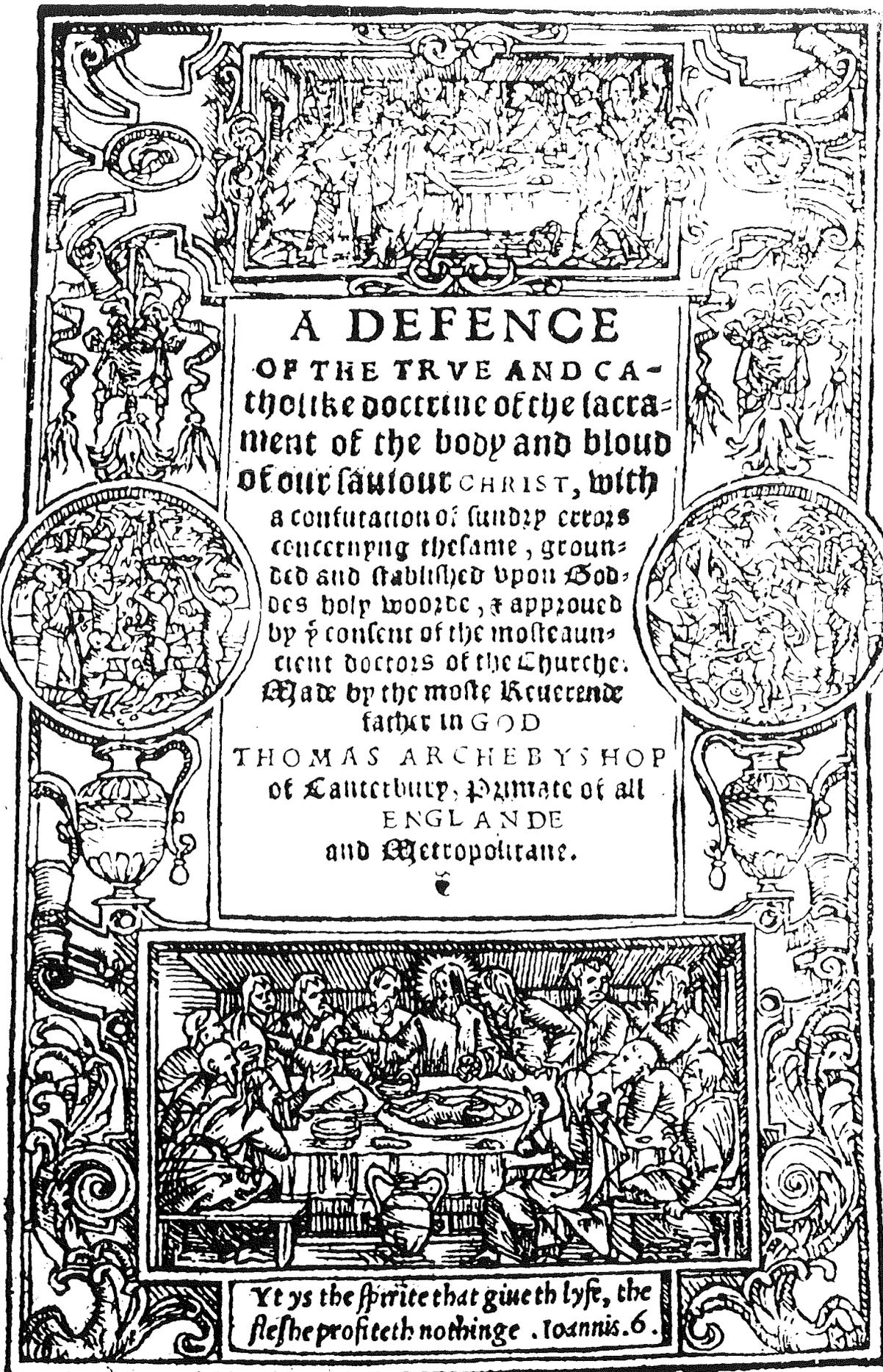


Figure 2

The titlepage of Thomas Cranmer's *A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ* [London, R. Wolfe, 1550], STC 6000. Note the upper and lower pictures and side medallions.

Lord's Supper, the Defence, in a woodcut which juxtaposed the Passover with the Lord's Supper. Flanking these images were events from the Old Testament; manna from heaven, and the water from the rock (see figure 2). In the text Cranmer explained how manna varied from Eucharistic bread, because all, both good and evil, ate manna and gained the same benefit from it. In his 1551 refutation of Gardiner, Cranmer enlarged on this concept, arguing that manna and Eucharistic bread were materially the same, being fruits of the earth, but that the Eucharistic bread alone had the promise of eternal life attached to it.⁹⁷ In other words one had been a temporal sign of favour, while the other was the seal of the promise of life, the Covenant promise.

Polemicists were quick to draw attention to the strikingly prophetic visual parallels that could be drawn between the Passover and crucifixion accounts. The claim by Protestant writers that the sacraments of the Old Testament had been figurative foreshadowings of the sacraments of the New, was not their own idea. It was part of a tradition which originated with the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 9) and had been part of a long tradition of mediaeval thought.⁹⁸ The crucial difference was in the lessons the polemicists drew from the juxtapositioning of this imagery on the figurative nature of a biblical sacrament. Gilby noted the account in Exodus, where the Jews daubed the blood of the Passover lamb on the door lintels to ward off the angel of death; this prefigured the blood of Christ on the cross which saved us from bondage to sin and spiritual death, securing eternal life.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 207. An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. p. 220.

⁹⁸ T. U. Holmes and M. A. Klenke, Chretien, Troyes and the Grail (North Carolina, 1959), pp. 108-122. Holmes and Klenke note the central place played by the twelfth century abbot Suger in the revival of this tropologic symbolism of the old law giving way to the new, which rested primarily on Paul's identifications of Old Testament figures as foreshadowings of New Testament fulfilments. This was derived from Hebrews and Corinthians. This was amply reflected in contemporary art, see M. Anderson, The Imagery of British Churches (London, 1971), pp. 97-8. Cited in E. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 427. Duffy notes this typologic symbolism in the lay devotional works of the late middle ages.

⁹⁹ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. M6v.

Cranmer was even more explicit:

As the pure paschal lamb without spot signified Christ, the effusion of the lamb's blood signified the effusion of Christ's blood and the salvation of the children of Israel from temporal death by the lamb's blood signified our salvation from eternal death.

The mystery of our redemption and of our Saviour's death was expressed by many figures and speeches in the Old and New Testaments. Cranmer wrote:

This holy bread broken and the wine divided do represent unto us the death of Christ now past as the paschal lamb did represent the same yet to come.

The comparison was deliberate since it was placed after the words of consecration in Matthew 26, 'this is my body', and the words of I Corinthians 11 to 'show forth the death of Christ until he comes again'. Cranmer drew the conclusion:

In the old mystery and sacrament the lamb was not the Lord's very Passover, or passing by; so likewise in the new testament the bread and wine be not Christ's very body and blood, but they be figures.¹⁰⁰

Lancaster wrote virtually identical words to the same purpose in a work published in the same year, while Gilby had pre-empted both writers by arguing this two years earlier, in 1548.¹⁰¹ Hooper's conclusion was irresistible: the churches of the Old and New Testaments were:

Two in external signs and sacraments, one in effect to be saved in Christ, and one concerning the substance and effect of the sacraments.¹⁰²

Both sorts of sacrament, those which were isolated acts of divine favour and the sacraments that were part of the church's ritual life, had one thing in common which was that they were signs, and obeying the nature of signs, stood in the place of a reality that they themselves did not possess.¹⁰³ All Protestants denied the assertion made by Roman Catholics that the mass could be both the sign and the reality that

¹⁰⁰ T. Cranmer, *Defence*, in *PS I*. pp. 135, 136.

¹⁰¹ T. Lancaster, *The ryght and trew understa[n]dyng*, sig. B8v-C1r. A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. D1r.

¹⁰² J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, p. 127. See also T. Cranmer, *PS I*. p. 76.

¹⁰³ J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, pp. 194-6.

figure signified. As Cranmer argued:

We do daily to call sacraments and figures by the names of things that be signified by them, although they be not the same thing indeed.¹⁰⁴

There was no change in the substance of the Eucharistic elements; the words of consecration were commemorative, and by speaking them the priest did not, nor was he able, to transubstantiate the bread and wine into the corporal body and blood of Christ. Since God was not in the material Host, to adore it as if it were God was idolatry. The adoration was hated by all the Protestant polemicists who persistently based their charges of Catholic idolatry on their own assumption that the Host did not contain the real corporal presence of God. The adoration was one of the first casualties of mediaeval religion in the Edwardian formularies of faith, being specifically forbidden in the Order for Communion of March 1548 and the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.¹⁰⁵

It was Cranmer's disbelief in the real corporal presence in the mass that caused him to excise references both to the corporal presence, and the oral manducation of the body and blood in the elements, from the third edition of his 1548 catechism.¹⁰⁶ This doctrine was reiterated in the Answer, written in 1551.¹⁰⁷ As Gilby put it we eat by faith, 'the soule hath no teeth.'¹⁰⁸ The elements that the faithful received were not themselves the vehicles of the grace the sacraments gave. The priest caused no objective spiritual presence to come into the mass elements, not even a spiritual presence.

¹⁰⁴ T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I, p. 125. Also T. Lancaster, A ryght and trew understaf[n]dynge, sig. B8v.

¹⁰⁵ Two Liturgies, pp. 8 and 89. Ridley also sought to ban this practice in visitations of his diocese as bishop of London, in The Works of Nicholas Ridley, p. 319.

¹⁰⁶ D. Selwyn, 'A neglected edition of Cranmer's Catechism', in JTS, 15 (1964), pp. 76-90.

¹⁰⁷ T. Cranmer, Defence, p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. E1r.

The change, Cranmer wrote, was in the receivers themselves and not in the bread:

The miraculous working is not in the bread, but in them that duly eat the bread and drink that drink. For the marvellous work of God is in the feeding; and it is Christian people that be fed and not the bread.¹⁰⁹

In this sense the substance of the sacraments was, as Gilby wrote, not the elements but the receivers themselves.¹¹⁰ Once again this doctrine was reflected in the official formularies; the Eucharistic prayer in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, did not pray that the sacrament may be the body and blood of Christ, but that it may be to us the body and blood. The change of emphasis was deliberate, and Cranmer admitted as much in his Defence of 1550, citing the passage and explaining how it had been meant to be interpreted as the spiritual feeding in the heart and not a bodily feeding on the real corporal presence.¹¹¹

The communion of faith was the reality, the sacraments were outward signs of this.¹¹² This of course raised all sorts of questions about the purpose such figurative sacraments served in the church. Technically the faith that gave the sacraments meaning was independent of, and could precede the sacramental act.¹¹³ Strikingly Cranmer wrote that even if the sacraments had never been instituted those with faith would still have been able to eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood.¹¹⁴ Spiritual eating with faith was not restricted to when one received the sacramental elements.¹¹⁵ The faithful brought Christ to the Eucharistic rite in the heart.¹¹⁶ Cranmer argued the same in the debate of 1548.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. p. 34. See also p. 53. Defence, in PS I. pp. 41, 52. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. E8r. R. Crowley, Confutation, sig. B1v-2r. T. Lancaster, A ryght and trew understa[n]lynge, sig. E1v-3r.

¹¹⁰ A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. K7v.

¹¹¹ T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 271. Cited in A. Gasquet, and Bishop, Edward VI and the book of Common Prayer (London, 1926), p. 170, who rightly see this as one aspect of Cranmer's attempt to eradicate transubstantiative doctrine from the liturgy by stealth, because of the opposition of the conservative Catholic bishops such as Day of Chichester.

¹¹² J. Hooper, op. cit., pp. 199-200. For the same by Cranmer, see PS I. pp. 40, 41, 43.

¹¹³ T. Cranmer, Defence, pp. 40-41 43. R. Crowley, The Confutation of xiii articles wherunto N. Shaxton late bishop of Salisbury subscribed, sig. B4v-5r.

¹¹⁴ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. p. 27.

¹¹⁵ T. Cranmer, op. cit., pp. 336-9.

¹¹⁶ J. Hooper, Wynchester's booke, pp. 127-8, 154.

¹¹⁷ Certayne notes touchyng the disputations of the byshoppes in the last parliament [1548] [British Library Ms Royal 17 B xxxix.], rptd. in Background documents to liturgical revision 1547-1549, ed. C. Buchanan (Bramcote, 1983), pp. 16 and 32.

The sacraments that were part of the Covenant though were not 'bare' tokens, despite their lack of material similarity to that which they signified. Crowley protested that no one of sense had ever asserted the sacraments to be no more than mere signs. The sacrament gave life to our souls and reminded us of Christ and these:

Things are of great importance and value in the eies of ye spirituall me[m]bres of Christ.¹¹⁸

Hooper wrote that God's sacraments in the church were analogous to the seal of a king upon a document; deriving its worth not from the intrinsic material substance, but from its use in the author's cause. In the same way Cranmer justified the importance of figurative sacraments as their use in a holy cause. The sacraments were 'badges' and 'open signs' of loyalty made by God's people to the Covenant agreement. Cranmer called the sacraments, 'signs or tokens', but also 'a sure pledge of our salvation'.¹¹⁹ The holy mysteries were 'a sure pledge of his love and a continuing remembrance of the same', reiterated the liturgy.¹²⁰ The versifier Shepherd expressed this in his doggerel verse:

But leave your deuillish mass, and the communion to you take!
And then CHRIST will be with you, even for his promise sake.¹²¹

Christ was present in the sacraments of his church in the same way as he was in his word, when he worked mightily in the hearts of the hearers.¹²² The reformers descriptions of *uerbum dei* were of a vivificatory energy, that could destroy or cut down evil, or build life out of nothing. In Bale's Image the Word of God is portrayed according to the verbal image set down in Revelation, as a two edged sword emanating from the mouth of the Son of Man.¹²³ All these identifications were

¹¹⁸ R. Crowley, A Confutation, sig. D4r.

