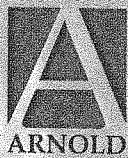


WK 5
No 3

The Impact of —
**THE ENGLISH
REFORMATION
1500–1640**



Edited by Peter Marshall

TITLES IN THE
ARNOLD READERS IN HISTORY SERIES

ALREADY PUBLISHED

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Edited by Richard Custr and Ann Hughes

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Edited by Peter Jones

THE IMPACT OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION 1500–1640
Edited by Peter Marshall

IN PREPARATION

BRITISH POLITICS AND SOCIETY 1906–1951

Edited by John Stevenson

GENDER AND HISTORY IN WESTERN EUROPE
Edited by Bob Shoemaker and Mary Vincent

THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR
Edited by Patrick Finney

THEORIES OF FASCISM
Edited by Roger Griffin

THE TUDOR MONARCHY
Edited by John Guy

WOMEN'S WORK: THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE 1650–1914
Edited by Pamela Sharpe

THE IMPACT OF THE
ENGLISH REFORMATION

1500–1640

Edited by PETER MARSHALL

Lecturer in History, University of Warwick



A member of the Hodder Headline Group
LONDON • NEW YORK • SYDNEY • AUCKLAND

- 31 The methods applied to produce the economic and population statistics presented here are fully discussed in ch. 5 of my Cambridge PhD thesis.
- 32 The Cheshire gentry, as in other parts of the country, appear to have developed a rota system among themselves for spreading out the burden of payment. Such a system helps to explain why most of the self-styled gentlemen among the subscribers fail to appear in the 1640-1 subsidies. Henry Best, *Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641* (Surtees Society, xxxiii, 1857), p. 87. Graham Kerby, 'Inequality in a Pre-Industrial Society: a Study of Wealth, Status, Office and Taxation in Tudor and Stuart England with Particular Reference to Cheshire' (University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 1983); Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 233-4. Subsidies used: PRO, E179/85/135; E179/85/131; E179/85/136.
- 33 'Loans, Contributions, Subsidies, and Ship Money, Paid by the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester in the Years 1620, 1622, 1624, 1634, 1635, 1636, and 1639', ed. G.T.O. Bridgeman in *Miscellanies Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire* (Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, xii, 1885), pp. 78, 92, 100, 115, 120; Frodsham: John Walker, *The Sufferings of the Clergy* ed. and revised A.G. Matthews (Oxford, 1948), p. 91; G. Ormerod, *History of Cheshire* (3 vols, 1882), ii, p. 58; AO; Tilston: AO; Ormerod, ii, p. 697. Wilmslow: AO; Ormerod, iii, p. 595; J.P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire* (2 vols, 1877), i, p. 91, ii, pp. 91-3; *Minutes of the Committee for the Relief of Plundered Ministers* (Lancashire and Cheshire Records Society, xxviii, 1893), pp. 146-7. Marbury: AO; Walker, pp. 305, 306; Raymond Richards, *Old Cheshire Churches* (Didsbury, revised and enlarged edn, 1973), p. 227; William Urwick (ed.), *Historical Sketches of Nonconformity in Cheshire* (Manchester, 1864), p. 150. Middlewich: *Plundered Ministers*, pp. 173-4; Urwick, pp. 7, 62, 151, 164-7, 201, 213-14; Ormerod, iii, p. 185.
- 34 See ch. 5 of my Cambridge PhD thesis.
- 35 Margaret Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control?', *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, eds A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (Cambridge, 1985), *passim*: *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 232-3, 267-71; 'Can We Count the "Godly"?', pp. 434, 437n. 20. Cf. Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p. 27.
- 36 GRO, EDC.5/1604 misc. (Manchester).
- 37 Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (1650), pp. 342, 344.

11

From iconoclasm to iconophobia: the cultural impact of the Second English Reformation

PATRICK COLLINSON

I

My title is sufficiently gnomic to call for some explanation, both with reference to my interest in iconoclasm and iconophobia, and in respect of those terms themselves. I have been typecast, or have cast myself, as a historian of Puritanism, but should prefer to be known (if at all) as a student

Reprinted from *The Stenton Lecture* (Reading, 1985).

of the secondary stages and processes of the Reformation in England. But what was the English Reformation: a social and cultural movement with the irresistible force of a river or an artificial and imposed act of state? Was it Reformation 'from below' or 'from above'? And when, give or take a decade or two, is the event, or rather process, supposed to have happened? One possibility is early Reformation from above, enforced by royal and parliamentary edict in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI and not subsequently reversed or even reversible; another, early Reformation from below, precocious and popular and rooted in native dissent and lay, anticlerical sentiment. A further possibility is that the Reformation was an act of state which took effect only in the reign of Elizabeth: late Reformation from above; yet another, popular Reformation from below, late or even very late, the 'second Reformation' of my title, which was still looked for in the 1640s.¹ These are not mutually exclusive positions. It is possible, as Professor A.G. Dickens insists, to believe in Reformation from both above and below, indeed to recognise its essential and dialectical character as consisting of complex from-above and from-below interactions.² The early and late positions are perhaps harder to reconcile. Either one believes that the Reformation was irreversible at the time of Edward VI's death, in which case the Marian reaction was bound to fail and could never have had the quality of an English counter-reformation, or one doesn't.

My own reflections on this problem have been increasingly influenced by the recognition that in some senses English Protestantism regressed, becoming less not more popular in character, as we proceed from the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, and from a time when the Reformation was associated with novelty, youth, insubordination and iconoclasm (when indeed it was still a *protest*³) to the period of its middle age, when it was more obviously associated with the maintenance of the *status quo* than with subversion, with middle-aged if not middle-class preoccupations, and when its attacks on traditional culture met with widespread and popular resistance.⁴ By the early seventeenth century, the cause of preachers, religious publicists and social controllers often no longer pretended to be the popular cause to which it had aspired in earlier years. I am far from suggesting that the Protestant scheme of salvation and all that went with it had been universally understood or that it received massive support in the opening stages of the Reformation process (except perhaps in London and some parts of East Anglia, Essex and Kent, and especially in the cloth towns); or that there were more Protestants in England in 1550 than there were to be in 1600 or 1620. That would be absurd. But the martyrologist John Foxe had filled out his scenes with a cast of thousands, 'a great many', 'a multitude', 'all the faithful people', his rhetoric crediting the people with an inspired common sense

grounded in fundamental honesty. Early Protestant propaganda took up the tradition of Piers Plowman and Luther's Karsthans in casting the common man as a centre of right-thinking theological gravity, exposing the sophistical and false learning of a corrupt clergy.⁵ But as we travel forward fifty years, this character gives way to ignorant opponents of the Gospel like Atheos in George Gifford's caustic dialogue *The Country Divinity* and the plebeian in Arthur Dent's *Plain Mans Path-way* who says 'Well, I cannot read, and therefore I cannot tell what Christ or Saint Paul may say.'⁶

Early seventeenth-century preachers were not always hostile to the ignorant poor. Some expressed pity and evangelical concern,⁷ but rarely admiration. Foxe's inclusive rhetoric was now inverted, to exclude from the Church of God in the most proper sense a host of papists, 'atheists' and other enemies, from the merely 'carnal' to the actively malignant. A favourite scriptural *topos* for voicing concern about the rotten state of the visible Church was the Parable of the Sower, in which only a little of the seed falls fruitfully on good ground; and the moral requires the preacher to blame the hearers, not the good seed or the sower, for the poor harvest which is gathered.⁸ 'The multitude' now becomes a mostly pejorative term. The idea that Christ's true Church is 'a little flock' was integral to New Testament Christianity itself. But whereas some English authors applied the theme of the little flock to 'litttle England' in its cosmic struggle with the gigantic, foreign enemy of the popish Antichrist,⁹ others complained of the grossly unequal balance of forces for and against true religion within England itself. Philip Stubbes in the *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583) is aiming at the majority of his own compatriots when he observes that 'the number of Christ his elect is but few, and the number of the reprobate is many; the way that leadeth to life is narrow, and few tread that path; the way that leadeth to death is broad and many find it.' It was to become a commonplace that in the visible Church the 'greater part' will normally be the 'worse part', the 'better part' the 'smaller part': one writer suggesting one in twenty 'Christians indeed' as a plausible ratio.¹⁰

This pessimistic rhetoric is admittedly double-edged, as well as having more of a conventional than an observational significance. It may be evidence of what it complains of, but it may equally well signify almost the reverse: the full internalisation and intensification of Protestant religious values, leading to heightened expectations and an aroused concern about alleged hypocrisy and carnality, and above all the sin of 'security'. But either way Protestantism became morally a more demanding religion, which is as much as to say that it became both inwardly and outwardly more repressive, less like a religion of liberation.