¹¹⁹ J. Hooper, Wynchester's booke, pp. 190-1. T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 11. An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, p. 43. J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, pp. 127, 8.

¹²⁰ The Book of Common Prayer (1549) in Two Liturgies, p. 80.

¹²¹ L. Shepherd, Bon Jon, and Mast Person [London, J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548?], rptd. in E. Arber, (ed.), An English Garner (Birmingham, 1882), vol. IV. p. 110.

¹²² T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 11

¹²³ J. Bale, The Image of Both Churches [S. Mierdman for J. Daye and W. Seres, c.1550], sig. C5r. STC 1298. For an identical use of the term see T. Lancaster, op. cit., sig. A7v.

drawn from the Old Testament tradition that identified the Word of God with the creative will and power of God himself. Therefore, when Hooper wrote that the sacrament 'preached' the word, he did not mean that the sacrament only taught by intellectual understanding.¹²⁴ Rather, in the same way as Cranmer, he was identifying the Word and the sacrament as ways the objective power of God was made manifest to man. Both the sacraments and God's Word were external means by which God applied grace through the Holy Ghost to the believer.¹²⁵ The process whereby this was applied through faith was somewhat obscure.

A major component of Cranmer's understanding of Eucharistic theology was derived from his extensive reading of the works of Augustine, to whom he was more indebted than to any other early church father.¹²⁶ An understanding of Augustine's sacramental theology may therefore help to explain some of the apparent ambiguities in Cranmer's thought that have been the occasions for so much dispute. Cranmer was eager to avoid the error of confusing the means by which Christ was preached, by the words of the mouth, by the sacraments or by the written word, with Christ himself. In writing this he was drawing on St Augustine.¹²⁷ The very fact that God worked on us by the sacramental signs and not by other signs, which were but outward 'shews' to the eye, gave the sacraments a special status. As Augustine wrote, all sacraments were signs but not all signs were sacraments.¹²⁸ The sacraments were similitudes of the body, and in a manner, the things that they signified. Cranmer was careful to qualify Augustine's words which appeared to imply transubstantiation with assertions of the spiritual presence. The sacrament was the bread and wine, the thing it signified

¹²⁴ R. Crowley, Confutation sig. B4v-5r. Also see Writings and Translations of Myles Coverdale, ed. G. Pearson (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1844), p. 420.

¹²⁵ This was also the sense in which Lancaster compared the Lord's Supper and the Word. T. Lancaster, A ryght and trew understa[n]dyng, sig. A7v, B1r, C8r.

¹²⁶ K. J. Walsh, 'Cranmer and the Fathers especially in the Defence', in Journal of Religious History, 11 (1980), p. 242.

¹²⁷ Cranmer, Defence, in PS I, p. 105. citing Augustine, de Trinitate, book 3 chapter 4 part 5. Hooper likewise claimed that grace was set forth by the sacraments and the word, but that these should not be confused; the gift of grace and the means by which it was given, were not the source of that grace, which was God the Father. If we confused these we risked idolatry, which was obviously what Hooper thought the mass had done. J. Hooper, Wynchester's booke, pp. 207-210.

¹²⁸ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I, p. 322.

was the body and blood. It was only the body though in the sense of a 'signifying mystery'.¹²⁹

Cranmer, Hooper and Gilby's writings show the same tension; asserting the figurative nature of the sacrament, but also vigorously arguing in realist language for the reality of sacraments as more than mere tokens.¹³⁰ In order to explain this seeming contradiction it is necessary to understand the Augustinian theology underlying it. The nature of the sacraments was in part a dialogue between God and man. Just as words were not merely signs but expressed a sympathy between speaker and listener, so the sacraments functioned as a medium expressing a sympathy between God and man. The way this sympathy affected man was even more subtle. The soul, asserted Augustine, was tripartite like the God who had created it, and was made up of the will, or Love, memory and understanding. By education in the one historical sacrifice of Christ, the human memory is moved to remember what the creator placed there, namely the image of God.¹³¹ The act of will which accepts the message and its significance, is purely involuntary; a person is prompted by God, through man's created sympathy with the creator, which is intrinsic to mankind's very existence. In the same way Cranmer wrote of the word and the sacraments as sensory catalysts that affected our senses to the intent that God could work on our hearts:

God worketh inwardly in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and confirmeth the same outwardly to our hearing by his Word, and to our other senses by eating and drinking of the sacramental bread and wine in his Holy Supper.¹³²

¹²⁹ T. Cranmer, An Answer unto a crafty cavillation, in PS I. pp. 225, 281, 282.

¹³⁰ J. Hooper, A Declaration, pp. 62, 71. T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. pp. 224, 276. Answer, pp. 212, 224. A. Gilby., An Answer, sig. D5v. T. Lancaster, A ryght and trew understa[n]dyng, sig. C1r.

¹³¹ P. Cramer, Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages c 200-c1150 (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 92-4, 106. The more clearly we understood what the sacrament signified, the more fruit it would bring to the faithful retainer. T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 38. On the importance of education to inform and enliven the faith of the receiver see, N. Ridley, The Works of Nicholas Ridley, p. 175. M. Coverdale, Writings and translations, p. 420. R. Crowley, A Confutacion, sig. B4v-5v.

¹³² T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. p. 43.

Likewise Hooper wrote that :

The mind is not only inspired by divine operations of God' s spirit that his sins be forgiven, but also by the objects represented unto the external senses.¹³³

Neither the word nor the sacrament suffered any permanent chemical change, their purpose being to 'invigorate the natural action of the soul.' The involuntary reaction of man's soul was prompted by the initiative not of man but of God:

Which purpose of the divine will, the heart of man receiveth, when it is drawn by the Father

In the same way that Christ's merits were 'delivered' to our souls by the Holy Spirit.¹³⁴ The way this was done showed the sacraments had to be more than commemorative tokens. The historical Passion was remembered in the performance of the sacramental rite, but also the significance of the Passion was brought to mind, its significance both to our present state, and of its effects on winning for us a future felicity in the reconciliation with God.¹³⁵ The sacramental rite encapsulated three realities syncretically into one act. It was this Augustinian theology of the reality of the sacraments that informed Cranmer's writing. Citing Augustine's *De doctrina Christiani* Cranmer wrote that the figurative command to eat the body and blood was:

a figurative speech signifying the participation of his Passion and the delectable remembrance to our benefit and profit that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us.¹³⁶

It is in the light of this that Cranmer described the true spiritual eating, as the way that our souls ate the very flesh and blood of Christ giving eternal life.¹³⁷ The sacramental tokens were to:

Put us in remembrance of his said death, and of the celestial feeding, nourishing, increasing, and of all the benefits which we have thereby; which

¹³³ J. Hooper, *Wynchester's booke*, p. 186. See also A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. E3v. The sacraments stirred us to faith by placing before us the commemorative figures of the passion.

¹³⁴ J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, pp. 206, 209.

¹³⁵ P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, pp. 90-92.

¹³⁶ T. Cranmer, *Defence*, in *PS I*. p. 212. Citing Augustine *De doctrina christiani*. Book 3 ch. 16.

¹³⁷ T. Cranmer, *An Answer unto a crafty cavillation*, in *PS I*. p. 148.

benefits through faith and the Holy Ghost are exhibited and given to all that receive worthily the said holy supper.¹³⁸

Similarly Hooper used the same Augustinian syncretism of times in describing the true spiritual eating. The true eating was to apprehend the Passion by faith, and then to apply Christ's merits to our souls, to be 'partaker' of the worthiness and deservings of Christ, and thereby to escape damnation, and to gain everlasting life.¹³⁹ In the sacramental act the believer momentarily was participating in that which he commemorated, lifted out of time.¹⁴⁰ The redemptive act and its achievement in fulfilling the Covenant were all present. In the receiver an alteration to a higher estate, nature and condition was being wrought by faith. Cranmer wrote:

Yet doth almighty God effectively work in them that duly receive his sacraments those divine and celestial operations which he hath promised, and which by the sacraments be signified.¹⁴¹

Without this the sacraments would indeed be merely tokens.¹⁴² In this way a man was sanctified, not by his own acts, but through the unitive power of Christ's sacrifice and its merits, being bound into a momentary union with God that he could only hope to achieve after his death.

The Lord's Supper was not a personal rite alone. It was instituted to be performed among the church community.¹⁴³ God was head of the church, and the congregation was the church's body. The sacramental figures preached the effective cause of our reconciliation to God, which was Christ's Passion, but also how the knowledge of this bound the congregation into a shared creed: 'One faith, one baptism, one Holy Spirit'.¹⁴⁴ The effect of God's love was properly shown by the love that the congregation bore to one another. The material nature of the bread and

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 328.

¹³⁹ J. Hooper, *Sixth sermon upon Jonas* [1550], in *Early Works*, p. 530.

¹⁴⁰ P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, p. 95. T. Cranmer, *PS I*, p. 138. The sacrament was intended to lift our hearts and minds from concentrating on the things which we see to things which we believed, from earth to Heaven. Also A. Gilby, *An Answer*, sig. D6r. The sacrament lifts our minds from the material to the inward and spiritual.

¹⁴¹ T. Cranmer, *An Answer unto a crafty cavillation*, in *PS I*, p. 323.

¹⁴² T. Cranmer, *An Answer unto a crafty cavillation*, in *PS I*, p. 148.

¹⁴³ R. Crowley, *A Confutation*, sig. A3r and 3v. Crowley saw the communal function of the eucharist as its most important part.

¹⁴⁴ Cranmer was citing Ephesians 4:6.

wine were representations of this bipartite tie of unity. This was derived from one of the most commonly used images among polemicists, the Cyprianic picture of the many parts gathered into one overall whole, in the rite of the Lord's Supper, the commemoration of his Passion. As the bread was one bread yet made of many grains, and the wine was one drink yet formed of many grapes, so many faithful Christians were unified into one spiritual body of Christ, and through him with each other.¹⁴⁵ The late mediaeval church had not neglected the communal aspects of the mass rite. But reformers objected that at many masses the congregation did not receive, but only looked at the elevated Host, and when they did receive it was only under one sacramental species. This reduced the symbolic didacticism of the rite. The whole congregation as the mystical body of Christ should partake of the Eucharist, not the priest alone. Bale expressed this belief by means of an unfunny pun on the private mass, said by a priest for the soul of a dead benefactor:

The name of "privation" added unto their mass clearly depriveth it of Christian communion where one man eateth up all and distributeth nothing.¹⁴⁶

Crowley meant the same when he called the mass 'dumb'. Denuded of any objective reality outside the faith of those who received, the mass meant nothing unless it preached to the faith of the church. The 1548 Order of The Communion, in the attempt to promote the communion, forbade elevation of the Host and commanded that the priest take only one sup and not drink up the whole chalice, leaving it upon the altar for the other communicants.¹⁴⁷ The 1549 Book of Common Prayer commanded the priest to inform his parishioners when communion would be conducted so that they could attend. A rubric to the communion service in the Second Book of Common Prayer forbade communion to take place if less than three

¹⁴⁵ Cranmer, *Defence*, in *PS I*. pp. 42-3. *An Answer unto a crafty cavillation*, in *PS I*. p. 195. N. Ridley, *The Works Of Nicholas Ridley*, pp. 174-175. T. Becon, *A potacion or drinking for this holy time of lent*, in *The Early Works*, p. 117. M. Coverdale, *Writings and translations*, p.420. Crowley, *A Confutation*, sig. A3r,v. J. Hooper, *Wynchester's booke*, p. 225. J. Bale, *The Epistle exhortatorie*, sig. C3v.

¹⁴⁶ J. Bale, *The first Examination of Anne Askew*, in *Select Works*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁷ *Two Liturgies*, p. 4.

people were present.¹⁴⁸ The sacrament was not a 'lookyng glasse' or a 'gazing stocke'. Its reality was not in an intrinsic apotropaic power but was to help the church's faith:

Jesu Christ hath ordeyned this holy sacrament for to moue us first unto a sure faith and trust in the free remysson of our synnes, so that he might the better so, cause us bothe to repent of our synful lyues, and to be bold also to follow his moste louynge commandementes.¹⁴⁹

Far from being a member of a minority radical faction of Zurichers, John Hooper's early works show his theology was very similar to the later writings of Cranmer on the Eucharistic question. Those modern scholars who have misinterpreted Cranmer and Hooper's theology have based their arguments on both writers' use of ambiguous terminology. This ambiguity was not completely the reformers' fault; it was an inherited weakness. Peter Martyr mourned the fact that many of the sayings of the early church Fathers were so vague that they seemed to infer a realist corporal presence in the sacrament; such comments were bolting holes for those who wished to maintain the mass.¹⁵⁰ Melancthon claimed that if only the church fathers had known what trouble their words were going to cause in later ages, they might have been more careful about what they had written.¹⁵¹ It was this very ambiguity that was at the heart of the discussion over precisely what authorities meant and who they supported, both in the biblical text, which was capable of various interpretations, and the writings of the early church fathers.

¹⁴⁸ *Two Liturgies*, p. 282.

¹⁴⁹ R. Bonner, *A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge*, sig. L6r and 6v.

¹⁵⁰ P. Martyr to J. Calvin, 8th March 1555, in G. McLelland and G. Duffield, (eds.), *The Life, Letters and Eucharistic writings of Peter Martyr* (Appledon, 1978), pp. 347-8.

¹⁵¹ Cited in R. Pogson, 'God's Law and Man's', in C. Cross, *et. al.* (eds.), *Law and Government*, pp. 67-8.

Popular polemic and Official Reform of the Mass: 1547-9

Cranmer's polemic concerning the Eucharist was the mature expression of a theological position that during 1547-9 became part of the official theology of the English church. In a succession of initiatives the transubstantial mass was excised from the English liturgy and replaced with a new Eucharistic rite.

Contemporaneously with this official process of reform, works of Protestant polemic designed to provoke public support for the government's actions were issuing from the presses. These works advocated the abolition of the mass and its replacement with the same Eucharistic theology as that expressed both in Cranmer's polemic and in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

Cranmer's Hostility to the mass was evident as early as November 1547 when he canvassed his colleagues on the episcopal bench through a series of questions concerning the efficacy of intercessory masses. The questions expressed a contempt for the oblation of the mass, a contempt stated explicitly in Cranmer's own answers to the questionnaire. Cranmer no longer believed that the mass was a sacrifice for the living and the dead but merely a 'representation' of the unique and all sufficient sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. The benefits of the mass could not be applied to anyone other than the receiver of the sacramental elements.¹⁵² This theological judgement underlay the Edwardian government's subsequent moves towards the reform of the Eucharistic rite, but it was a reform that they only dared enact by a series of careful stages.

The initial moves of Edward's government against the mass struck at the roots of intercessory masses by liquidating the Chantry foundations that had been set up to perpetuate the saying of masses for the dead. The Chantries act explicitly condemned the 'vain opinions of purgatory and masses sadisfactory' as doctrines that detracted from the 'very, true and perfect salvation' that had been achieved by the death of Christ.¹⁵³ But Cranmer obviously intended further change. On 10 December the

¹⁵² D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, pp. 379-80.

¹⁵³ Documents illustrative of English church history, eds. H. Gee and W. Hardy (London, 1896), p. 328.

House of Lords passed the act against revilers of the sacrament and for communion in both kinds. The significance of the act was the chance that it gave Cranmer to introduce alterations of his own devising into the mass ritual.¹⁵⁴ The enactment of the bill and its purpose was realised in the Order of Communion of 8 March 1548. The new order was a measured attack upon the doctrine of the real corporal presence. The sacramental elements were described as pledges that enabled a continual remembrance of Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross, by which those with a lively faith: 'spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood' (my emphasis).¹⁵⁵ However the order only dealt with that part of the mass when the laity received the bread and the wine; the canon of the mass including the consecration of the sacramental elements by the priest was left untouched. The Edwardian authorities did not feel confident enough in early 1548 to abolish the mass unilaterally. Nevertheless they were clearly contemplating further change in the Eucharistic rite even when the Order was published. The proclamation that prefaced the 1548 Order envisaged that the king and his council:

may be encouraged from time to time further to travail for the reformation and setting forth of such godly orders as may be most to God's glory.¹⁵⁶

There was an acknowledged theological agenda behind these godly intentions.

Edward's council admitted that further reform would be forthcoming, and that they knew what it should be:

We know both what by his Word is meet to be redressed and have an earnest mind [...] with all diligence and convenient speed to set forth the same [...] which we doubt not that our obedient and loving subjects will quietly and reverently tarry for.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ The Act contained two bills joined together; a bill against revilers of the sacrament and a bill for communion in both kinds to the laity. The conjoining of the two bills into one act was deliberately engineered so that the overall act would seem more palatable to conservative peers in the Lords, which would ease the passage of the act through Parliament. Edward's government obviously feared that the bill for Communion in Both kinds would not pass a vote in the Lords if it was entered as a separate act. Gasquet and Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 44-53.

¹⁵⁵ *The Order of Communion* [1548], in *Two Liturgies*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ *Two Liturgies*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Two Liturgies*, p. 2.

It was within this context, of a desire for further change, but apprehension about popular reaction to this change, that the Edwardian government allowed Protestant preachers and polemicists to mount a propaganda campaign against the mass during 1548. Despite the act against revilers of the blessed sacrament and a royal proclamation augmenting the act, passed on 27 December, preachers all over the country ignored the order and continued to speak against the sacrament.¹⁵⁸ Edward's government did little to stop them. Latimer, newly in favour, preached a sermon at the Shroudes in London, part of which dealt with the idolatry of the mass sacrifice.¹⁵⁹ He was obviously preaching with the prior approval of the government since he became court preacher shortly afterward. Nor was Latimer the only officially endorsed preacher preaching against the mass. Thomas Hancock used his preaching license from Archbishop Cranmer to pursue an itinerant career inveighing against the 'idol of the altar' until he was stopped by the mayor of Salisbury who charged Hancock with contravening the proclamation of 27 December 1547. Yet despite Hancock's obvious guilt and his conviction at the local quarter sessions, Somerset personally intervened to save Hancock, reversing the verdict and giving him a cure in Poole where Hancock continued to pursue his one man crusade against the mass.¹⁶⁰

The government's intention to introduce Eucharistic change was intimated by the proliferation during 1548 of polemical works and reprints which supported Cranmer's theological views on the Eucharist.¹⁶¹ Works by Mardeley, Veron, Frith

¹⁵⁸ Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London, p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ H. Latimer, Sermons, pp. 71, 73, 74.

¹⁶⁰ Hancock's account is related in Narratives of the Reformation, pp. 71-84. Also see Bindoff, vol. I, pp. 83-4.

¹⁶¹ A few examples are J. Mardeley, Here is a shorte resytal of certayne holy Doctoures whych proueth that the naturall body of Christ is not conteyned in the Sacramet of the Lordes supper but fygyratyuly [T. Raynalde, 1548?], STC 17318. J. Mardeley, A Declaration of thee power of Gods worde [T. Raynalde, 1548], STC 17317. J. Veron, Certayne Litel Treatises setforth by Jean Veron Senonoy [H. Powell, 1548], STC 24676. J. Veron, The V abhominable blasphenies cof[n]teined in the masse [H. Powell, 1548], STC 24679. R. Crowley, Confutation C. T. A spirituall purgation sent unto them that laboure of Luthers error touching the bodely presens of Christe in the sacrament [W. Hill for W. Syngleton, '1555'(1548)], STC 4312. J. Frith, A Christen sentence [1548]. R. Tracey, A brief and shorte declaration made whereby every chrysten man maye knowe what is a sacrament [R. Stoughton, 1548], STC 24162. J. Bale, A treatyse made by Johan Lambert unto kynge Henry the viii concernyng hys opynyon in the sacramet of the aultre [Wesel, 1548], STC 15180. R. Bonner, A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge [London, N. Hill, 1548]

and other writers agreed in stressing the uniqueness of Christ's historical sacrifice, which obviated the need for any further sacrifice in the mass.¹⁶² The sacramental elements were signs or pledges of this one sacrifice and were intended to serve both as badges of spiritual affiliation for the Covenant community and as visual catalyst to enliven the interior faith of each individual believer.¹⁶³ As a result the sacramental eating was spiritual and realised through faith not oral manducation.¹⁶⁴ This enabled the sacrament to be eaten by both the faithful of the Old Testament and the New.¹⁶⁵ The precise interaction between the visible rite and the spiritual partaking was explained by Mardeley using a simplified version of the same Augustinian receptionism as was used in Cranmer's own polemical justifications of the Lord's Supper.¹⁶⁶

Functioning in parallel with works which explained theological alternatives to the traditional Catholic mass, were cruder works of criticism and invective. At least one purpose of these works was to discredit the reputation gained within London, of the most articulate defenders of the mass, whether in print or by preaching, and thereby to reduce resistance to later anti-Catholic change. Primary among these seems to have been Stephen Gardiner. On 29 June 1548 Gardiner had given a public sermon at Whitehall before the king and a crowd from the city. The Duke of Somerset had hoped to elicit from Gardiner an endorsement of the religious settlement in England as it then stood, and the validity of the king's authority to enact further change if necessary. Somerset explicitly forbade Gardiner to make any mention of the mass in his sermon, which, he said significantly, was still a matter in controversy. In the event Gardiner subverted Somerset's intention and used the

¹⁶² J. Mardeley, Shorte resytal, sig. A3v. J. Veron, Litel Treatises, sig. G5r. R. Bonner, A treatyse, sig. C3v. J. Frith, A Christen sentence, pp. 428-9. J. Mardeley, A Declaration, sig. D2bv-3r.

¹⁶³ R. Bonner, A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge, sig. D8r-E1r. C. T., Spirituell purgation, sig. C5r-7r.

¹⁶⁴ H. Brinklow, Lamentacyon, pp. 100, 102. R. Bonner, A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge, sig. D8r-E1r. J. Frith, A Christen sentence, pp. 431-2. J. Mardeley, A declaration, sig. C4v-5r.

¹⁶⁵ C. T., Spirituell purgation, sig. C2r-v, H7v-8r. H. Brinklow, Lamentacyon, p. 48. R. Crowley, Confutacion, sig. C8r-v. R. Bonner, A treatyse of ye ryght honourynge, sig. B6r-8v. J. Frith, A Christen sentence, p. 431. J. Mardeley, A declaration, sig. C6r.

¹⁶⁶ J. Mardeley, Shorte resytal, sig. A3v.

sermon as a public forum in which to endorse the Catholic doctrine of the real presence before a large audience. As a result he was sent back to imprisonment in the Tower.¹⁶⁷ By the time that Luke Shepherd wrote his The Vpchering of the messe in 1548, Gardiner's sermon had become notorious among the London populace. The narrator of Shepherd's Vpchering claimed: 'That such a noyse is raysed, And thorowe England voyseed', as a result of the sermon, that he does not doubt that his readers will know who he is referring to, even without explicitly naming the man.¹⁶⁸ A series of pointed allusions follow to the content of Gardiner's late sermon and his incarceration in the Tower. Having implicitly identified Gardiner as the defender of the mass Shepherd then proceeded to mock this defence. The purity of the mass, which Shepherd said was asserted in Gardiner's discourse is juxtaposed with images of corruption and sexual innuendo:

To be of such perfection,
 As neadeth no correction,
 Nor yet to haue infection,
 For al hir late detection
 Nor worthy of suspicion,
 So clere is hir confection
 And purenes of complexion,
 By catholyke election
 She seems to take erection,
 Aboue the resurrection.¹⁶⁹

Gardiner's own devotion to the mass is degraded into a senseless addiction that Shepherd compares to the love that a drunkard bears for the Ale pot: 'He loueth hir wel God wot, There can no dronken sot, Loue more the good ale pot.'¹⁷⁰ Nor was this the only time that Shepherd lambasted the bishop of Winchester. In a succession of tracts Shepherd kept up a constant barrage of abuse against the prelate in his works of 1548. Gardiner was described with heavy irony as more learned than the apostles, and 'learned beyond the mark'. His learning was great but had served merely to

¹⁶⁷ The account is in J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. pp. 86-93, 109.

¹⁶⁸ L. Shepherd, The Vpchering of the messe, sig. A6r-v.

¹⁶⁹ L. Shepherd, The Vpchering of the messe, sig. A7r.

¹⁷⁰ L. Shepherd, The Vpchering of the messe, sig. A7v.

mislead him into error.¹⁷¹ In pathos another work of 1548, Shepherd showed the Pope lamenting the imprisonment of Stephen Gardiner, who was the champion of the Roman church.¹⁷² In A pore helpe Gardiner's learning is ridiculed by a series of associative rhymes which link his name with menial professions: 'He hath bene a pardoner, And also a gaddener, He hath bene a vitayler, A lordly hospitelar.'¹⁷³

But Gardiner was not the only English Catholic whose public defence of the mass had necessitated a polemical counter attack by Protestant writers. In 1548 Shepherd's fellow citizen in London, the Catholic polemicist Miles Hogarde, had published a verse work defending the traditional Catholic theology of the mass.¹⁷⁴ This immediately provoked a written refutation by the polemicist Robert Crowley. This refutation claimed that Hogarde's tract had landed Hogarde in trouble with the Privy Council as well.¹⁷⁵ In addition to these measures Shepherd made Hogarde the butt of his ironic humour in his work A pore help and warned his readers against Hogarde's 'darkely answere' in defence of the mass.¹⁷⁶ In Antipus, a short poem of one page, Shepherd turned his pen against William Leighton, the Catholic canon of Bonner's cathedral of St Paul's in London. Leighton was well known as a vocal defender of the mass on repeated occasions from the city pulpits.¹⁷⁷ In Antipus Shepherd associates Leighton's defence of the mass with a series of couplets each of which defends as truth a manifest lie. These inversions of the truth, argues Shepherd, are really no different to Leighton's approval of the inverted reasoning which justifies the real presence in the mass: 'If Leighton wyll neades his maker make, That these are true he can not forsake.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ L. Shepherd, A pore helpe, the buklar and defence of holy mother kirke [J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548?], sig. A7r-v. STC 130521.7. [Hereafter, A pore helpe]

¹⁷² L. Shepherd, Pathos, or an inward passion of the pope for the losse of hys daughter the masse [J. Daye and W. Seres, 1548?], sig. B2v. STC 19463. [Hereafter, Pathos]

¹⁷³ L. Shepherd, A pore helpe, sig. A7r.