Seen in this context, Puritan Separatism articulated rejection of a false and ungodly communion with the ungodly or relatively irreligious multitude, its strongest motive a formal objection to the principle of an all-

inclusive and mixed parochial Church. This objection was shared by the majority of Puritans, who witnessed against schismatic separation and insisted on the obligation of private Christians to continue to adhere to the public congregation. Indeed, those who remained part of the parish and declined to depart for Amsterdam practised, or at least preached, a form of social segregation which was more drastically divisive and stressful both for themselves and for society as a whole than ecclesiastical separation itself. Apart from participation in the communion of the parish one should have as little to do with the bulk of one's neighbours as possible. Unnecessary 'company keeping' and 'good fellowship' were vices. Neighbourhood was a hollow reed. There were no friends like the friends of one's soul.¹¹

How are these negative imperatives to be accounted for? An easy answer would be to observe that seriously committed Christians are, as a matter of fact, always in the minority, so that these early seventeenth-century saints were merely responding to the reality of their situation. A rather more sophisticated answer would explore the consequences of internalising in social relations and experience a morally austere and demanding version of Christianity which turned the doctrine of election into a principle of invidious exclusion and stimulated an unrelenting warfare between the elect and the children of perdition, accentuating that mentality of opposites and contrary correspondences which was so prevalent in early modern England.¹² We should also have to give some weight to the legal insecurity experienced by Calvinist Protestants in a Church which was not modelled and disciplined according to their principles.

A distinctly *less* sophisticated explanation deals in crude social categories. The godly are said to have been more or less equivalent to the better sort in the sense of the more affluent, in contemporary diction those of 'ability', the 'civil sort'; not necessarily rich people but thriving, the successful yeoman farmer with access to buoyant markets and the capacity to accumulate capital, the 'industrious sort', to use a compelling phrase which Christopher Hill borrowed at a high rate of interest from the seventeenth century itself. For 'the multitude', read the rest, the mass of people depressed into poverty or near-poverty by demographic and economic pressures, a source of growing anxiety to their social betters. According to some historians, Puritanism or evangelical Protestantism in action was much the same thing as 'social control', a means of repressing the threatening and 'malapert' behaviour of what has been characterised as a kind of 'third world' existing in the entrails of Elizabethan England.¹³ This is not all wrong by any means but nor can it be quite right. The religious and moral struggle was engaged *within* classes as well as *between* them. It was a relatively free option for the sons and daughters of Kentish yeomen, in about 1580, whether on Sundays they went out to sermons or to dances.¹⁴ Both activities were fashionable. Both involved travel and

some expenditure. The poor were probably effectively excluded from both. Young people were perhaps more likely to opt for dancing. After their mid-twenties, with the advent of marriage and the responsibilities of house-keeping, the attraction of the sermon might prove stronger, although middle-aged householders of means often acted as patrons of the Sunday dances, hiring the minstrels and paying for the beer. So I read the literature of complaint and the evidence of criminal proceedings in both ecclesiastical and secular courts. And perhaps more people went to both dances and sermons than these sources tend to suggest.¹⁵

II

So much is prolegomenon. Our subject properly concerns some cultural reverberations of the complex and even contradictory processes of the English Reformation. More than a hundred years ago, in his pioneering *History of the English People*, J.R. Green wrote a sentence which was profoundly true. All that follows merely elaborates and illustrates what Green wrote. Some time between the middle of the reign of Elizabeth and the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640 the English became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. 'No greater moral change ever passed over a nation.'¹⁶ I believe that Green was quite correct in his dating. If anything I should be more precise, placing the moral and cultural watershed of which he wrote in 1580, or thereabouts.

Let us be more specific about the nature of the watershed. The first generation of Protestant publicists and propagandists, the Edwardian generation, made polemical and creative use of cultural vehicles which their spiritual children and grandchildren later repudiated, as part of their rather general programme of rejection. They wrote and staged Protestant plays. They sang Protestant songs and godly ballads to secular and popular tunes. And they made brilliant use of the graphic image, both to attack Catholicism and to commend their own religious convictions and values. These strategies constitute, for my purpose, what is meant by Iconoclasm. It is not what students of the great Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth century understand by the term, nor yet what writers on Continental Protestant movements, especially in the Netherlands in 1565, mean by it. For the present purpose Iconoclasm implies a spirited attack, verbally violent or actually violent, on certain unacceptable images, but not the total repudiation of all images, which on my terms is Iconophobia. Indeed, Iconoclasm in this sense may imply the substitution of other, acceptable images, or the refashioning of some images for an altered purpose. It is hostile to false art but not anti-art, since its hostility implies a true and acceptable art, applied to a laudable purpose. As George Herbert asked: 'Is there in truth no beauty?'¹⁷

To return to our three cultural milieux. All three were familiar and traditional. Therefore those first-generation Protestant communicators who exploited them were in continuity and communication with the tradition, sharing common cultural ground with their Catholic opponents. This common ground ceased to exist round about 1580. So this significant cultural watershed occurred not between the last generation of traditional Catholicism and the first generation of Protestantism but between the first and second generations of Protestants. It divided the first and second Reformations.

A related theme concerns the changing attitudes of religiously minded Protestants to alehouses, inns and other places of popular resort. At first, they were at home in such places, where they argued points of theological difference with their opponents (the phenomenon called by contemporaries 'jangling'¹⁸) and engaged in mutual edification among themselves. In the 1530s that formidable and inventive figure Robert Wisdom exhorted his flock 'to take the scripture in their hands' when they met together at the alehouse on Sundays and holidays, 'and to talk, commune and reason of it'. When Bishop Bonner objected that this would lead to mishandling of Scripture by drunkards, Wisdom retorted that on the contrary the presence of the Bible would prevent people from getting drunk.¹⁹ In Mary's days the Protestants of Colchester made their headquarters in the inns of the town, leading A.G. Dickens to remark that if the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, the Reformation was won in the pubs of Colchester. In London, the secret Protestant congregation gathered at the Swan at Limehouse, the Kings Head at Ratcliffe, the Saracens Head at Islington. On one occasion the company of thirty consumed 'three or four pots of beer' – apparently each – before turning their attention to the sermon.²⁰

As a place of 'common resort', associated with 'good fellowship', devout or merely respectable Elizabethan Protestants increasingly distanced themselves from drinking houses. According to one Puritan writer, anyone having a godly mind who entered such an establishment 'doth thinke he cometh into a little hell'. Clergymen who 'haunted' alehouses stood rebuked, not only by 'Puritans' but by the Royal Injunctions of 1559 and later by George Herbert in *The Priest to the Temple*. And the parochial clergy, all over Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe, were as never before the representative and exemplary Christians. So religion and this most prevalent matrix for popular sociability and culture began to draw apart.²¹ In 1569 there was 'talk had of Scripture' in an alehouse in East Kent. But at least one of those present thought it inappropriate to be 'talking of Scripture on the alebench'. Whether religion also began to abandon the more respectable urban inns to the variety of other and secular functions which these often large and elaborate establishments served is less certain. But here, in T.S. Eliot's famous phrase, was some dissociation of sensibility.²²

One covert Protestant congregation gathered in an inn for the ostensible purpose of seeing a play.²³ It is well enough known that John Bale and other early Protestant clerical authors wrote under official patronage propagandist plays, adapting established theatrical conventions and devices for their own polemical purposes, which they shared with Thomas Cromwell and his men. A genre which first flourished under such regular auspices became a theatre of subversive protest in Henry VIII's last years, only to burst out with renewed confidence after the old king's death, when Gardiner and other conservative bishops were pilloried in 'all sorts of farces and pastimes'.²⁴ Such plays were anti-Catholic rather than positively Protestant, and it might be thought more difficult and certainly less entertaining to present in dramatic form the abstractions of Protestant soteriology. Yet the contrary is suggested by *Jacob and Esau*, of which the theme is predestination, and even more by Lewis Wager's play *The life and repentance of Marie Magdalene*.²⁵ This work is not widely esteemed as a major dramatic achievement. Yet it treats persuasively as well as didactically the evangelical themes of sin and redemption, carefully explaining that Mary's deliverance was by mere grace, appropriated by faith, not something merited by the moral strength of her own repentance.