¹⁷⁴ Hogarde lived in Pudding Lane in London, see J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VII, pp. 111, 757. The work that Hogarde published was called Ye Abuse of ye blessed sacrament of the autler and was rptd. in Crowley's verse confutation of 1548.

¹⁷⁵ R. Crowley, Confutacion, sig. C8v.

¹⁷⁶ L. Shepherd, A pore helpe, sig. A7r-v.

¹⁷⁷ Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London, pp. 56-7.

¹⁷⁸ L. Shepherd, Antipus, To heare of such things ye be not wont [single sheet fol. London, J. Day, 1548?], STC 683.

Yet the ultimate aim of all these personal attacks was the destruction of the mass rite itself. Anti-mass dialogues and ballads aimed at the destruction of popular devotion to the mass by imputing to the theology of the mass a series of blasphemous associations. Thus the polemicist William Punt wrote that if the mass was truly a sacrifice that could be offered up for sin then it must: 'crucifi Christ euerie day anew'.¹⁷⁹ This frightful act of deicide was compounded by the frequency with which the oblation of the mass was celebrated by its devotees:

Not content with crucifieng him once or twyse a day, or one day the but she [the mass] will nedes crucifi him V. c. times eueri dai.¹⁸⁰

This made the mass itself and the priests who celebrated it worse than the false apostle Judas, since Judas had only betrayed Christ to his death once, the mass did so repeatedly.¹⁸¹ Edmund Geste tried to heighten the sense of outrage at the implications of the mass oblation by asserting that since by nature every sacrifice was bloody the sacrifice of the mass must cause Christ to suffer anew the pains that he had endured at his crucifixion:

If Christ must be agayn offered to the contentation of syn, then muste he also be woefully payned and done to death agayn. For (as the sayd Paule sayth) there is no contentyng and sacrifice but it be bloody.¹⁸²

Similarly the verse ballads of Luke Shepherd argued that if Christ was truly present in the consecrated bread and wine then this necessarily implied that every time the consecrated Host was shut away in the pyx, Christ was locked up like a common criminal. Shepherd denied this could really be true and therefore

¹⁷⁹ W. Punt, A new Dialoge called the Endightement against mother messe [London, W. Hill and W. Seres, 1548], sig. B4r. STC 20500. [Hereafter W. Punt, A new Dialoge] For the dating of this work to December 1548, See J. N. King, English Reformation Literature, p. 288. Also see, E. Geste, A Treatyse againste the preuce Messe [1548], sig. C8v. [Hereafter E. Geste, Preuce Messe] The mass was an attempt to 'Moudre' Christ all over again. Also, Luke Shepherd, The Upchering of the messe, sig. A4r. The mass was an act of 'manslaughter'. L. Shepherd, A pore helpe, sig. A5r.

¹⁸⁰ W. Punt, A new Dialoge, sig. B4r. Also see, H. Brinklow, Lamentacyon, p. 104. W. Turner, A new dialogue wherin is conteyned an examinatio[n] of the masse, sig. C1r. J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 61.

¹⁸¹ W. Punt, A new Dialoge, sig. B4r.

¹⁸² E. Geste, Preuce Messe, sig. C8r.

the mass must be a lie:

Christ canot al day,
 be kept within a boxe
 Nor yet set in the stockes,
 Nor hidden like a fox,
 Nor prysoner undre lockes.¹⁸³

The intention of these verses was not merely to state the ridiculous aspect of such a situation, but also convey something of its deeply offensive nature. The doctrine of the real locative presence in the mass had allowed apotropaic uses of the Host that Shepherd depicted as risible; but such a use of the sacrament had also led to a trivialisation of its importance that was clearly irreligious. The sacrament was reputed as:

Good for hens and cockes,
 To kepe them from the fox,
 They saye she is good for the pox,
 And suche as haue sore dockes,
 And as for gaulde horse backes
 That chafed be with packes,
 With panyers and with sackes,
 No helpe they saye she lackes,
 And good for meselde Hogges,
 And also maungy dogges [...]
 She bringeth wether clere
 And seasonable yere
 And if it nede againe,
 They saye she bringeth raine.¹⁸⁴

Shepherd's aim regarding the real locative presence was the same as that of Punt and Geste concerning the sacrifice of the mass. Each polemicist was seeking to shock their readers into an admission that such doctrines could not be true because the inescapable implications of both posed a direct affront to the dignity of Christ. This was only one method used by popular polemic to denigrate the doctrine of the real presence.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ L. Shepherd, A pore helpe, sig. A5r. For the same charge by a more 'high brow' Protestant polemicist see T. Cranmer, Defence in PS I, p. 93.

¹⁸⁴ L. Shepherd, The Upchering of the Messe, sig. A4v-5r.

¹⁸⁵ Polemicists also argued that the impassibility of God and the corruptibility of the mass elements proved the real presence was a theological lie. See H. Brinklow, A Lamentacyon, pp. 100-101. Also Christ was in Heaven and could not be simultaneously in the mass. J. Frith, A Christen Sentence and True iudgement of the moste honorable sacrament of Christes body and blood [1548], rptd. in CWTM vol. 7. p. 429. W. Punt, A new Dialoge, sig. B6r. A. Gilby, An Answer, sig. N5v. J. Mardeley, A

The utilization of both popular and theological polemic in a propaganda war against the mass was most clearly shown in the government's use of both polemical forms during the Lord's Debate of December 1548. Like the polemical campaign of the previous summer and autumn the Debate was designed to discredit the doctrine of the real presence through a mixture of scholarly argument and blasphemous imputation. The evangelical party in the debate included Cranmer, whose comments were consistent with the theology set out in his Defence. Another evangelical, the principal secretary Sir Thomas Smith, argued for the same cause as Cranmer, yet his comments were hardly scholarly; they showed a marked similarity to the anti-mass rhetoric used in Shepherd's tracts. Smith's first comment upon the corporal presence in the Eucharist was an attempt to discredit the defenses of the real presence previously made by Tunstall and Heath:

Of the Corporall and Spirituall bodie a long processe declaring what inconvenience and howe loathsome things to heare, shulde arise, by description of the naturall bodie in the sacrament Ffor other [sic] Christe muste haue but a smale bodie in the sacrament or else his lenght and thinckes cannot be there whiche things declare that it can not be no true body, or els he must want his hed or legge or some part of him. And also eueri part of him muste be one as bigge as an other, the hande as moche as the hed, the nose as moche as the hole body with suche innumerable.¹⁸⁶

A later comment by Smith rhetorically played on offensive implications of the real locative presence, which would mean one was eating a man's body and blood.¹⁸⁷ The Debate reflected the strategy of the government during the previous summer and autumn in their use of the press. The fulfilment of this war of attrition against the conservatives was the First Book of Common Prayer. This new Liturgy received the royal assent on 14 March 1549, and came into use on 9 June in the same year. Contemporaries would have noticed that the new service excised the prayers for the

declaration of thee power of Gods worde, concernyng the holy supper of the Lord [...] Compyled M.D.XLVIII [T. Raynald, 1548], sig. C5r. STC 1717. J. Hooper, Declaration, pp. 62, 70, 117, Wynchesters booke, p. 157. T. Lancaster, A ryght and trew understandyng, sig. C2v-3r T. Cranmer, Defence, in PS I. pp. 52, 89, 95, 97.

¹⁸⁶ The Great Parliamentary Debate [1548], in Background documents, p. 16. For similar arguments see L. Shepherd, Jon Bon, p. 104. L. Shepherd, Pathose, sig. B1v. See also T. Cranmer, PS I. p. 233. J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p. 157. R. Crowley, A Confutacion, sig. C4r.

¹⁸⁷ Background documents, p. 25.

formal oblation by the priest that had been a central part of the the traditional mass service. Cranmer inserted a new prayer into the canon which stressed that Christ's unique historical sacrifice meant that the Eucharist was not an oblation:

Which of thy tender mercy didst give thy thine only son our saviour Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there (by his one oblation once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and sadisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. (my emphasis).¹⁸⁸

The Lord's Supper was a rite of remembrance where the receivers partook of the sacrament through faith not carnally:

Vouch safe to bless and sanctify these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the body and blood.' (my emphasis)¹⁸⁹

The same theology of receptionism informed the taking of the sacrament to the sick. The communicant was told that he did not need to receive the actual elements but could feed through faith, merely by seeing the sacrament.¹⁹⁰ As a result the sacramental elements contained no objective reality outside the faith of the receiver and the Book forbade the elevation of the chalice or the Host, the reservation of the Host within the pyx, or even the showing of the Host to the people during mass.¹⁹¹

Protestant polemic was used as a way of provoking the demand for a reform that Edward's government already fully intended to institute. As a result both preachers and Protestant writers were allowed virtually unfettered freedom to attack the mass from the pulpits and through the printing presses. The campaign that was mounted showed a surprising degree of coherence. Works appeared which argued the same theological case as that which Cranmer and the evangelicals were to maintain in the Lords' Debate in December 1548. Parellel to this was a flood of anti-mass ballads and tracts typified by the scurilous invective of Luke Shepherd and William Punt. These works were predominantly iconoclastic, yet they served an important role in

¹⁸⁸ Two Liturgies, p. 88.

¹⁸⁹ Two Liturgies, p. 88. Also see the prayer of address on p. 79.

¹⁹⁰ D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer, p. 414.

¹⁹¹ Two Liturgies, p. 89.

de-sanctifying the mass and subjecting its defenders to ridicule. The relationship of this tradition to the more sober Protestant tracts was clearly seen in the Lord's Debate of December 1548. This parliamentary discussion, which argued the evangelical case with both Cranmerian theology and anti-mass invective, was the final instalment in a propaganda battle that had been waged against the mass during the previous summer and autumn. The aims realised in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer were the same as the aims of many of the Protestant polemicists during 1548, and of Cranmer himself.

Chapter 6

Mid-Tudor Visions of Reform. Edwardian Polemicists' views of the state

Protestant polemicists believed that the stability of their society was reliant upon the maintenance of a divinely ordained system of 'due degree'. Every social group in this hierarchical system was united to its neighbour through links of service and stewardship to each other, and religious duty to God. A healthy society was one in which the inter-related virtues of social justice and true religion were observed by all groups; the neglect of either of these was a disaster that provoked divine wrath and caused social disintegration. In the second half of Edward's reign many Protestant writers became convinced that this was what was happening. The liquidation and appropriation of church property by the gentry was mirrored by the same class's selfish policies of enclosure, and rack renting.

This was a trend Protestants criticised repeatedly in a series of sermons and polemical tracts. Undoubtedly the motivations of this polemical reaction was a sincere belief that the government's rapacity was both unjust and harmful. Yet the reformers also found the policies to be deeply embarrassing to themselves. The asset stripping of the church had been justified in terms of theological reformation, and this made the Protestant reformers accomplices in the abuse of church wealth. Reform had furnished the tools with which the laity had attacked the fabric of the church. Yet the authority of the state had also allowed many constructive reforms to be achieved that the Protestants were justifiably proud of. The dilemma facing them was how to escape the association with magisterial rapacity, while maintaining their association with the reform allowed by the authority of the state.

The solution was to rediscover the argument used so effectively to distance themselves from the conservative reaction of Henry's VIII's last years. In the latter troubled years of the reign of Edward VI, many Protestant writers again began to withdraw their support from the regime, on this occasion out of distaste for the actions of the clique surrounding the Duke of Northumberland, which had seized

power on the fall of the revered Somerset. Once again Protestant writers began to employ the evil counsellor argument in an attempt to divide Edward's person from the actions of his advisors. The division was maintained after Edward's death, when the Protestant writers increasingly justified their own reform cause, by arguing that they and the king had had nothing to do with Northumberland's embezzlement of church wealth. Edward became a king beguiled by his counsellors, an innocent saint amidst a rabble of thieves.

This new articulation of the Protestant polemicists' alienation from the state had other uses also, since it provided a relatively straightforward explanation of the collapse of an age of reform in which they initially had placed such high hopes. In 1553 Edward died; the collapse of his health was relatively sudden, and gave those committed to the Protestant regime in England little time to prepare themselves for the reversal of fortune which swiftly followed. The Protestant writers at least had a theological explanation at hand: to them the corruption of the Northumberland regime was used to explain why God, seeing the betrayal of reform, had allowed the death of the Godly king and the succession of queen Mary. It was a pattern of thought which both preserved their integrity through the last troubled years of Edward's reign, and prepared the way for an acceptance of a renewed exile.

The Divine Order

All Edwardian polemicists shared the belief that state and government were intrinsically both needful and good. The power of the state enforced an order of law which curbed the natural inclinations of humanity to commit crimes. Thus even if a king was a tyrant, tyranny would ultimately be less oppressive than the anarchy of unlicensed lawlessness; the cumulative result of the sins of each individual given full rein. Order not only allowed one to live in peace, it was also conducive to the propagation of religion. The 1547 Homily on obedience remarked that kings and magistrates were the maintainers of a natural order and that to abolish these orders of government would abolish order itself. No man could safely hold possessions or

family in a society riven by lawlessness, in fact all men would lose 'soules, bodies, goods and comonweals.'¹ The health of the individual life and the state itself were interdependent. Robert Crowley, the Edwardian writer and clergyman, repeatedly stresses the duty of the individual in relation to the state in maintaining order. No subject could presume to judge a king a tyrant with a view to that king's deposition:

Yea thou mayst not grudge or repine
Against thy king in any wise,
Though thou should see plain with thine eien
That he were wicked past all sise
For it is God that appointeth
Kings and rulers over the route (sic).²

The individual will was subordinated to the common good. Even if a man's cause was just, this gave him no right to resist an oppressor; he must endure suffering and call upon God in prayer. Hopefully God would move the heart of the king to act on behalf of the petitioner. The king alone had the right to enforce order, because God had demanded that it be so. The limitation of the acts of punishment and social justice to the king and his officers was meant to help the maintenance of order in society, by limiting acts of violence to those enacted by the oligarchy in their judicial capacity.