But in this and other religiously motivated plays and interludes, for the most part composed by clergymen, such 'morality' coexists with the uninhibited employment of 'mirth', that is, of bawdry. No Miss World contest ever dwelt more lovingly on the vital statistics of the contestants than did Wager on the physical attributes of the stunning blonde, Mary Magdalene. And when his heroine responds to the 'prick of conscience', the Vice, characterised as Infidelitie, exclaims: 'Prick of conscience quod she? It pricketh you not so sore/as the yong man with the flaxen beard dyd I thinke' (II.1.1.1050-1). No godly preacher of the next generation could have tolerated such a scurrilous, nay 'filthy' libretto.²⁶

It has sometimes been thought that such plays were never part of the active dramatic repertory, or no part of the Elizabethan repertory. But if *Marie Magdalene* was pre-Elizabethan, it was first printed in 1566. The first Elizabethan decade witnessed the publication of a whole cluster of Protestant moral interludes,²⁷ some written in earlier years, others originating at this time. Examples are *Nice Wanton*, *Lusty Juventus*, *The Disobedient Child* and *New Custom*. The same period saw the printing of the biblical plays *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* by Thomas Garter (a more skilful but also an even more prurient play than *Marie Magdalene*),²⁸ *Godly Queen Hester* (in truth a Henrician political satire), *Jacob and Esau* and *The Story of King Darius*. The conventions of these pieces are grounded in the tradition, partly of morality, partly of miracle plays. But they are distinctively Protestant and of their own time, not only in some theological undertones and overtones, but in identifying the vices with stock figures of popery and prelacy, so giving vent to anti-Catholic

polemic, and in a characteristically Protestant modification of the prodigal son theme, dramatising the moral choices confronting Youth, poised between evil courses – idleness, pleasure, sexual incontinence – and good – obedience, education, religious seriousness.²⁹

David Bevington (correcting Chambers) has demonstrated that these plays were not printed for the sole benefit of the Malone Society.³⁰ Some of them were primarily school plays. But their stage directions make clear that they were also considered suitable for performance by the early Elizabethan touring companies consisting of 'four men and a boy'. The casual evidence of Willis's *Mount Tabor*, describing fifty years after the event a moralistic interlude performed in Gloucester in the 1560s or early 1570s, strengthens the conviction that these pieces were the common stock-in-trade of provincial players for at least the first half of Elizabeth's reign.³¹ And Wager's *Marie Magdalene* contains a reference to an audience which has paid for admission.³²

This was a period when the traditional religious drama was still alive and comparatively well in many towns, notably Coventry, where in Mary's reign a Protestant prisoner and future martyr (he died in prison) had been allowed out of ward to play his part in the seasonal pageant of the Corpus Christi plays.³³ If that was inconsistent with a godly Protestant profession, John Careless went to his grave unaware of the fact. In the same city of Coventry the Corpus Christi cycle was only suppressed in 1579. So for twenty years it coexisted with the powerful preaching of the city's apostle and archdeacon, Thomas Lever. Did Lever attack the plays from the pulpit as the preachers inveighed against them at Chester? At Chester, York and Wakefield, the mysteries came to an end only in the mid-1570s; this, the time of Archbishop Grindal's presence in York, constituting the decisive cultural watershed for the North.³⁴ In the provinces, the anti-theatrical reaction was progressive and ultimately drastic. By the 1590s urban magistrates were shutting their gates against the licensed companies of travelling actors whose performances had begun to replace the traditional and indigenous plays: and it was soon standard practice to pay them to go away. This eventually happened in Stratford-upon-Avon, of all places. At Chester, citizens could be fined for going out of the city to witness such 'obscene and unlawful' entertainments. At Dorchester a truculent impresario who protested at a refusal to let his men perform was imprisoned for his pains.³⁵ A poem by John Kaye (or Key) of Huddersfield, dateable between 1576 and 1588, remarks: 'Now seinge that players doe not goe Abrode/Nor yet fine musicians we may not aforde. . . .'³⁶

This is not the occasion to prise apart all the possible reasons for the violence of the mid-Elizabethan anti-theatrical reaction, a matter much debated by scholarship and exhaustively catalogued as early as 1633 in that vast encyclopedia of antipathy, Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*, which digested, besides countless ancient authorities, 'above 150 moderne Protestrant and

Popish writers of all sorts'.³⁷ Among the possible motives, arranged by different scholars in various hierarchies,³⁸ we have the objection to drama as pagan or even 'devilish' in origin, Sabbatarianism, concern for public health and order, dread of prodigality and idleness, an ever-increasing sensitivity to anything 'filthy', that is, suggesting and inciting sexual licence, the rejection of dramatic fictions as (in effect) lies, with a particular objection to the transvestite lie; and, most significantly for a discussion of incipient iconophobia, resistance to the theatrical appeal to what has been called 'the idolatrous eye'. 'For the eye', wrote Stephen Gosson, the playwright filled the stage with 'all manner of delights'. Anthony Munday concurred: 'There commeth much evil in at the eares, but more at the eyes...'³⁹ No doubt the commercial institutionalisation of the metropolitan theatre in the late 1570s was a catalyst. So too a related shift in the dramatic repertoire, away from improvement and towards the 'vain' entertainment of Italianate romances, and in the direction of the spectacles to which the demotic audience was susceptible.⁴⁰ Professor Ringler exaggerated only a little when he insisted that the metropolitan, literary onslaught on the theatre broke abruptly without much warning, and in 1577, as soon as the first public theatres opened their doors.⁴¹

What is most relevant to the present argument is the repudiation by these professional complainers not only of 'vain' and wanton plays but of all plays whatsoever, including religious plays and moralities. In 1551 the great German reformer Martin Bucer had observed (from his professorial chair in Cambridge) that

for the making of tragedies the Scriptures constantly offer an abundance of material... For these stories are thickly packed with god-like and heroic people... Since all these qualities have wonderful power to strengthen faith in God, to arouse love and desire of God and to create and increase not only admiration of piety and justice, but also the horror of impiety and of the sowing and fostering of every kind of evil.

How much better to employ these sources rather than the profane literature of pagan poets!⁴² In a speech in Elizabeth's first parliament, Abbot Feckenham of Westminster could still take for granted the Protestant alliance of pulpit and stage when he attacked the 'preachers and scaffold players of this new religion'.⁴³ But by 1566 a note of defensiveness has crept into the Prologue to Wager's *Marie Magdalene*, if indeed it was not there already, since the Prologue, like the play itself, may have been Edwardian in origin: 'Doth not our facultie learnedly extoll verue? Doth it not teache God to be praised above al thing?'⁴⁴ In Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1578) there is some ambivalence in the concession that there are such things as 'good plays and sweet plays', which Gosson specifies, including one of his own. But he no longer thinks them

'fit for every mans diet neither ought they commonly to be shown.' This connects with Thomas Norton, one of the authors of *Gorboduc*, but a main pillar of city government as well as the busiest of all Elizabethan MPs, who in 1574 condemned public theatre-going as 'unnecessary and scarcely honest'.⁴⁵ Presumably the fear was that a popular audience would enjoy the 'mirth' but miss the moralistic point of plays intended for improvement. These were transitional attitudes and Theodore Beza of Geneva was in the course of a similar transition when he wrote his biblical play *Abrahams Sacrifice* in 1550. In the Preface he admits to having altered 'some small circumstances' of the story for dramatic effect.⁴⁶ The thoroughly matured Beza would surely have condemned absolutely such artistic licence.

With no such reservations at all, Philip Stubbes in 1583 first distinguished between divine and profane plays and then proceeded to condemn the divine as the more intolerable of the two, since in such 'sacrilegious' performances the glorious majesty of God was handled 'scoffingly, flauntingly and jibingly'. This is reminiscent of the argument that white witches were worse than black witches, precisely because they pretended to do good by devilish means. As Prynne would later insist, 'the more elegant and witty therefore the Playes, the more dangerous and destructive are they'. Venomous pills must be coated with honey. 'The more witty and sublime their stile and manner, the more pernicious their fruites.' Stubbes wrote that the merits of Christ's passion were not available to be 'derided and jested at, as they be in these filthy playes and enterludes'. It was not lawful 'to mix scurrilitie with divinitie, nor divinitie with scurrilitie'. Applied to religious drama, this was already a commonplace. John Northbrooke, in no sense an original writer, had pronounced in 1577 that to perform 'histories out of the scriptures' was to mingle scurrillity with divinity, or to eat meat with unwashed hands. 'Illotis Manibus' was one of Erasmus's *Adagia*, where the *topos* is related to those who handle theology in ignorance of the philological skills on which it depends. 'Truly with hands and feet unwashed, he is taking the most sacred thing of all, not to treat it, but to profane it, pollute it and do it violence.' This point is worth observation, since attitudes classified as 'Puritan' often represent the application of the message of Christian humanism, or 'Erasmianism'.⁴⁷

If we consult the records of the last days of the old religious drama, we can easily see what Stubbes and Northbrooke found so objectionable, sensing the depth of the gulf now opening up between the old and the new religious sensibilities, the mimetic and didactic presentations of religious truth. In the Coventry accounts of the Cappers' Guild there are payments 'to pylart iijs viijd'; 'Irem, paid to God (evidently a smaller part) xvjd'; at Chester, the cost is recorded of the 'guildinge of little God's face'. In York the nuts customarily distributed in the annual procession of Yule and Yule's Wife (a frankly bawdy affair) were said

to be 'in remembrance of that most noble Nut our saviour's blessed body'.⁴⁸ How many light years would one have to travel to escape from the notion that Christ's body could be suitably symbolised by a nut and to arrive at a typical Jacobean sermon! Stubbes thought that the opening words of St John's Gospel were a proof text against the religious drama: 'the word is God, and God is the word'. To represent the Word was to 'make a mocking stock of him' and to perpetrate a counterfeit.⁴⁹

If it appears more difficult to understand why *Jacob and Esau* or the realisation of Christ in Wager's *Marie Magdalene* should have been considered 'filthy', we must appreciate that we are dealing with an objection to 'playing' rather than preaching the Gospel which was more profound than any quarrel with the wanton profanity of secular comedy. So it was that on the eve of its greatest achievements, the English theatre was not available as a medium to explore and present the drama of salvation, while it was left to Handel in the eighteenth century to exploit the dramatic potential of the Old Testament. Confronted with the argument of the devil's advocate, that plays are as good as sermons 'and that many a good Example may be learned out of them', Stubbes explodes: 'Oh blasphemie intollerable!'; and most significantly, he links his dismissal of this strategem with the doctrine that the number of Christ's elect is limited, the way of salvation strait and narrow. For those who could not discover God in his Word, expounded from the pulpit, it was just too bad.⁵⁰ At York, a future archbishop, Matthew Hutton, passed judgment on the fifteenth-century play known as the Creed Play: 'It was plausible 40 yeares agoe, and would now also of the ignorant sort be well liked: yet now in this happie time of the gospell, I knowe the learned will mislike it and how the state will beare with it I knowe not.' And at Chester, a local worthy remarked that the only utility of the traditional plays was 'to shewe the Ignorance of oure forefathers'.⁵¹

The pamphlet war of 1577 to 1583 did not put paid to biblical drama, and although the genre did shrivel away to almost nothing by 1600, Murray Roston is no doubt correct to insist that its final passing cannot be simply attributed to Puritan opposition. Lily Campbell showed that it was possible from Henslowe's Diary and other sources to compile a list of as many as fourteen late Elizabethan scripture plays, at least two of which were performed in the public theatres. But that merely served to keep the issue alive for a few more years. Even Thomas Lodge, who had written against Gosson and was co-author with Greene of a play about the adventures of Jonah, *A looking glasse for London and England* (performed 1592, printed 1594), wrote in 1596 that 'in stage plaies to make use of Hystorical Scriture, I hold it with the Legists odious, and as the Council of Trent did . . . I condemne it' — Lodge being some kind of Catholic.⁵² The statute of 1605 which prohibited blasphemy on the stage (and defined blasphemy very broadly) was no doubt indicative of a rather general shift

in public taste, extending to disapproval of 'playfully gestures' in the pulpit, which Prynne would condemn as 'altogether scandalous and unseemly for a Minister'. 'He is the best Minister who is most unlike a Player, both in his gesture, habit, speech and elocution.'⁵³

This portion of the argument can be summarised as the changing history of the three Ps. Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester had complained of his mishandling by Protestant dramatists (and the Protestant Prynne would later approve of his complaint and endorse it), leading Foxe in the *Book of Martyrs* to spin an alliterative phrase: 'Printers, Players and Preachers trouble Winchester'. Thirty years later, Gosson launched a vicious attack on 'Poets, Pypers and Players'. In 1610 William Crashaw rang a less felicitous variation when he defined the three great enemies of religion as 'the Devil, Papists and Players'.⁵⁴

III

Moving on to another form of popular culture, the broadside ballad, we find a parallel sequence.⁵⁵ In the 1560s there was a flood of godly ballads, keeping company with the moralistic interludes. Indeed, there is a distinct affinity between the two enterprises in that both moral interludes and godly ballads usually conclude with the convention of a prayer for the queen and the state. But in the godly ballads there is a distinct absence of 'mirth', with the significant exception of the resonances of the tunes to which they were to be sung. The corpus includes anti-Catholic ballads, as much political as religious, ballads preserving the memory of the Marian martyrs, ballads exposing immorality such as *agaynste fornication etc a godly ballett* (Rollins 34, 1564–5) and ballads of hideous example in the spirit of the lost pamphlet *Judgement of God upon a perieured person in Gunne Alley who ripped his belly*.⁵⁶ A ballad was printed within two days of the 1580 earthquake attacking the theatre with the refrain *Comme from the plaie comme from the plaie* (Rollins 327, 8 April 1580). There were ballads of scriptural and doctrinal exposition, such as the title *Approvyng by the scriptures that our salvation consisteth only in Christe, a godly new ballett* (Rollins 92, 1562–3), and ballads denouncing secular love ballads, such as Thomas Brice's *Against filthy writing and such like delighting* (Rollins 33, 1561–2) and *Reprovyng all reball songes* (Rollins 2277, 1563–4).

Such open attacks on secular balladry were rare. The more usual stratagem of the pedlars of moralities was parody, producing godly versions of popular songs to be sung to the same tunes. According to Hyder Rollins, the genre was made 'instantly popular' by the early Elizabethan parodic and loyal ballad *The cuntrye hath no pere*.⁵⁷ Virtually all successful ballads (and this was doubtless a tribute to their success) seem to have been given this treatment. We know of moralisations of *Go from my*

window, *The hunt is up, John come kiss me now, Maid will you marry, Into a myrthful may morning and O sweete Oliver* (which is quoted in *As You Like It*). The hit song *Row well ye mariners* (William Peking, 1565–6) provoked several moralised versions: *Row well ye maryners moralized* (1566–7, 3 editions), *Row well Godes maryners* (Alexander Lacey, 1567–8), *Row well ye Christes maryners* (also Peking, 1567) (Rollins 2327–2333). Claude Simpson writes of ‘the irresistible urge to appropriate its lilting line [the tune is lost] to moralizing purposes’.⁵⁸ The famous *Dance and songe of death* (Rollins 480, 1568–9) beginning ‘Can you dance the shaking of the sheers?’ was evidently a moralisation of a lost ballad called *Dance after my pipe*. The tune is mentioned in the play *Misogonus* (1560). William Elderton’s celebrated *Gods of love* (Rollins 987), for long known directly only from a snatch in *Much Ado About Nothing*, was twice parodied, as *The complaynte of a symer vexed with payne* (William Birch, Rollins 357) and as *The ioy of virginitie*, which occurs in the collection *A handeful of pleasant delites* (No 16). Elderton’s *Pangs of love* was also twice parodied.⁵⁹

In addition to these singles, there were albums, more ambitious collections of moralistic parodies, notably the Maidstone surgeon John Hall’s huge compilation *The court of virtue* (1565), which confutes what Hall called those ‘lecherous ballads’, the verses of Wyatt and others contained in *The court of Venus*, and evidently employing the same music. There was another *Court of Venus moralized* by the industrious Thomas Brice.⁶⁰ Such parodies or ‘counterfeits’ were in an established tradition and were widely practised in Reformation Europe. In France Marguerite de Navarre rendered ‘Sur le pont d’Avignon’ as ‘Sur l’arbre de la Croix’.⁶¹ Among leading English reformers, Miles Coverdale, Thomas Becon and Robert Wisdom all in effect agreed with the nineteenth-century salvationist William Booth that there was no reason why the Devil should enjoy a monopoly of the best tunes.⁶²

All this is well enough known to students of Elizabethan verse and to anyone who has investigated the history of the broadside ballads. But what has not been acknowledged, even by the principal authority, Hyder Rollins, is that the godly parodic ballad, like the Protestant moral interlude or biblical play, began to go out of fashion in the 1580s. I have made a rough and ready analysis⁶³ of ballad titles which works on a rather arbitrary definition of what constitutes a godly ballad and in most cases relies on a mere title in the *Stationers Register*, where the ballad itself is no longer extant. Nevertheless the analysis may have some impressionistic value. In the fourteen years 1559 to 1572, no less than 169 godly ballads were issued, 160 of them in the ten years 1562–1571; none at all between 1573 and 1576, and then only 63 in the eight years 1577–1584, 24 in the one year 1586, 21 in the nine years 1588–1595, and virtually none after 1595. The last notable moralistic retort to a hit song occurred in 1580, following the printing of A

neue northern dittye of the ladye Greene Sleeves (Rollins 1892).⁶⁴ Within a fortnight a licence was granted for *Green Sleeves moralized to the Scripture* (Rollins 1051). Other godly ballads proceeded to appropriate this immediately popular tune,⁶⁵ including *The godly and virtuous song and ballad* of the Marian martyr, John Careless, whom we have already met acting in the Coventry mystery plays.⁶⁶ This was hardly surprising. As ice-cream vendors know to our cost, the tune is hard to forget and in the age of the ballads no less than eighty distinct texts were set to it.⁶⁷

But public taste was changing and by the 1590s it no longer seemed fitting to sing a religious lyric to such a melody. Thomas Nashe wrote disparagingly in *Have with you to Saffron-Walden* (1596) of ‘such another device . . . as the godly Ballet of *John Carelesse*, or the Song of *Green sleeves moralized*’; while Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives* (1600–01) (II.i.59–61) complains that Falstaff’s words ‘do no more adhere and keep place together than the hundred Psalms to the tune of *Green Sleeves*’.⁶⁸ When, in 1597, ‘certain evil disposed persons’ accused a Kentish vicar of leading his congregation in a rendering of the 25th Psalm to *Green Sleeves*, he brought a legal action against them for defamation of character.⁶⁹ By then the policy of musical parody may have been tacitly abandoned. It is significant that while the mid-sixteenth-century Scottish collection familiarly known as *The gude and godlie ballatis*, which contains several English parodies, was kept in print with editions of 1567, 1578, 1600 and 1621,⁷⁰ it has no English counterpart. In 1595 it was still possible to purchase a copy of the first and only edition of *The court of virtue* (1565), but that was hardly a mark of success.⁷¹ The godly ephemera later collected by Pepys⁷² were a different genre, chapbooks rather than broadsheets and not intended for singing.