The need to obey recognised offices of authority was founded upon a divinely ordained hierarchical order that formed the basis of all order in creation. The state itself was a microcosmic order that encapsulated, in its adherence to the hierarchical principle, the divine order of the macrocosm of creation. All polemicists, and Crowley in particular, described the whole of society according to the precepts of the Great Chain of Being.³ This stipulated that a hierarchical 'chain' of due degree stretched through all creation from God's throne above, to the lowest inanimate matter

¹ T. Cranmer, *An exhortation concerning good order and obedience to rulers and majestates* [1547] in *Homilies*, ed. R. B. Bond, p. 161. The source for this quote is traced by Bond to the pseudo-Demosthenes' *Oration against Aristogeiton*.

² R. Crowley, *The voice of the Last Trumpet, Blown Bi The Seventh Angel*, in *Select Works Of Robert Crowley*, ed. J. M. Cowper, *EETS*, 15, (1878), p. 68. [Hereafter, R. Crowley, *Select Works*]

³ This system is expounded in E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London, 1943), pp. 25-33. Enlarging on the unity of the commonweal in the image of the body politic see D. G. Hale, *The Body Politic: a Political Metaphor in English Renaissance Literature* (Paris, 1971), pp. 48-68. Also see the same ideology in R. Crowley, *An Information and petition of the poor Commons*, in *Select Works* pp. 168, 9.

below. Within each section of creation the hierarchical rule was observed; water ranked above earth, gold above brass and so forth. Each group was reliant upon that immediately beneath it and that immediately above it. For instance plants nourished animals, but were themselves in debt to water, earth and the action of the sun. Such an order of due degree was mirrored in the society of man. The king held primacy over other men because it was natural and had been part of God's purpose in creation; just as the lion or elephant had a natural primacy over sentient non-human mammals. Society functioned as inter-related social groups, like the groupings of nature, one class relying on the class below and above it in a pattern of co-operative help. It was argued that just as due degree kept order in creation, so properly observed it would prevent disorder in society. No state could do better than to observe the principles that God had laid down for the world. Thus when polemicists spoke of the state as a 'commonwealth' they did not intend equality but a vocational degree within the established order for every person. Crowley emphasises again and again that what God desired to see in society was the maintenance of clearly defined social groups. In the Voice of The Last Trumpet [1550] the beggar is told:

First walk in thy vocation,
And do not seek lot to change⁴

The same injunction is given to other degrees including servants, yeomen, merchants and the learned men.

Imbalance in the divine system

Problems in the state were the result of an imbalance in the hierarchy.⁵ Forestallers, rackrenters and enclosers are accused in Pleasure and pain of enriching themselves by impoverishing others. In a state where all was ordered in equilibrium the only way to rise was at the expense of another individual; wealth was not created but re-apportioned. Thus the rich man who got richer must have done so by taking

⁴ R. Crowley, The Voice of the Last Trumpet, in Select Works, p. 57. The same idea is expressed in T. Becon, The pollecy of Warre [1542] in Early Works, p. 235. Also J. Hooper, Declaration, p. 26.

⁵ R. Crowley, Ibid., pp. 63-66, 75, 90.

from someone else. For Crowley the enclosers of common land were the most notorious examples of this. They transgressed an order that was based on equity, upon God's will, which was that all men may have a place in the hierarchy. Such was the inflexible nature of this hierarchy that Crowley could seriously postulate it as a model for the whole of history. The nobility of Edwardian England were thus the direct heirs of the nobles of past civilisations, including the nobility of Babylonia.⁶ This order of the rich had a duty to those beneath them, according to Chain theory, and not to themselves alone; they were stewards of their wealth not owners. Reputedly, Latimer said just this to Henry VIII, telling him that though the king had gained possession of the abbeys, the proceeds derived from them were not his to dispose of as he wished. Abbeys were for the help of the poor and not the king's horses:

God teacheth what honour is decent for the king and for all other men according unto their vocations [...] to extort and take away the right of the poor is against the honour of the king.⁷

This is why Crowley could explain rebellion against enclosures not as peasant greed, but as a desire for equity, for the inalienable rights of the lower orders:

Among all nine there is not one,
That would have ought more than his own.⁸

The importance of such views was their conservatism and their subordination of the individual will to the authority of the king. As a result Crowley, though he would admonish the government on their errors, believed that all religious and social reform would come from above through the hierarchy of the system, and even in Elizabeth's reign he would refuse to secede from the established state church in England.⁹

Since the Great Chain of Being was ordered by God it was vital to keep his affections if one wanted to prosper in the world. The revelations of the abominations

⁶ R. Crowley, An informacion and petition of the poor commons, in Select Works, pp. 163-7.

⁷ H. Latimer, 'First Sermon before Edward the Sixth. 8 March 1549', in Sermons, pp. 93-4.

⁸ R. Crowley, Pleasure and pain. Heaven and Hell. remember these four and all will be well, in Select Works, p. 112.

⁹ J. W. Martin, Religious Radicals In Tudor England (London, 1988), p. 167.

of Catholic practice had been a mark of favour from God, his gift for order in the state, since true religion was believed to be the force which ensured the amity between each estate, a kind of social glue. But if true reform in religion were to prosper society would have to avoid what would alienate God's love. Reformation and prosperity relied on appeasing God in one's religious allegiances, and one's everyday acts. The crimes that were especially hateful to God were idolatry and disregarding the cries of the poor.¹⁰ Thus the reform that polemicists most desired would combine both social concern for the poor, and iconoclasm, and it may say much for the astuteness of Somerset that his policies included both these considerations.

It has been shown that Protestant writers approved of Somerset's religious policies in 1547-9. His reforms had been typified by iconoclastic legislation which both Crowley and Lever saw as vital to the eradication of Catholicism in England. In fact even after Somerset's death polemicists continued to write nostalgically of his virtues, and first among these was his fervour as an iconoclast. This laudatory attitude does not seem to have been prompted merely by the reaction of grateful clients to a patron. When Crowley described the death on the scaffold of his patron, Sir Ralph Fane, in the Epitome of Cronicles (1559) he gave it only cursory mention. By contrast Somerset is spoken of at some length and with marked admiration. The Lord Protector, wrote Robert Crowley had served:

The furtherance of God's word and true religion [...] to take all images out of churches for the avoiding of idolatry.¹¹

Somerset's enclosure commissions of 1548 and his intervention on behalf of poor men in legal cases must also have appealed to Robert Crowley's sense of what made a godly reformer, imposing the right measures from above. Crowley made it quite clear that he did not consider that the rebellions of 1549 had been caused by the

¹⁰ R. Crowley, The Way to Wealth, in Select Works, pp. 138-9.

¹¹ R. Crowley, Epitome, sig. Dddd3v-Eeee3v. Somerset was executed on 22 January 1552, Ralph Fane was hanged a month later, 22 February 1552. See John Stow, A Summarie of Englysh Chronicles [London, 1565], sig. Dd6v-Ee1v.

policies of the king or the Lord Protector, rather the unrest was the result of the refusal of landowners to implement these policies. It is not insignificant that the myth of Somerset as the 'good Duke' is mostly derived from the polemicists.¹²

The Protestant writers sought to convince the king of his place at the apex of reform, by suggesting biblical roles that cast him as defender of the poor and as an iconoclast. The use of Old Testament exemplars has already been noted, as has the ambiguity which lay at the heart of them. The constant fear of the polemicists was that the king would turn Catholic, as his father had done in 1539, and which the 1547 Act of Succession would allow him to do. Their advice was therefore based on a series of exemplars that not only defined but subjected royal power to the associations of the biblical authority from which they were drawn. Old Testament kings derived their authority from the subjection of their policies to the law of God. When the Hampshire papist told John Bale that Edward, when he knew better, would become a Catholic, Bale replied that Edward, like Josiah, was fully capable of understanding and sanctioning those religious reforms instituted during his minority. The use of a biblical example rather than a legal one was significant. However, towards the end of Edward's reign many of the polemicists began to reappraise this imagery, as disillusionment with the regime and the ways that it had failed to deliver reform became more intense.

Criticism of the Government

It was only natural that in a magisterial reformation, the rulers of the state would have a part in the success or failure of reform. The rapacity of Northumberland's financial management of the church gave the polemicists the scapegoat that they needed to explain the disappointing progress of reform. Nor was this completely unjustified. Looking for reform from above they came to believe that the government was sacrificing the needs of an evangelical church to the greed of its own members.

¹² J. N. King, English Reformation Literature, pp. 113-121.

The problem was that the aims of Protestant reform and state reform had diverged. The Protestant writers, always suspicious of the right that the state had claimed to form doctrine, also began to question the state's control of the church itself. Reformers aimed at purification of the English church, achieved first by iconoclasm and then by preaching.¹³ They accused the oligarchy of subordinating the cause of reform to financial greed. As Bucer wrote in 1550 there were too many benefices in the hands of the laity. A result was that curial livings were either packed with uneducated and unsuitable nominees of their lay patrons or the patrons took the tithes themselves and awarded a ridiculously low stipend to the incumbent. No preacher could afford to live on such stipends.¹⁴ This was the excuse that Thomas Becon pleaded when excusing his own pluralism and it may well have been the reason that George Joye held more than one living at the same time.¹⁵ However according to Latimer and Lever, when this was pointed out, the reaction of the gentry was to find curates elsewhere among the retired Chantry priests, rather than raise stipends.¹⁶ Not only did this allow a cheap incumbent to be found, it also saved the person concerned the payment of the Chantry priest's pension. Protestant reactions to hiring Catholic Chantry priests for service in the reformed church were predictably critical. Far from purifying the church, gentry were helping to preserve corruption within it: 'Thrusting them into benefices to poison the whole community.'¹⁷ One can understand the reformers' anger at their exclusion from posts on economic grounds in favour of Catholic candidates. It was a perversion of the reform purpose. Crowley put it into words:

Theyr own chyldren they did present,
 Theyr servents and theyr wicked kynne
 And put such bye as I had sent,
 To tell my people of theyr sinn.¹⁸

¹³ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 178, 200. H. Latimer, *Remains*, p. 243.

¹⁴ Letters of Bucer to Brenz, May 1550, and Bucer to Calvin, Whitsunday 1550, in *OL* II. pp. 545-9.

¹⁵ T. Becon, *Early Works*, p. 21. C. C. Butterworth and A. G. Chester, *George Joye*, p. 256.

¹⁶ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 123-4. T. Lever, *A Sermon preached the Third Sondag in Lent before the kynges Maiestie* [J. Daye and W. Seres, 1550], sig. C2v-3r. STC 15547. [Hereafter, *Sermon*]

¹⁷ T. Lever, *Sermon*, sig. E7r-8r, and B7r.

¹⁸ R. Crowley, *Pleasure and Pain*, in *Select Works*, p. 119.

But Crowley and his co-religionists were not angry on their own account. Sellers of benefices had cheated parishioners of their spiritual succour. Preaching was vital as a way of bringing the people to salvation. Latimer wrote that those who appropriated benefices, sold for gold souls that Christ had bought dearly with his blood.¹⁹ Crowley wrote that by cheating Reformation such men had cheated God himself. In Pleasure and Pain Crowley shows Christ judging the tithe farmers:

Ye robde, ye spoilde, ye bought, ye solde,
My flocke and me in every place,
You made my bloode viler than golde.
O wicked sort voyde of all grace.
avoid from me down into Hell.²⁰

The tithe farmers and their candidates for benefices, namely the Catholic Chantry priests, were described by both Crowley and Lever as false shepherds, 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' They were deceivers. Their heritage was not of Christ but of 'the Devil's ordinance'. Latimer added another level of meaning to the image when he wrote that the carnal gospellers, those who professed the gospel but committed un-Christian acts, were wolves disguised in sheepskins, but they often disguised themselves with satin, silk and velvet. It did not need much imagination to know that only gentry wolves could afford such clothes.

Lever was specific and told his listeners that these devilish gospellers could be seen dogging the king's house in their attempts to solicit preferments. In Lent 1550 he accused the courtiers personally of complicity in the irreligion of magisterial reform. If God were to trace the blood from his flock scattered by the wolves the trail would lead to the highest in the land:

It wyll leade hym euen streyght way into this court and into your houses,
where as these great theues which murther, spoyle and distroye the flockes of
Christ be receaved, kepte and mainteyned. For you maynteyne your
chapleynes to take pluralitites and your other servauntes mo[re] offices than
they can or will discharge.

¹⁹ H. Latimer, Sermons, p. 123.

²⁰ R. Crowley, Select Works, p. 114.