Part of the reason for the abandonment by religious publicists of any attempt to compete in the popular market of broadside balladry (or, more realistically, the abandonment by ballad-mongers of the religious side of their trade) lay in the changing attitude of the godly towards the ballad singers. The war now declared against the minstrels was, if anything, even more total than that waged against stage players. In *The Anatomy of Abuses* Stubbes talks about dancing the wild morris through the needle’s eye to Heaven and asks of the musicians: ‘Who be more bawdie than they? Who uncleaner than they? Who more licentious and loose minded? Who more incontinent than they?’⁷³ The ordinary occupation of unattached and technically ‘vagrant’ minstrels was the accompaniment of country dances, and it was this which made them anathema in the eyes of the preachers and other complainers. In Kent the act books of the archdeacon’s courts for the 1570s are replete with the prosecutions of minstrels alleged to have played in service time, drawing the youth away from church ‘in heaps’. In 1578 the Canterbury preacher John Walsall carried his complaints up to London in a Paul’s Cross sermon which fulminated against ‘vaine fiddlers and

vagabond pipers', and which was at once printed 'at the earnest request of certain godly Londoners and others'. Walsall put on one level the London players who drew larger audiences than the preachers and the country minstrels. Two years earlier, one of his clerical neighbours had complained of a musician who had lured away most of his congregation. 'By report he had more with him than I had at the church.'⁷⁴

The crucial argument occurs in Thomas Lovell's versified *Dialogue between Custom and Veritie concerning the use and abuse of dauncing and minstrelste* (1581), where Veritie denounces the minstrels for being all things to all men:

Some godly songs they have: some wicked ballads and unmeet . . .
For filthies they have filthy songs,
for baudes lascivious rimes:
For honest good, for sober grave
songs, so they watch their time.

Lovell invokes the Epistle of James to condemn the chameleon-like adaptability of the musicians. Out of the same mouth ought not to proceed blessing and cursing.⁷⁵ This was to excoriate not only the country minstrels but ballad-mongers like William Elderton, who with his famous grog-blossom of a tippler's nose had no reputation for godliness but was content to supply the market for sacred as well as secular song, a lucrative strategy akin to the device known as 'flying'.⁷⁶ Fifteen years later, the Suffolk preacher Nicholas Bownd took an even harder line against balladry in his *Doctrine of the Sabbath*. Bownd had heard that in the first age of the Protestant gospel, psalm-singing had almost driven out the singing of ballads. (Foxe was probably his source.) But now the tide was flowing in a contrary direction. At every fair and market the minstrels were singing and selling the ballads, which country people stuck on their walls for want of any other decoration. In Bownd's opinion, psalms and ballads could not possibly coexist. 'They can so hardly stand together.' And the suggestion that the ballad-mongers might be hired to sing the Psalms was dismissed out of hand. The 'singing men' were so notoriously ungodly that it would be better to stop their mouths altogether than to allow them to pollute such sacred songs.⁷⁷ This was to turn into a sour and negative complaint the positive aspiration of Miles Coverdale in the early English Reformation, combining elements of Erasmusian and Lutheran idealism: 'Would God that our minstrels had none other thing to play upon, neither our carters and ploughmen other thing to whistle upon, save psalms, hymns and such godly songs as David is occupied withal!'⁷⁸

What we are uncovering is a drastic separation of the sacred and the secular, and of two popular musical genres which began by being closely intertwined: balladry and psalmody. By 1600 Psalms invariably meant the Psalms of David, sung to their own sacred melodies. Although they might

be used by godly people on all and any occasions, they were primarily intended for congregational singing, in church. But fifty years earlier the situation had been very different. Many of the so-called 'scripture songs' of the first age of the Reformation were not scriptural at all but, as we should say, protest songs: polemics against the Mass, or the faults of the clergy, or the folly of going on pilgrimage. Foxe preserved just such a song of fifty stanzas called *The fantasie of idolatry*, 'for posterity hereafter to understand what then was used in England'. The author was William Gray, who also wrote the popular secular ballad *The hunt is up*.⁷⁹ These pieces were sung anywhere *except* in church and they had no connection with congregational worship. In periods of persecution they were sung, loudly, by Protestant prisoners so that they could be heard on the street outside. In Essex they were performed at weddings, by what Foxe calls 'common singers against the sacraments and ceremonies'.⁸⁰ For example, in Mary's reign an apprentice to a Colchester minstrel was sent out to a country bridal feast to perform a repertoire of so-called 'scripture songs', which included *News out of London*, an attack on the Mass and the queen's 'misproceedings'.⁸¹

Nothing tells us more about the broad social and cultural bottom of the early Reformation than these scripture songs of the 1530s, 1540s and 1550s. They benefited from the patronage of Thomas Cromwell and the commercial investment of London printers. Solid citizens encouraged their apprentices 'to sing a song against the sacrament of the altar'. It was not beneath the dignity of the Oxford scholar Julinus Palmer to be 'a jolly writer of three halfpenny books' and 'doggish rhymes'. In Worcester an eleven-year-old boy composed an anticlerical ballad called *Come down for all your shaven crown*, perhaps echoed in Elderton's anti-catholic Elizabethan ballad *Northumberland's newes*, with its refrain 'Come tumbling down, come tumbling down'.⁸² By the 1580s there was little of this tradition left.

Musicologically, this seems to be what happened.⁸³ Both balladry and psalmody had evolved as popular adaptations of the music of the late Henrician and Edwardian courts and they shared the same tunes and the same metre. It is not clearly the case that psalmody was a secondary development. The close affinity of the two genres is implicit in the proposal of Sternhold and his continuators that their psalm settings should take the place of 'fayned rymes of vanitie', 'all ungodly songs and ballads'. William Baldwin's wish, expressed in the dedication to Edward VI of his metrical version of *The Ballads of Salomon* was: 'Would God that such songs myght once drive out of office the bawdy balletes of lecherous love', an admonition repeated in John Day's title page to *The whole booke of psalms*.⁸⁴ Here was antipathy but also affinity. Mid-Tudor Bibles naturally attributed to 'The Song of Solomon' the title '*The Ballad of Ballads*'. As with Clement Marot's French Psalter, congregational use of the metrical

Psalms was a secondary development, an adaptation of music originally intended for private and domestic use. Stow's continuator Edmund Howes remembered in the 1630s that the Psalms had once been sung to 'galliards and measures'. 'Geneva Psalms' were sometimes called 'Geneva Jigs', implying that they were sung at a lively pace to instrumental accompaniment; and that they displayed rhythmic qualities in performance which are absent from the musical notation as printed.⁸⁵

John Calvin was insistent that only the Psalms of David could be sung in church. He also ruled against the ecclesiastical use of 'chansons villains et impudiques', insisting that psalm singing should have the quality of 'poids et majesté', with the text enjoying precedence over the music.⁸⁶ In Elizabethan England, congregational psalm-singing, men and women singing together in unison, spread like a grass-fire.⁸⁷ This too was popular religion and, in a sense, popular culture, which would endure for three centuries. Although they probably had secular origins, the psalm tunes soon acquired the character of religious melodies sung on religious occasions by religious people: not so much protest songs as hymns. In practice, the repertoire of tunes may have been small, and very small in comparison with the thousand or so ballad tunes thought to have been published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, over 400 of which survive or can be reconstructed.⁸⁸ And sung unaccompanied, in large and cavernous buildings, the psalm tunes slowed down. Nicholas Temperley has calculated that by the late seventeenth century the speed was as ponderous as two seconds or more to each note. By the time of John Playford's *Brief introduction to the skill of music* (1650s), psalm tunes were printed in minims and semibreves, songs and dances in crotchets and quavers. In 1619 George Wither wrote that to sing the Psalms to 'those roguish tones, which have formerly served for profane jigs' and to set the psalm tunes to profane words were two equally inadmissible procedures.⁸⁹

IV

Not much space has been spared for my third topic, although it is awesome in scope and significance: pictorial art and its creeping disappearance as a means of communicating religious knowledge and arousing moral virtue – the iconophobia of our title according to a strict and narrow understanding of the term. Nothing demonstrates more forcefully the absolute refusal of so many late Elizabethan and Jacobean religious communicators to appeal to the senses and to popular taste than the pictures which are missing from their books, where you might expect to find them. And the implication is that they were deliberately restricting their appeal: or so one would have to conclude after reading Dr Scribner's account of the brilliant deployment of visual propaganda in the German Reformation.⁹⁰ We shall take no more than a few stabs at this large subject, excluding from

consideration the sacred and moral emblematic picture and the more recondite *imprese*, a large omission but since our concern is primarily with popular culture one which will not wholly disable the argument. Nor are the remarks which follow intended to imply any disparagement of the (neglected) pictorial arts of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, especially as applied in a secular didactic context, decorative, ceremonial and heraldic. These works lent themselves to a form of appreciation best described as 'reading'. They were, as Dr Michael Leslie observes, pictures to be read.⁹¹

Among the Britwell Ballads in the Huntington Library there is a religious broadsheet of 1604 called *The map of mortality*. It is illustrated with a picture of Christ as the Good Shepherd with crown of thorns and nimbus, drawn in an appealing and vaguely mannerist style: something so rare and unusual for its period as to startle.⁹² One reacts in the same way to Isaac Oliver's thoroughly un-English miniatures of Christ and of the Returned Prodigal of a few years later. Oliver, of course, was of French extraction and the only English painter of his generation who is known to have travelled in Italy. Jill Finsten writes of his 'sophisticated internationalism' and describes these little paintings, probably intended for the Catholic Queen Anne, as 'progressive and precocious'.⁹³

In 1569 Stephen Bateman published *A christal glasse of christian reformation*, the declared purpose of which was to 'plainly shew unto all, the estates of every degree by order of picture and signification'. There are thirty pictures of vice, all realistic and representational in the manner of the illustrations to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.⁹⁴ Forty years later Richard Bernard, a prolific clerical author who migrated from Nottinghamshire to Somerset and from a rather extreme, semi-separatist Puritanism to a more conformable position, published *Contemplative pictures with wholesome precepts*. But there are no pictures and Bernard's explanation is significant: 'These are certaine pictures [of God, Goodness, Heaven; the Devil, Badness, Hell] not Popish and sensible for superstition, but mentall, for Divine contemplation.'⁹⁵ The rejection of 'sensible' pictures as 'popish' was, in effect, to repudiate such images as falling foul of the Second Commandment, on which Calvin placed a distinct emphasis, insisting that it made idols and images effectively indistinguishable.

To be sure, Bernard's prose is so vivid, for example in his descriptions of the majesty of God⁹⁶ or in his characterisation of the Devil, that it might be thought that the reader would have no difficulty in forming his own mental images of these things, beside which any woodcut would be crudely inadequate. One recalls Erasmus's memorable remark in the *Paraclesis* that the words of the New Testament make Christ so fully present that 'you would see less if you gazed upon Him with your very eyes'; and also Sidney's suggestion in the *Defence* that the Psalms make you 'as it were, see

God coming in His majesty', for poems are 'speaking pictures', a figuring forth. *Ut pictura poesis*.⁹⁷ And there was no other legitimate way to envisage God, for as James I asked: 'How can we paint God's face when Moses, the man that ever was most familiar with God, never saw but his back parts?' When Richard Haydock in his anglicisation of Lomazzo's *Tratto dell'Arte* encountered the suggestion that the image of God the Father should be represented with perfect clear colours he remarked: 'And I [think] that he should not be Painted at all.'⁹⁸

What do we know about the capacity to form mental pictures of someone who has almost never seen an actual picture? What would our mind's-eye conception of Christ consist of if we had been totally isolated from the Christian iconographical tradition? The visual imagination of ordinary people in Jacobean England is not a very accessible subject. But let us remind ourselves that in principle and more often than not in fact the pictures with which pre-Reformation churchgoers had been familiar – the Trinity in the habitual form of the Father sustaining the Son with the Holy Spirit above in the form of a dove, Christ enthroned in judgment, not to speak of biblical and hagiographical narrative pictures – were now altogether destroyed or (as at Stratford-upon-Avon) slobbered over with whitewash. It has been almost a commonplace to observe that in Elizabethan England the image of the Virgin was replaced by that of the virgin queen in polite and even popular devotion. Perhaps it was so, in some sense. But in the churches eyes were drawn not to some idealised portrait of Elizabeth but to the potent, emotive but wholly abstract symbolism of the royal arms.

So much for church art. As for the schoolroom, Professor Hölzgen has pointed out that the only picture which we can be certain penetrated the Elizabethan grammar school was the cut at the back of Lily's Grammar which showed three boys raiding a pear tree. When the young Henry Peachman was caught copying this picture he was severely punished, which did not prevent him from publishing, in due course, *Graphice, or the most ancient and excellent art of drawing* (1606): and before that recording the only known 'artist's impression' of a Shakespeare play in performance.⁹⁹

It is a remarkable fact, like Sherlock Holmes's dog which did not bark, that most Elizabethan and Jacobean Bibles have no illustrations. John King remarks that the illustrated Bibles published in the reign of Edward VI have no successors: a pardonable exaggeration. They represent 'an anomaly in the publication history of authorized editions'.¹⁰⁰ The youth in the interlude *The longer thou livest* earns a cheap laugh when he is handed a New Testament by Piety and begins to search for the non-existent pictures:

God's santy, this is a goodly book indeed.
Be there any saints in it and pilcrowes?

But after turning a few leaves: 'Here is little good cheer.'¹⁰¹

But what, it may be asked, about all those brilliant, action-packed pictures in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, some of them prodigious pull-outs, which were reproduced from the same blocks right up to the 1630s, and thereafter continued in derivative and debased versions to enliven the dreariness of Sunday afternoons for generations of Protestant children, even into the present century? It is perhaps unlikely that such pictures would have been commissioned and executed if Foxe had been first published in the 1590s or early 1600s. There are no illustrations to Thomas Beard's *Theatre of divine judgments*, a collection of dramatic 'providences' which may appear to cry out for them. Foxe preserves a piece of mid-sixteenth-century Protestant aesthetic, fossil-like, into the altered cultural climate of the late sixteenth century and beyond.

By the 1620s and 1630s, with van Dyck in England and Rubens responding to English royal patronage, a contrary cultural tide was flowing with some strength, the artistic expression of the anti-Calvinist reaction we nickname Arminianism. By 1635 Francis Quarles's *Emblems and Hieroglyphikes* contained a representation of God enthroned as *Amor Divinus*, taken from a Jesuit source without alteration. Only in the edition of 1643 was this popish image replaced with the acceptable Hebrew lettered device of the Tetragrammaton, word rather than image.¹⁰² But that literally illustrates the extent to which English Arminianism repudiated the Reformation itself, putting this episode beyond consideration in an essay devoted to cultural modifications within Protestantism.

The argument in respect of the drama, music and graphic art has been one and the same. The primary thrust of Protestantism which came to fruition around 1550 was hostile to false art, images which were vehicles for false belief. But it devised its own mimetic programme, its own iconography, which had many points of contact and sympathy with inherited and traditional forms. In this sense the first Reformation was neither anti-art nor anti-popular. The secondary thrust gathering momentum around 1580 came close to dispensing with images and the mimetic altogether, while disparaging the tastes and capacities of the illiterate, the mass of the people. The Suffolk puritan saint John Carter may be allowed the last word in expressing the creeping ascetic totalitarianism which has been our theme. In expounding the Sermon on the Mount, Carter made this gloss upon Christ's own glossing of the Seventh Commandment. It condemned not only an idle and easy life, lascivious company, needless gadding, haunting of suspected houses and unreasonable meetings and revellings but these three things: 'Love-songs and Bookes, . . . filthy objects in Pictures, Playes, or whatever else stirreth up corrupt nature.' Before that is dismissed as an extreme and Puritanical attitude, we may note that the official *Homilies* of the Church of England declared that 'the seeking out of images is the beginning of whoredom'.¹⁰³

Advice is one thing, practice another. The real extent of practical iconophobia in Jacobean England is unexplored and for the most part unexplorable. If the inventory of the household maintained at York by Henry Hastings, third earl of Huntingdon, means what it says, the earl had no pictures on his walls whatsoever: only maps, non-representational floral hangings, a table of the Ten Commandments in a frame and 'one table in a frame containyng the cause of salvacion and damnation'.¹⁰⁴ These furnishings would have caused no offence to a Muslim of the Wahhabi sect. But Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, Huntingdon's brother-in-law and political ally, possessed plenty of pictures and wall-hangings in a lavish Mannerist style,¹⁰⁵ while their contemporary, the politician Sir Thomas Smith, covered his walls at Hill Hall in Essex with two series of frescoes: the one depicting the legend of Cupid and Psyche, the other the Old Testament stories of King Hezekiah.¹⁰⁶ The Suffolk household of that exemplary godly magistrate Sir Robert Jermyn was well known to Nicholas Bownd, who wanted to stop the mouths of the singing men. And yet it accommodated George Kirby, Jermyn's music master, who published the first six-part madrigals in England, written for Jermyn's daughters.¹⁰⁷ The better documented evangelicals of the nineteenth century were variable in their practice with regard to such matters. Some read novels. Some did not. Some went to the theatre. Others abstained. Naturally preachers like Bownd found it easier to reprehend the musical tastes of the common people than those of Jermyn's daughters.