He then went on to call them very Judases who embezzle God's purse and pretend that it is for the sake of the poor:

And those in England that did pretend that besides the abolishing of superstition with the lands of the abbeyies, colleges and Chantries the king should be enriched, learning maintained and poverty relieved, and the commonwealth eased, and by this pretence purposely enriched themselves, setting abroad cloistered Papists to get their livings by giving them pensions [...] (or benefices) for the resignation of those pensions. These men's counsel seemed no better than Judas's counsel was.²¹

Lever then threw their religious reforms in their face. The reforms are hateful to God because of the court's corruption by simony, pluralism and enclosure:

What care I for all your Englishe Bibles, homilies and all your other books,. Set furthe no more godly seruyce to honor me with: I hate them all with my herte. Truth it is the fault is not in the thynges that be set furthe, but in you that have set them furthe. *manus enim vestri plene sunt sanguine*: for your hands are full of blood.²²

Blood was the symbol of guilt in the Old Testament, and its use to describe the guilt of the governmental oligarchy, plainly identified them as the corruptives of reform. It is quite obvious that this stain, so to speak, rose up to the very top of society. Northumberland had had lists compiled of all those Episopal sees whose revenues exceeded fifty pounds a year. Altogether this revenue constituted a sum half as big as the revenue that had been gained by the liquidation of monastic property in Henry's reign.²³ Any doubt that Northumberland's motives in causing these lists to be compiled were primarily those of financial greed seem to be allayed by the words of the duke himself. Writing to Cecil in October 1552, Northumberland claims that a new appointment to an ecclesiastical post will allow the liquidation of that post's assets:

If the Dean of Durham [Horne] is appointed Bishop with 1000 marks more than his deanery, the houses he now has in the city and country will serve honourably, and so may the king receive the castle and the other stately homes the Bishop had in the country.²⁴

²¹ T. Lever, *Sermon*, sig. A6r and C8r-v.

²² T. Lever, *Sermon*, sig. C1r.

²³ W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Threshold of Power*, pp. 377-378.

²⁴ SP 10/15. 35 in *CSPD*, pp. 270-1.

In this way the government took control of church property, and it replaced the bishop's revenues with a fixed stipend. This stipend would be below the value of existing revenues and because it was fixed would depreciate in real terms because of the rate of inflation. The revenues would be diverted into the pocket of the crown. According to Northumberland, if the suffragen bishop of Berwick was replaced:

The king may place godly ministers in these offices and receive 2000 pounds per year of the best lands in the north.²⁵

The plan went awry however for as Northumberland later told Cecil:

'The living of the suffragen is not above 200 marks a year, so my reckoning for elevating the king's charges will not hold; some other plan must be found.'²⁶

Recent historians have stressed that this was a necessary part of Northumberland's attempt to establish the stability in English government that Somerset's rule had lacked. By 1550 war, foreign debt and the coinage debasement had made the crown insolvent. A weakness of Somerset's rule had been its indifference to the conciliar principle and the Lord Protector's desire to centralise power in his own hands, thereby alienating those who considered they had a part to play in government. Northumberland did not mean to make these mistakes. He had told Cecil to raise revenue and the church was one of the sources. These revenues helped to pay the Crown's debts and reform the coinage.²⁷ They were also used to consolidate Northumberland's hold on government. The importance of the Earl of Shrewsbury as a magnate who controlled the north, along with the Earl of Derby, was proved when in 1550 Northumberland, fearing that Shrewsbury had allied with Somerset against him, used patronage to bind the magnate closer to Northumberland's own policies. Shrewsbury remained loyal in 1553 because he had been substantially

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ SP 10/15. 36 in CSPD, p. 271.

²⁷ D. Hoak, 'Rehabilitating the Duke of Northumberland; politics and political control, 1549-1553', in J. Loach and R. Tittler (eds.), The mid-Tudor polity (London, 1980). Also see J. Murphy, 'The Illusion of Decline: The Privy Chamber, 1547-1553', in D. Starkey (ed.), The English court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War (New York, 1987).

bribed with old church lands.²⁸ This was a method commonly used by Northumberland to maintain the allegiance of nobles to his control of the government. Whatever the political justification for such moves, this action was open to charges of manipulation of the church for personal ends. Lever accused those who appropriated bishops' lands of dividing the cloak of Christ like those who divided his clothing while he died upon the cross.²⁹ It was not without reason that in a sermon to the court during Lent 1553 John Knox was to compare Northumberland to Ahitophel, the false counsellor of King David, and Edward's household comptroller and Lord Treasurer to Sobna, the corrupt comptroller of the court of King Hezekiah.³⁰ Lever's sermons would have found plenty of people in the court to whom his criticisms were relevant. Such strictures initiated a new phase in polemical criticism.

Lever's use of the image of blood was highly significant. It reapplied a rhetoric of criticism that had traditionally been used by Protestant writers against their Catholic enemies to their Protestant patrons. The shedding of the blood of an innocent man by murder put the land under a blood guilt which had to be expiated, Deuteronomy 21:9. This expiation could only be wrought by the blood of the murderer, Numbers 35:33. Unavenged blood like that of Abel, cried out from the ground for justice, which placed a curse on the land and its inhabitants. God would avenge the wrong if no man did. The theology had a wide circulation among the polemicists. Many had used it during the late years of Henry's reign in order to explain why God allowed the godly to be persecuted by their enemies.³¹ They

²⁸ G. W. Bernard, The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility: A study of the fourth and fifth Earls of Shrewsbury (Hassocks: Harvester, 1985), pp. 64-73.

²⁹ T. Lever, A sermon preached at Poules crosse the xiii daye of december [J. Daye, 1551], sig. A5r-v. STC 15546. [Hereafter, Poules crosse].

³⁰ J. Knox, A Faithful Admonition [1554], in The Works of John Knox, ed. D. Laing (6 vols. Woodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1846-64), vol. III. pp. 276-7 and 280-3. Accounts dealing with Sobna, (More often rendered Shebna) are in 2 Kings 18: 18, 37, 2 Kings 19:2 Isaiah 22:15 and 36:3 and 37:2. Sobna was initially comptroller of king Hezekiah's household, and later degraded to scribe and secretary. Sir William Paulet had successively been made secretary, comptroller and Lord High Treasurer to Edward VI. This coincidence must have made the comparison seem very apt to Knox.

³¹ See chapter 3 above. For later uses of the ideology, T. Becon, Catechism, pp. 423-4. J. Hooper, A Godly protestation and confession [1550], in Later Works, p. 67. G. Joye, cited in S. Gardiner, A Declaration, sig. Bb1r. J. B., A brief and plaine declaration [1547], sig. B5v. The ideology enjoyed a widespread use among Protestant writers see, W. Tyndale, The Practice of Prelates, in Expositions and Notes, p. 244.

warned their Catholic persecutors that though they seemed to be persecuting the Protestants with impunity, divine retribution would assuredly overtake them. God's wrath would demand of all those that He had placed in authority an account in their own blood of all the innocent blood that was shed during their tenure of power. Joye had written that the Christian congregations were devoutly and vengefully praying for such judgement to be wreaked on Henry's England in 1545.³² But this blood did not have to be literal. Those who slayed the soul were more guilty than those who broke the body. If prelates failed to preach the Word of God, God would damn the ignorant when they died, but He would demand their blood, which would be on the hands of the bishops.³³

It had become common practice for Protestant polemicists to impute the curse of blood guilt to their Catholic enemies, and the exclusiveness of this application made it coterminous with the two-church divide. Thomas Lancaster wrote that in the false church was found, 'All the innocente blod that is shed upon earth from Abelles tyme until this daye.' (my emphasis)³⁴ It said much about the relationship between the Protestant polemicists and their patrons that they were willing to apply this mark of false-church status to their supposed Protestant co-religionists. Lever was not the only one to voice the idea. Recalling his tumultuous sermon of Lent 1553 John Knox explained the reasons for his brutal frankness:

In this meane tyme, [...] sum crymes wer so great manifest and haynous that the Earth culd not hyde the innocent blude; neither yit culd the Heavens behold without schame the craft, the deceit, the violence and oppression that universaillie wer wrocht; [...] But what answered hereupon? Alas! I am ashamed to rehearse it, universal contempt of all Godis admonitiounis.³⁵

But Knox was not the only preacher greeted with official indifference. On the first Sunday after Epiphany Bernard Gilpin preached to the court on the text of Luke 2:49, 'I must be about my father's business.' Gilpin used the text as an excuse to

³² G. Joye, *Exposicion*, sig. K5r-5v.

³³ J. Hooper, *Wynchesters booke*, p. 220.

³⁴ T. Lancaster, *A ryght and trew understa[n]dyng*, sig. E4v.

³⁵ J. Knox, *A godly letter sent to the Faythfull in London, Newcastle, Barwick and to all other within the realme off Englande that love the cominge of oure Lorde Jesus* [1554], *Works*, vol. III. p. 175.

criticise first papal abuses and then to tell his audience that these papal abuses in the church had been embraced and not reformed by the Protestant oligarchy, he even had some embarrassingly specific examples of this abuse of church property. However Gilpin's audience had obviously gained prior information about the good preacher's intended admonitions. The nobles of the court were about their own business elsewhere and so Gilpin was forced to preach his sermon against them to their empty seats.³⁶ The prayerful petitions for justice of the Henrician martyrs had been replaced by the prayers of the poor for justice against their rulers. In a work of 1551 Truth goads the king to action with this knowledge:

Thy people are,
So full of care,
That nowe to God they call
Vengeance therefore,
Is at thy dore,
Redy the to distroy
Onless thou wyll
Purge out the Ill
That doth thy flocke anoye.³⁷

Lever admitted that Edward's council had chased the romish fox out of England, but warned them to beware of the wolf of covetousness: 'He wyll do more harme in a week than the other fox dyd in a year.'³⁸ His warning was in vain and in his next sermon he compared their covetousness with papistry and found it wanting:

For papistry is not banished out of Englande by pure religion, but overrunne, suppressed and kepte under within this realme by covetouse ambition. Papistrye abused many thinges, but covetousnes hath destroyed more, papistry is superstition, covetouness is Idolatry. ³⁹

This was no empty charge. The rhetoric which polemicists had used to describe the relationship of idols with their patrons came to be identified with the relationship of the false reformer to his ill gotten gains. The closeness of the joining of the church and Christ had been described by St Paul as connubial; Christ was married to the church. The idolater replaced Christ with another love; he was joined to, and make a

³⁶ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. II. pt. 1 pp. 25-9.

³⁷ R. Crowley, *Philargyrie of greate Britayne or the fable of ye great gigant* (in verse) [R. Grafton, London, 1551], sig. D6v-7r. STC 6089.5.

³⁸ T. Lever, *Sermon*, sig. A5v.

³⁹ T. Lever, *Poules crosse*, sig. A3v.

partaker in, something else. This joining may be with the idolatrous image that he worshipped. With the greedy man it was a love for money, and the love he bore for this had the same corruptive effect on his soul as the idolatrous image did. Lever explained that the impropiators of benefices had been the Pope's 'paramors', with whom the Catholics had committed 'spirituall fornicacion'.⁴⁰ The Protestant magistracy were in the same state of sin, and Lever threatened them with the sentence of Phinehas. This Phinehas had killed an Israelite who had broken the covenant of Israel with God by joining himself to a Midianite woman.⁴¹ Ridley described the sins of the court as 'insatiable covetousness', 'carnality and voluptuousness, ambition and pride'. Ridley described the corruptive effect of covetousness upon the oligarchy using the same terms he used to describe idolatry and its cure. Ridley wrote that the sermons of the preachers, Bradford, Knox and Lever had been attempts 'to have purged them of that filthy matter which festered in their hearts' (my emphasis).⁴² In a way this new idolatry was even worse than the old, since it was not only irreligious but also destructive. The destruction of the monasteries had merely allowed one very greedy layman, to replace a number of less greedy monks. Where fifty gluttonous monks had lived, now only one member of the laity lived: 'your gredye guttes'.⁴³ Becon agreed, praising the monastic overseers:

They abhor the names of monks, friars, canons, nuns etc.; but their goods they greedily gripe. And yet where the cloisters kept hospitality, let out their farms at a reasonable price, nourished schools, brought up youth in good letters, they did none of all these things [...] so that they become in effect though not in name, very monks, canons, friars, priests.⁴⁴

It would be a mistake to see this as the polemicists' nostalgia, a sudden realisation of the attractions of a halcyon past of monasticism. Unfavourable comparisons between the magisterial reformers and monastic foundations, which

⁴⁰ T. Lever, *Poules crosse*, sig. E6r-7r.

⁴¹ The account is in Numbers 25: 6-15.

⁴² N. Ridley, *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, p. 59.

⁴³ T. Lever, *Poules crosse*, sig. D7v.

⁴⁴ T. Becon, *Catechism*, p. 435.

propaganda had labelled as sinks of all iniquity, was merely the foulest insult that polemicists could think of with which to describe their patrons.⁴⁵

Philargyrie of greate Britayne

All these threads of criticism were gathered into one in the great verse fable by Robert Crowley written in 1551, the Philargyrie of greate Britayne. This work put into vivid imagery the reaction of the reformers to state embezzlement. The gold eating giant of the title is served successively by Hypocrisy, the pseudonym for the Catholic Church, and then Philaute or self love, the pseudonym for the magisterial reformers. Philargyrie is the personification of greed. He is fed by the character Hypocrisy from the revenues of pilgrimages, shrines and church endowments. Philaute later feeds the same giant with church lands and the proceeds of rack renting and enclosure. His reward is to be given the old properties and preferments of Hypocrisy:

And all that be
Kynne unto thee,
be it never so small
I wyll promote
And set affloate,
cosens I wyll them call.⁴⁶

The title page of the book makes the message explicit. It shows a fur-clad Protestant magistrate sweeping gold into a sack using a Bible (see figure 3). This was a parody of the usual image of a magistrate carrying the symbols of office; a sword and a Bible. The message was obvious, the magistrates were misusing their authority. Worse than this they were abusing the seat of all authority, the truth of God, the Bible. This became what polemicists called the carnal gospeller. Magisterial reform

⁴⁵ For a similar instance of the same see Latimer's criticism of contemporary immorality with the religious discipline and reverence of the 'papists'. H. Latimer, Sermons, p. 230. Also H. Brinklow, Complaynt, pp. 10, 34. An interesting and as yet unexplored aspect of the same methodology is found in the work of John Bale. Bale praises Catholic men of letters for their respect to literature while criticising the wanton destruction of books by his Protestant contemporaries. J. Bale (ed.), The Laboryouse Journeye and serche of Johan Leyland, sig. F2r-3r. Alcuin's efforts to copy libraries of books and send them to the court of Charlemagne is described by Bale as a manifestation of a 'golden world'. This observation comes after the criticism that at least papists had allowed books to survive, the reformers destroyed whole libraries. Op. cit., sig. E6r.

⁴⁶ R. Crowley, Philargyrie, sig. C8v.

Philargyrie

of greate Britayne



i. Timothy. vi,
The rote of al mifchife þ euer dyd spring
Is careful Couetife, & gredy Gathering

Figure 3

The titlepage of Robert Crowley's, *Philargyrie of great Britayne* [or] *(the fable of ye greate gigant)* [R. Grafton for R. Crowley, 1550], STC 6089.5

that used religion to get rich was a perversion similar to the Catholic use of false doctrine to enrich their church; both were of a kind. The pretension to be of the gospel, the disguise, made the carnal gosseller as dangerous as the Catholic, and in a way even more obnoxious: 'The Hypocrites were ill but worse is selfe loue.'⁴⁷

Philaute's intention is to feed Philargyrie with money stripped from the church, and he inflames a similar greed in those who hear his message, though he cynically disguises this vice by wrapping it up in theological truth:

All you, quoth he,
 That do your own welth loue,
 For Gods owne sonne,
 Dyd byd me runn,
 Your enmie to remoue
 Hypocrisie
 Hath dealt falsely
 Wyth you all many a yere
 To gather pelfe
 And keep him selfe
 In ease and bealy chere. [...]
 Open your eies,
 If you will be wyse,
 And se to your owne gain[...]
 You need not passe
 for his vayn masse,
 his diryge and prayars long. [...]
 His [Hypopcrisy] prayers shall
 Helpe none at all
 Christes bloude hath paid the price.⁴⁸

Philargyrie thus revised the traditional Protestant image of Antichrist as the Roman Catholic regular masking theological evil with a disguise of public piety.⁴⁹ Antichrist had a new disguise, permitting the public destruction of the church and the poor under the cloak of theological truth. Such deception alienated God's affections as surely as Catholic error. Both were corrupting in the spiritual sense and because of this were disruptive in the social sphere. Philargyrie's oration at the beginning of the

⁴⁷ Ibid., sig. A2r.

⁴⁸ R. Crowley, *Philargyrie*, sig. D3r-D4r.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the Roman regular as a disguised form of Antichrist particularly in the plays of Bale see J. N. King, *English Reformation Literature*, p. 157. Also J. Bale, *Kynge Johan*.

fable was a subversion of the reciprocal nature of the Great Chain of Being:

Do your own will freely
 Catch what you can from every man,
 And hold it for your own
 Reape let me se
 And bryng to me
 That other men have sowne
 And when you find ought to your minde
 That force cannot bryng in
 Then beat your brayne
 About some trayne
 whereby you maye it wyne.⁵⁰

Biblical Criticism

It is obvious that by the time Lever gave his sermon in Lent 1550 he saw himself as the archetype of a prophet. It was not merely the use of the biblical image of blood guilt, pronounced by Old Testament prophets over their people. The conviction that biblical truth was as immutable as the God who had inspired it, meant that polemicists felt that they could quite legitimately apply biblical prophecies to Edwardian England. Crowley for instance, uses exactly the same words to describe England as the prophet Ezekiel had used to describe Israel centuries before, merely slotting the word England into the text in the place of Israel. God's truth was the same in all ages, and therefore his threats for sin and his reactions to it would be similarly unchanging. The prophet had a role as well defined as that of a king in the biblical accounts. This meant that there were specific examples on which he could model himself. Crowley's admonitions to his audience, the group he criticises, and the plagues that he says God will wreak upon the heads of the unrepentant, have their parallel almost exactly in Isaiah 3-5. Especially fitting to Crowley was Isaiah 5: 8-13 for it seemed to criticise with biblical authority the sixteenth-century practice of enclosure. Those who join 'field to field' and 'house to house' were hateful to God. Crowley was not alone in noticing the significance of this Biblical prophecy, for Hooper used Isaiah 5 to criticise rack renters and enclosers as well.⁵¹ The

⁵⁰ R. Crowley, op. cit., sig. A4r-v.

⁵¹ J. Hooper, Wynchesters booke, p.111.

embezzlement of church wealth by the rich also seem to have been covered in

Chapter 3 (Verses 14-16 in the Geneva Bible) which claimed that:

The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients (Prophets) of his people, and his princes thereto for you have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses [...] you beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor.

Repeatedly Crowley saw the attackers of church wealth as thieves of that which would have helped reform and the cause of poverty. Their punishment would be falling agricultural yields, deserted houses and finally foreign invasion and captivity (Isaiah 5: 9-10 and 26-30). Crowley used this threat in An informacion and Peticion of the poor commons, and A way to wealth.⁵² Both works outline roughly the same abuses as the Old Testament prophets had. A similar model is used in Jeremiah 5 where Judah is threatened with divine vengeance in the form of a foreign invasion, and crop failure because of their mistreatment of the poor. There seems to have been a continuous tradition of prophetic criticism in the Old Testament and the Protestant polemicists were using the same model because of the closeness of their adherence to the scriptural text. Certainly Knox identified himself with the prophetic tradition, most closely with the prophet Jeremiah.⁵³

Prophets had an especial task in relation to rulers regarding state religion. Latimer's biographer, Bernher, outlined the main attributes of a prophet. These included the duty to admonish all degrees of people, even and especially kings, without flattery or falsity, to further the Word of God and to preserve his church.⁵⁴ It helps to explain what may seem the downright rudeness of Protestant preachers to the court if it is realised that their accusations were not malicious but seen as a duty of their office. Such a man would receive the Holy Spirit that gave the power to prophecy and the ability to stand before kings and call for repentance. A recurrent comparison used by Crowley, Lever and Knox was to cast themselves in the role of

⁵² R. Crowley, A way to Wealth, in Select Works, pp. 149-50 and 161.

⁵³ R. Kyle, 'John Knox and Apocalyptic thought', SCJ, 15: 4 (1984), pp. 455 and 456.

⁵⁴ Dedicatory preface of the sermons by Augustine Bernher cited in A. G. Chester, Hugh Latimer, pp. 187-8.

Jonah, whose call for repentance had saved a heathen city. But the prophet was by definition an uncomfortable figure to those whom he accused. The emulation of the Hebrew prophet could alienate as well as reconcile his audience by his shaming of them. In Lent 1553 John Bradford, in an address to the court, slightly overdid it. Modelling himself on the prophet Jeremiah, Bradford prophesied against the court complete with mannerisms. After berating the council roundly he cried with a 'lamentable voice and weeping tears' moaning:

'judicium domini, judicium domini, the judgement of the Lord, the judgement of the Lord.'

The court, perhaps understandably, were rather crestfallen at this and exclaimed that they would:

'Hear no more of their sermons, they were indiscreet fellows and prating knaves.'⁵⁵

John Knox, never noted for his diplomacy, thought the sermon rather fine. Master Bradford 'had not spared the proudest' he wrote.⁵⁶ That was the mark of a true prophet, even if it was not the mark of a good politician.

But the fact that polemicists had found it necessary to carry the prophets' criticisms into the court showed that they considered that there was something seriously wrong with state reform. Protestants had become aware of Northumberland's plans to attack episcopal revenue. Prophets did not keep quiet about such things even before kings. Evangelicals began to refuse to co-operate with Northumberland. Knox refused Northumberland's offer of the see of Rochester, turning on the Lord President of the council and questioning the sincerity of his religion and criticising his policies.⁵⁷ Dean Horne gave a similar reaction when offered the bishopric of Durham. Northumberland had planned to shear this see of many of its revenue yielding properties for the crown's benefit, and Tunstall had been

⁵⁵ J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. pp. 177-8.

⁵⁶ J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. p. 176.

⁵⁷ Northumberland related his meeting with Knox when the reformer questioned his religion, in a letter to Cecil, SP10/15 no. 66 in *CSPD*, pp. 279-80.

deprived on a trumped up charge with just this purpose in mind. The person who accepted the post would have to agree to an alienation of church lands and properties, which Horne was unwilling to do. One can guess what he accused Northumberland of by the letter which Northumberland wrote to Cecil describing the interview:

If he [Horne] may not have every thing after his own will he will refuse it [...] his conceit condemning every man's doing but his own.⁵⁸

Horne, like Knox before him, was using the role of the prophet to criticise his patrons, and thereby to distance himself from their actions.

Kings, Prophets and evil counsellors

The role of the prophet had obvious advantages for Protestants during Edward VI's reign. By publicly denouncing those they considered to be guilty of ecclesiastical theft, the Protestants disassociated themselves from complicity with that theft. John Rogers cited this as a defence of the Edwardian reformers when Gardiner accused them of attacking the church:

Secondly my Lord whereas ye yesterday so highly dispraised the government of them that ruled in innocent king Edward's days, it may please your Lordship to understand, that we poor preachers whom ye so evil allow did most boldly and plainly rebuke their evil governance in many things, specially their covetousness and neglect and small regard to live after the gospel[...] this all London testify with us.⁵⁹

The prophet could also be presented as one persecuted for his championing of the truth, which further disassociated the Protestants from their unfortunate patrons. The last Lenten sermons at Edward's court in 1553 showed this division clearly. Grindel, Lever, Bradford and other preachers threatened the court with divine vengeance because of their hatred of God's Word and their slander of his preachers. The king's servants and household officers:

neither eschameit nor feirit to raille aganis Godis trew Word and aganis the precheris of the same.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ SP 10/15. 62, and SP 10/18. 1 in *CSPD*, pp. 278, 286

⁵⁹ J. Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, vol. VI. p. 605.

⁶⁰ J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. p. 176.

But the disassociation was not complete, nor did Protestant preachers and polemicists wish it to be so. Edward's authority had enabled the reformers to make concrete achievements despite the obvious material destruction. In the effort to retain the endorsement of regal authority for their reforms, while disapproving of the embezzlement of church possessions by the state, polemicists separated Edward from the actions of his counsellors. Edward was made the champion of future reform, when in his majority by an act of royal fiat he would put right what his counsellors had done. Thomas Lever lamenting the subversion of reform by financial greed, voiced a hope that God's judgement would be made manifest upon the offenders through the person of the king:

God shall commaunde hys faythfull seruaunte Moyses, the kynges majesty, to take and hange all the rulers of the people that haue wyttyngly sufferd these whoryshe Madyanytes, these popish abuses.⁶¹

Crowley's Philargyrie ended with the resolution of all problems and the wiping out of evils in the state through the king's action as God's instrument. Truth, the symbol for the gospel, informs the king of his duty to reassert equity in his kingdom, the king rises up and drives Philargyrie from his land, and his speech is a triumphant reassertion of the divine order of Great Chain reciprocity:

To God aloud he cried
 Lord God quoth he
 thou hast chosen me
 Over thy flock to reign,
 Make me of might,
 All wrongs to right
 And make all well again.⁶²

Latimer lamented the covetousness of the realm but took heart from the fact that 'the king's majesty when he cometh to age will see a redress of such things so out of frame.' The appeal was repeated the next year in Latimer's final sermon before the king when he told Northumberland and the council to rule wisely in the young king's minority, and called upon Edward himself to begin to exert his authority in the

⁶¹ T. Lever, Poules crosse, sig. E6.

⁶² R. Crowley, Philargyrie, sig. D8r.

council on behalf of the poor.⁶³ These attempts to disassociate Edward's person from the evils committed during his reign were essentially a reapplication of the same evil counsellor argument that polemicists had used during the Henrician exile.⁶⁴ Early in Edward's reign it had served the interests of many Protestants to assert that Edward knew about and endorsed the iconoclastic reforms that were enacted through his authority. This had been one purpose of the Josiah exemplar.⁶⁵ By the later years of Edward's reign the financial exploitation of the church meant Protestant writers were faced with the opposite problem; how to maintain the appearance of the king's innocence of reforms committed in his name. This necessitated the propagation of a myth of Edward as an innocent youth, uncorrupted by the cupidity so evident in those around him. John Knox writing to his co-religionists in England in 1554 praised Edward's piety, only to emphasise the king's political impotence. Edward had been manipulated by his evil counsellors:

We had ane king of sa godlie dispositioun towards vertew and the treuth of God that none from the begynning passed him; (and to my knowlege none of his yeiris did ever matche him in that behalf, gif he mycht haif bene lord of his awn will).⁶⁶

Nor was this the first time that Knox had argued this. He recalled his sermon to Edward's court made in 1553, where he had preached on the text: 'He who has broken bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.' Knox expounded this verse as a commentary on the state of most royal courts, and Edward's in particular:

Commonly it was sene that the most godly princes hadde officers and chief counsellors most ungodlie, conjured enemies to goddis trew religion and enemies to their princes. Not that their wickedness and ungodlynesse was spedily perceyved and espied out of the same princes.⁶⁷

Knox then went on to make pointed allusions to Northumberland and other officials

⁶³ H. Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 102, 268, 273-5. Also T. Lever, *Poules crosse*, sig. E6v. T. Lever, *Sermon*, sig. C5r-v.

⁶⁴ See chapter 2 above.

⁶⁵ See chapter 4 above.

⁶⁶ J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. p. 175.

⁶⁷ J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. pp. 276-7, 281.

in Edward's court. Though these counsellors were culpable, Edward was not:

What wonder is it then that a younge and innocent Kinge be deceived by craftye, covetouse, wycked and ungodlie counselours?⁶⁸

Knox was not alone in emphasising Edward's innocency and holiness, as a way to disassociate him from bad reforms. William Baldwin was to make Edward into a Christ-like figure whose death helped to expiate the divine punishment that England had deserved from God for their indifference to his Word. God the Father tells Christ:

Yet for thy sake I wyll not stroye them quite
but for to try them once at thy bequest
I wyll but touch their king and warne the rest,
To amend theyr lives which if they do delay
I will take theyr king, their comfort life and stay.⁶⁹

Edward's death was in the nature of a martyrdom since the king himself was guiltless: 'Thus dyed this king, This giltless blessed childe, In body and soule a vyrgyn undefyled.'⁷⁰ But those around him were not and it was on their account that he had died. Edward's martyrdom was described by Terentianus in a letter to John ab Ulmis in November 1553. His account of Edward's death, like that of Somerset's by John Foxe, is wreathed in hagiographic details that likened Edward's death to that of Christ:

The death and the other evils that now oppress England were apparently portended by a storm to which I do not remember any equal: it was accompanied with the most extreme darkness, most violent wind, innumerable flashes of lightening, terrible claps of thunder and an immense body of water.⁷¹

By this time the sanctification of Edward was serving at least two purposes. It continued to act as a justification of Protestant reformers who identified themselves and their cause with the guiltless Edward and not with his cupiditous counsellors.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 281-2.

⁶⁹ W. Baldwin, *The Funerallles of King Edward the sixt. Wherin arer declared the causes of his death* [T. Marsh, 1560], sig. A4r. STC 1243.

⁷⁰ W. Baldwin, *Funerallles*, sig. B4v.

⁷¹ *OL* I. p. 365. Compare this account with that of Somerset's death described in chapter 4 above. Also see the descriptions of Christ's death in Matthew 27:45, Luke 23:44-5, Mark 15:33.

However, it also furnished an explanation of the providential purposes that had allowed the English king to die and with him the cause of reform in England. Edward had been too good for England. His death Knox explained, re-appraising the Josiah exemplar, had been providential. Just as Josiah had died so had Edward; in both cases it had been an act of divine mercy that spared each king the pain of experiencing the punishment that God had determined to inflict upon their ungodly kingdoms.⁷² For sixteenth-century Protestants, this punishment was queen Mary, sent by God because of their sins. Robert Crowley was more specific about why God had allowed Mary to succeed as queen:

by that woman who they would [have] shouldered from her right, he punished their insatiable gathering of treasure under his good Kyng. For so he turned the hertes of the people to her, and against them that she overcame them without bloodshed.⁷³

To Protestants it must have seemed an ironic and unpleasant twist of history that God should enact justice upon the evils of Protestant magistrates through a Roman Catholic queen.⁷⁴ The only way to resolve this apparent paradox was to argue that God's anger had been caused not by the successes of Edward's reforms, but by their later betrayal. The rationalisations of Protestant persecution and exile under Mary, thus naturally followed from the polemicists' alienation from the state in the later years of Edward VI's reign. This alienation had been provoked by the dilemma posed by the polemicists' alliance with the state. Protestants needed the authority of the state, especially that of the king, to legitimise and enforce their programme of reform over a population that was still staunchly Catholic. Yet this alliance made Protestants accomplices in a state reformation that had begun to subvert the aims of Protestant reformation. Polemicists had defined Edward's role as that of Josiah. While this had justified the destruction of the apparatus of Catholic religion in

⁷² J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. p. 178.

⁷³ R. Crowley, *Epitome*, sig. Eeee4r-v.

⁷⁴ There was also a certain irony in the fact that it was Mary who during her reign reformed the church and reversed the Edwardian policy of ecclesiastical asset stripping. See J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*, pp. 131-5.

England, the polemicists' political allies had used it as a means by which to embezzle the fabric of the mediaeval church. The polemicists' indignation at this betrayal of reform was only matched by their embarrassment at being associated with it. The polemicists' vocation as prophets and the myth of Edward as the stainless youth were attempts to reconcile the need for state endorsement of reform with the state's abuse of these reform objectives.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

At the centre of the polemicists' experience of reform during 1538-1553 was the Supremacy. It has been the object of this study to trace the ways in which Protestant writers during this period adapted to the problems and opportunities that the Supremacy offered to the cause of Protestant reform in England. Protestants realised from a very early stage that there were substantial gains to be made from a use of the Supremacy in their own religious cause. By associating their dissent from Rome with the defence of the Supremacy, Protestant polemicists legitimised their own religious dissent by linking it to the regal authority. However the Supremacy also allowed Protestants to impose Protestant religious reform upon their Catholic countrymen, despite the Catholic sympathies of these people. The same was true during Edward's reign. The nature of the religious changes carried out during Edward's reign were derived from the theologies of Protestant writers and clerics, but the implementation of reform was dependent upon the Protestants' alliance with Edward's crown. The benefits were manifest even within so short a period as the six years of Edward's reign. The systematic destruction of the fabric of traditional religion was relentlessly carried out with the intention of preventing a return to that religious system ever again. The thoroughness of the programme was made possible by the active involvement of the government. The motivating force behind this programme was the biblical ideology articulated by Protestant writers. The closeness of the relationship between the secular powers and the polemicists' biblical ideology has been treated at some length. A similar proximity aided the other achievement of Edwardian reform, reform of the liturgy. The involvement of the Edwardian government in this reform programme was shown during the 1548 Lords' Debate when Somerset, Northumberland and Smith allied with the evangelicals in arguing for the Eucharistic settlement that eventually was to be at the heart of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

Yet the Supremacy held as many dangers for Protestant reform in England as it offered opportunities. The unaccountability of the Supremacy could be exerted with equal force against Protestant sensibilities. In 1539 Henry VIII used his new authority to reverse the doctrinal direction of English reform and reimpose a unitary Catholic doctrine over the whole of England. Towards the end of Edward's reign the polemicists became convinced that the Supremacy was being used to subvert many of the positive aims of reform for the sake of private financial gain. The marriage between polemicists and mid-Tudor government was thus one of convenience and it was liable to collapse at short notice. The instability of the years 1538-1553 made Protestant writers slightly unsure about how they should regard royal authority. Aware that they needed its help to achieve reform, they were justifiably suspicious of its ulterior motives. In this context the youth of Edward VI proved to be polemical godsend. Towards the end of the reign when polemicists became estranged from the Edwardian state, they managed to divide Edward's authority as king from the effects of his evil counsellors. The only way that they could achieve this was by arguing that he was too young to have been an accomplice in the false reform of his advisors. This allowed Protestants to continue to claim the authority of Edward's Supremacy, while disassociating themselves from many of its more unpleasant implications. It is largely this polemical sleight of hand that allowed Edward's reputation to descend into Protestant history unsullied, while Henry VIII's reputation among evangelicals was darkened as soon as he was dead. Around 1558 Anthony Gilby graphically described Henry VIII's reformation of religion as similar to a pig looking for truffles. No doubt the reforms did much damage to false religion, but they also harmed the good, since the reforming aim was greed and not religious truth.¹ Edward by contrast became a 'godly imp' and a personification, both of the purity of sincere reform and its death in 1553.²

¹ A. Gilby, *Admonition to England and Scotland* [1558], rptd. in J. Knox, *Works*, vol. III. p. 563.

² See chapter 6 above.

During their discussion of the issues of obedience and authority raised by the Supremacy the Protestant polemicists were constructing an identity for the Protestant community. During the Henrician exile Protestant writers defined the separate identity of the true Christian church (i.e. themselves) from the official church in England. The articulation of this identity of dissent was achieved primarily through the specific use of biblical imagery and a general use of the Bible overall. Polemicists encouraged co-religionists who read their books to interpret the religious and political issues of the contemporary world through the images of scripture. These images were subjected to the diametricities that were part of a two-church theology, and then applied as descriptive labels to the contemporary world. The obvious short-term effect of this was to simplify the decisions that were faced by Protestants in England in the 1540s. The decision as to whether to be a part of Henry VIII's church was resolvable by the simple question: was the king's church part of the true church of Christ or the false church of Antichrist? Polemicists prompted the correct response by using biblical images to inform their readers that Henry VIII's church was antichristian and that they should keep themselves separate from it. By justifying their dissent through biblical and historical precedents polemicists made the situation of the Henrician evangelical dissident a constant part of the Protestants' self identity. The godly had always been persecuted by the world, and always would be as long as they remained true Christians. Yet the long-term effects were to replace the visual religion of late mediaeval Catholicism with a religious culture that was expressed primarily through the spoken and written word.

The hostility of Protestant reform to traditional religion was partially explainable as the meeting of two religious systems: that of a communal religion that was articulated through sensory aids to worship, and religion based on the individual apprehension of God through the Word. Protestant polemicists were not wholly antagonistic towards visible aids to worship, but they sought to subject these to the Word of God itself. In 1542 Thomas Becon described the house of a godly believer in which biblical quotations were pinned upon various architectural features and

household objects in the house, things that in some way reflected the meaning of the text itself.³ As with the application of biblical nomenclature to contemporary personalities, Protestants were being encouraged by polemicists to perceive the visual world through the written word of the Bible. Yet Protestant polemicists expected this new biblical culture to be both associative and intellectual. The constructive reform of the Eucharistic rite in England in 1548-9 necessarily forced the polemicists to use theology as well as biblical images. The reform of the Eucharist required a careful reconstruction of the mass rite, not merely its destruction. The value of polemic in this context is the insight that it gives into the nature of the reform itself. Cranmer's works of religious controversy clarify the theological reform agenda that underlay liturgical reform in Edward's England. Cranmer's agenda was part of a wider consensus among other writers of Protestant polemic. It seems likely that it was this theological consensus that fuelled the concerted propaganda campaign during 1548 in favour of Eucharistic change. It was part of a deliberate strategy to prepare public opinion for the theology set out in the Prayer Book of 1549.

It was this biblically-defined community that survived the failure of the political reformation under Edward VI. When Edward died in 1553, his political authority passed to his sister who was a Roman Catholic. Mary used this authority to reverse Edward's political reform of religion and proceeded to attempt to destroy dissent. The separate identity that had served the Protestant community during the Henrician exile was now re-deployed by those Protestants who faced persecution. Languishing in prison the reforming bishop of London, Nicholas Ridley, appealed to the texts of Daniel 11 and Revelation 12 to encourage the Protestant community, just as Bale and Joye had done a decade before.⁴ His intention was much the same as that of the Henrician polemicists. The godly community must not accommodate with Antichrist, nor must it dissemble its religion, but be a testament to the faith by

³ For instance verses on the door read 'I am the door of life, if any man entereth in he shall be safe, and shall go in and out and shall find pasture.' in T. Becon, *A Christmas Banquet* [1542], rptd. in T. Becon, *Early Works*, pp. 63-6.

⁴ N. Ridley, *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, pp. 76-7.

willingly embracing persecution.⁵ Only in this way could the church's identity as a doctrinal body be kept pure and shown to the world. John Rogers likewise used the theology of the two churches to encourage himself to maintain his identity as a Protestant in the face of persecution that urged him to adopt a contrary course. He told Gardiner that he would never accommodate with the Marian church, because it was the church of Antichrist.⁶ Nor was he alone; many of the Marian martyrs expressed a sense of their own identity using the same terms.⁷ The ecclesiology of the Henrician exile thus became a way of maintaining the identity of the Protestant community under persecution. The division of this community from the official church was surprisingly resilient to change. Not until the 1590s were Protestants willing to identify Christ's church with the monarch's institutional church in England.⁸ When John Foxe came to commemorate the example of these martyrs he readily built upon the biblical and historical definition of the true-church community that had been defined during the Henrician exile, most notably on the work of John Bale. The Acts and monuments repeated the claim that the true church was by nature a persecuted minority, and the false church was by nature a persecutor. This two-church division became a constant feature of English political life in the succeeding generations, a bequest for which the Protestant polemicists were to blame.⁹ The influence of Foxe's work meant that the polemical definition of the Henrician exiles was perpetuated for centuries to come.¹⁰ During this time the polemicists' definition of the church and its emphasis on a biblical culture gradually became part of the religious identity of the English nation as a whole through the success of Protestantism in the institutional

⁵ N. Ridley, The Works of Nicholas Ridley, pp. 53, 76-7.

⁶ J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. pp. 597, 599.

⁷ For examples of this see J. Foxe, Acts and monuments, vol. VI. pp. 597, 604-5, 614, 618, and vol. VII. pp. 83, 314, 332, 345-6, 348, 357, 360, 388.

⁸ R. Bauckham, Tudor Apocalypse (Abingdon, 1978), p. 236.

⁹ See C. Hill, Antichrist in seventeenth-century England (London, 1990). For a study of the tradition of apocalyptic see R. Bauckham, op. cit., and K. Firth, The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645 (Oxford, 1979).

¹⁰ An instance of this was shown by the nineteenth-century editor of Foxe's history who asserted that the work proved that Catholics were by nature persecutors and therefore Protestants in England should beware of them. Though nineteenth-century Catholics appeared civilised they were only waiting for a chance to subvert England and sell her back to Rome and persecution. J. Foxe, Acts and monuments vol. I. p. 5.

church during the reign of Elizabeth. In this way the polemical experiments of 1538-1553 became a formative influence on the identity of English Protestantism.

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