V

Why? It is certainly a difficult question and far from local, since as Peter Burke has shown in his *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* 'the triumph of Lent' was a nearly universal phenomenon. 'Puritan' may have some value as a description of John Carter's mentality and moral attitudes but it is of little explanatory use to say that English Protestantism had hardened into Puritanism. That is to play with words. Another phrase 'the reception of Calvinism' is more helpful. True, it implies a rather primitive notion of how ideas work in history, as if a certain dose of Calvin's divinity had been poured into so many receptive English bottles, while 'influence' is a word out of fashion among historians of the intellect. But it is undeniable that Calvin took a hard line on these matters. And if we appreciate that he was heating to a kind of maximum intensity layers of anti-sensualism, drawn from Plato, Augustine, St John Chrysostom and other Fathers, as well as from the humanists of his own century, Erasmus not least, then we should be unwise to underestimate Calvin's impact on a susceptible English moral consciousness. The unrelenting struggle against Catholicism must also be central to our understanding of the Protestant impact on culture. The drastic polarisation of the mind which tended to extrapolate

popery from any trace of theological deviance or weakness made it hard to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable images. Witness John Donne's confusion in *Satire III*:

To adore, or scorn an image, or protest,
May all be bad . . .

The attack on the theatre had a close affinity to the denunciation of Catholic worship as theatricality, just as the Puritan polemic against magic and witchcraft connected with rejection of the Mass as a kind of conjuring and necromancy. Before the Reformation it was sometimes sufficient for a layman to be found in possession of a book – any book – to be suspect of heresy. After the Reformation, pictures – almost any pictures – aroused suspicion of popery.¹⁰⁸ And, to be sure, pictures as household possessions were as rare as books had once been. Dr Susan Foister has found that of 613 inventories (from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury) compiled between 1417 and 1588 (and mostly Tudor) only 63 list pictures or other works of art; and that under Elizabeth there was a distinct 'tailing off' of pictures on religious subjects. 'It is clear that the majority of even the most prosperous classes in Tudor England did not own any paintings or sculpture at all . . .'¹⁰⁹

The fathers ate sour grapes and the children's teeth were set on edge. By the time of the Civil War a thoroughly seasoned iconophobia could be provoked in Sussex by the contents of a Flemish bark which was stranded near Worthing. A scandalised parliamentary colonel, Herbert Morley, reported to the Speaker of the House of Commons the discovery on board of 'certain pictures which contain most gross idolatry', including a 'monstrous' image of the Trinity. Among these canvases, products of some Antwerp studio, was a painting of the betrothal of St Ursula, intended for a church in Seville. This was misconstrued as an allegorical representation of the Virgin, presiding over a ceremony in which Charles I was surrendering his sceptre to the queen and the pope. 'I look upon this picture as an hieroglyphic of the causes and intents of our present troubles', wrote Morley in despatching the offending object to London, where it went on exhibition in the Star Chamber.¹¹⁰

However, problems remain. As we have been taught the principles of Protestant poetics by Barbara Lewalski, Lily Campbell and John King,¹¹¹ the Reformation, even in its Calvinist expression, was not hostile to art, only to false and idolatrous art, 'men's fantasies'. There was scope for artistic sincerity. Lucas Schan's naturalistic representations of animals and birds in Conrad Gesner's *Historia Animalium*, some of them carefully coloured, were also Protestant art, in the tradition of Dürer's *De Symmetria*.¹¹² Then why was it inadmissible for so many second-generation Protestants to appeal directly to the eye with images bearing a literal resemblance to the biblical word, for example with a faithful likeness of Christ in portrait form; or by means of a dramatic realisation of a gospel

story, like Lewis Wager's touching re-enactment of the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee, when Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Jesus with her tears – virtually the last appearance of Christ on the English stage for 350 years? Why was the almost gnostic hermeticism of emblematic conceits lawful but naturalism not? This was as much to say that pictorial symbols were accessible only to literate cognoscenti, who had least need of them, in the way that truth had been concealed in parables, lest the vulgar should comprehend. It is not as if there was no established Protestant pictorial language, representing the humanity of Christ. Mid-Tudor Bibles contain plenty of such images. Francis Quarles's question of 1638 is very apt. Christ is presented in Scripture as Sower, Fisher and Physician. 'And why not presented so, as well to the eye as to the ear?' But this was written in justification of those 'silent parables', emblems.¹¹³

Consequently, those grappling with these problems suspect hidden depths, ironies, contradictions. It was not because Zwingli and Calvin were without a musical ear that Zwingli excluded music from worship altogether and that Calvin admitted it only under stringent conditions. Zwingli was a talented amateur musician and Calvin knew, doubtless from personal experience, that music had 'grande force et vigueur d'esmouvoir et enflamber le coeur des hommes'.¹¹⁴ Protestants of this secondary generation were suppressing powerful appetites in themselves, appetites equated with sensuality, in Carter's words 'whatever stirreth up corrupt nature'. Of his part as a poet Theodore Beza wrote (in the words of his Elizabethan translator):

For I confesse, that even of nature I have delighted in poetrie, and I can not yet repent me of it; nevertheless it greveth me right sore, that the little grace which God gave me in that behalfe, was employed by me in such things as the very remembrance of them irketh me now at the hart.¹¹⁵

When all else fails, we reach for the psychologist, if only for the amateur psychologist lurking within each one of us. Some scholars, no less desperate than ingenious, have wondered whether the logocentric iconophobia of a reformer like Zwingli may not imply the dominance of the left hemisphere of the brain, the seat of language-related faculties, over the visual and musical faculties of the right hemisphere. I do not know what professional neurophysiologists and psychologists would make of that, or of the evidence which this essay has presented. But it does appear that the cultural impact of what looks almost like a second English Reformation resembles that famous day in Sweden when, at a certain signal, vehicles stopped driving on the left and changed to the right, so relatively sudden and drastic was the change.

Notes

- 1 Christopher Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', *Historical Journal*, xxv (1982), pp. 995–1007.
- 2 I refer to points made by Professor Dickens in conversation. However, the argument is everywhere implicit in his *The English Reformation* (1964) and in his contribution to *The Reformation Crisis*, ed. J. Hurstfield (1965).
- 3 Susan Brigden, 'Youth and the English Reformation', *Past and Present*, no. 95 (1982), pp. 37–67. (See Reading 3 above) Cf. N.Z. Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, no. 50 (1971), pp. 41–75, reprinted in N.Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (1975), pp. 97–123. Cf. also Janine Garrisson-Estébe: 'Globalement, les nouvelles générations sont massivement présentes là, où la violence a parlé': *Protestants du Midi 1559–1598* (Toulouse, 1980), pp. 49–51.
- 4 Patrick Collinson, 'Popular and Unpopular Religion', chapter 5 of *The Religion of Protestants: the Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford, 1982); David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 44–105; Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978). Cf. Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie's shopping list of what was abusive in the perception of the Protestants of the Cévennes: 'The Mass, dancing, laughter, bowling and card playing, too long or too intimate betrothals, the debaucheries of serving-girls, abortion, feminine vanities and masculine quarrels . . .': *The Peasants of Languedoc* (1976), p. 170.
- 5 John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, 1982).
- 6 George Gifford, *A briefe discourse of certaine points of the religion which is among the common sort of christians which may be termed the countrie divinitie* (1581); Arthur Dent, *The plaine mans path-way to Heaven* (1601), p. 30. An exception to prove the rule is John Comyns's sermon *The thankfull Samaritane* (1617), preached in Exeter Cathedral. Comyns thought that the poor and painful husbandmen commonly displayed more holiness and conscionable obedience than knights and gentlemen. 'The Mechanicall man is a better Christian than a Merchant man.' However, that the one healed leper who gave thanks should be a Samaritan was a paradox, and this led Comyns into these further paradoxes.
- 7 See Duffy, 'The Godly and the Multitude in Stuart England', *Seventeenth Century Journal* 1 (1986), pp. 31–49.
- 8 George Gifford, *A sermon on the parable of the sower* (1582); William Harrison, *The difference of hearers* (1613), discussed by Christopher Haigh in 'Puritan Evangelism in the Reign of Elizabeth I', *English Historical Review*, xcii (1977), pp. 30–58. Cf. Thomas Carew on 'The Little Flock of Christ' in *Certaine godly and necessarie sermons* (1603): 'The fault . . . in the peoples hearts' (Sig. G). 'It seems by this parable that in the visible Church there are many more hypocrites than true Christians . . . Of this number [scil., of true Christians] there might peradventure be pointed out some one or two in this town, some two or three in that town, although we cannot see many' (Sig. H6).
- 9 John Norden, *A mirror for the multitude* (1586).
- 10 Philip Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses in England in Shakerspere's Youth AD 1583*, ed. F.J. Furnivall (New Shakespeare Society, n.s.s. iv, vi, xii, 1877–82), p. 144; John Darrell, *A treatise of the Church written against them of the separation, commonly called Brownists* (1617), pp. 25, 28–9. Cf. the pessimism of Jeremy Corderoy in *A warning for worldlings* (1608).
- 11 This argument, which was deployed in my Birkbeck Lectures delivered in Cambridge in 1981, is further stated in my article, 'The English Conventicle', *Studies in Church History*, xxiii (1986), pp. 223–59.
- 12 Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past and Present*, no. 87 (1980), pp. 98–127; Michael Hunter, 'The Problem of "Atheism" in Early

- Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. xxxv (1985), pp. 135–57.
- 13 These possibilities are explored, mainly on the basis of polemical and other literary evidence, in the writings of Christopher Hill; and, more recently and on a different basis, by Keith Wrightson, especially in Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525–1700* (1979), and in 'Aspects of Social Differentiation in Rural England 1580–1660', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, v (1977). See also Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500–1640* (Hassocks, 1977), 'The Ramoth-Gilead of the Good'; Gloucester 1540–1640', in *The English Commonwealth, 1547–1640*, ed. P. Clark, A.G.R. Smith and N. Tyacke (Leicester, 1979), pp. 167–87 and *The English Alehouse 1200–1830* (1983). See the critical remarks of Margaret Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 41–57.
- 14 Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, pp. 216–30.
- 15 For a particular attack on householders as patrons or 'bawds' of dancing, see Thomas Lovell, *A dialogue between custom and veritie concerning dauncing and minstrelsie* (1581).
- 16 J.R. Green, *History of the English People* (1876 edn.), p. 447.
- 17 A certain influence is exerted on these remarks and on much of what follows by Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, 1979).
- 18 See *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, i (New Haven, 1964), no. 186; and Henry VIII's last speech to Parliament of 24 December 1545: 'I am very sorry to know and hear how unreverently that precious jewel, the word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern.' (J.J. Scansbrick, *Henry VIII* (1968), p. 471.) Cf. the debate at the sign of the Bell in Northampton in 1538, reported by Margaret Bowker in *The Henrician Reformation: the Diocese of Lincoln Under John Longland 1521–1547* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 166–7; and the Thaxted man who confessed that 'in Alehouses and other uncomelie and unmeate places' he had taken upon him to 'babe, talke and rangle of the Scripture which I understode not.' (John F. Davis, *Heresy and Reformation in the South-East of England, 1520–1559* (1983), p. 95.)
- 19 BL, MS. Harley 425, fols. 4–7. For the dating of Wisdom's narrative, see J.S. Bailey, 'Robert Wisdom Under Persecution 1541–1543', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, ii (1951).
- 20 William Wilkinson, *A confutation of certaine articles* (1579), reprinted, John Strype, *Annals*, II.ii (Oxford, 1824) pp. 282–3; *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. S.R. Cattley, viii (1839), pp. 458–60. Dickens's *bon mot* was proposed in an unpublished lecture (but see his *Reformation Studies* (1982), p. 507). Joyce Lewes of Lichfield drank a hearty breakfast on the morning of her martyrdom, sharing the cup with her friends, 'the women of that town', and pledging 'all them that unfeignedly love the gospel of Jesus Christ, and wish for the abolishment of papistry'. Later these women were prescribed penance 'for drinking with her'. (*Acts of Monuments*, viii, pp. 404, 429.)
- 21 *A dialogue concerning the strife of our Church* (1584), p. 6; *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. H. Gee and W.J. Hardy (1896), pp. 421–2; *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941), p. 227; Clark, *The English Alehouse*, pp. 157–9.
- 22 Cathedral Archives and Library Canterbury, MS. X.8.8, fol. 349. I owe this reference to Dr R.J. Acheson.
- 23 *Acts and Monuments*, viii, p. 444.
- 24 Susan E. Brigden, 'The Early Reformation in London, 1520–1547', unpublished Cambridge PhD thesis (1977), pp. 302–4; *Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. S.R. Cattley, v (1838), p. 446. On Bale, see most recently King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 56–75 and *passim*.
- 25 *A newe mery and wittie comedie or enterlude newlye imprinted, treating upon the*

historie of Jacob and Esau (licensed 1557/8, printed 1568, Malone Society reprint, 1956); Lewis Wager, *A new enterlude . . . entreating of the life and repentance of Marie Magdalene, not only godlie learned and fruitful, but also well furnished with pleasant myrth and pastime* (1566; modern edn. ed. F.I. Carpenter (Chicago, 1904)). See King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 278–83.

- 26 Cf. the interlude by W. Wager (no relation), *The longer thou livest* (see following footnote) where (pp. 36–8 in Benbow edition) Incontinence tempts the young man Moros with talk of 'to kisse, to clip, and in bed to play/Oh with lusnie girties to singe and daunce . . . Sometime you may have your choice of twenty'.
In chronological order of first publication: W. Wager, *The longer thou livest the more foole thou art* (c. 1559–68, written c. 1559); modern ed. R. Mark Benbow (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1967); *A newe interlude of impacynete povertie* (1560, written c. 1550); *A pretie new enterlude called Nice Wanton* (1560, written c. 1547–53); *Godly Queen Hester* (1561, written c. 1527); *A pretie new enterlude both pitie and pleasant of the story of Kyng Daryus* (1565); *An enterlude called Lusty Juventus pleasant of the story of King Darius* (1565); *A newe enterlude no lesse wittie then pleasant Child* (1569, written c. 1560); *A newe enterlude no lesse wittie then pleasant entituled New Custome* (1573, written c. 1570); Thomas Garter, *The comody of the most vertuous and godlye Susanne* (licensed 1568–9, printed 1578; Malone Society reprint, 1937). (Dating from *The Revels History of the Drama in English* (1983), ii, 1500–1576, corrected by King, *English Reformation Literature*.) See also Sylvia D. Feldman, *The Morality-Patterned Comedy of the Renaissance* (The Hague and Paris, 1970), Robert Porter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition* (1975), chapter 5 'Early Elizabethan Plays in the Morality Tradition'.

28 See the Prologue:

And though perchaunce some wanton worde dotte passe which may not seeme,

Or gestures light not meete for this, your wisedomes may not deeme,

Accompt that nought delightes the heart of man on earth,

So much as matters grave and sad, if they be mixt with myrth.

Sensualitas says of Susannah: 'By God I would spend my best cote to fishe within her poole' (l. 427).

29 See especially *Nice Wanton, Lusty Juventus* and *The Disobedient Child*.

30 David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA, 1962); E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, i (Oxford, 1923), pp. 240–56. See also *The Revels History of the Drama*, which, like Chambers and many other writers, makes too absolute a watershed out of the royal proclamation of 16 May 1559 which prohibited the playing of interludes 'wherein either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal shall be handled or treated', which, in the manner of such proclamations, can only have taken temporary effect at best. (*Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, ii (New Haven, 1969), no. 458.)

31 Bevington, *Mankind to Marlowe*, pp. 13–14.

32 'Truely, I say, whether you geve halpence or pence, Your gayne shallbe double, before you depart hence.'

33 *R(ecords) of the E(arly) E(nglish) D(rama)*, iii. Coventry, ed. R. W. Ingram (Toronto, 1981), p. 207.

34 REED, I. *Chester*, ed. Lawrence M. Clopper (Toronto, 1979), pp. 109–17, 184, 197–9, *R of the EED*, II. York, i. ed. Alexander F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (Toronto, 1979), pp. 368–70, 378–9, 390–3; Harold C. Gardiner, *Mysteries' End: an Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage* (New Haven, 1946), pp. 72–83; Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519–1583: the Struggle for a Reformed Church* (1979), p. 203; David Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 246–7.

35 R.E.E.D. York, pp. 481–2, 486; *Mimutes and Accounts of Stratford-upon-Avon*, ed. E.I. Frupp, ii, 1566–1577 (Dugdale Society Pubns., iii, 1924), xxxvi. R.E.E.D., *Chester*, pp. 184, 292; Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, pp. 51–2.

- 36 Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. W.b.484, pp. 31–2. I owe this reference to Professor W. Ringler.
- 37 William Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix: the Players Scourge or Actors Tragedie* (1638), p. 701. See the collection of 'Documents of Criticism' in Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv, pp. 194–255.
- 38 William A. Ringler, 'The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage 1558–1579', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, v (1942), pp. 391–418; William Ringler, *Stephen Gosson: a Biographical and Critical Study* (Princeton, 1924); Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, i, pp. 242–56; Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and the Theatre* (Cambridge, 1980); Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981).
- 39 Stephen Gosson, *Plays confuted in five actions* (1582), Sig. E1; Anthony Munday, *A second and third blast of retraitts from plaies and theaters* (1590), pp. 95–6. I owe this point to Dr Michael O'Connell of University of California, Santa Barbara.
- 40 Michael Hartway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (1982).
- 41 Ringler, 'The First Phase'. That there was some exaggeration in Ringler's argument is suggested by Edmund Grindal's letter as bishop of London to Sir William Cecil, 22 February 1563/4, in which he attributes a renewal of plague in London to the players, complains that 'God's word by their impure mouths is profaned and turned into scoffs' and recommends a proclamation to inhibit all plays for a year, 'and if it were for ever, it were not amiss.' (*The Remains of Edmund Grindal*, ed. W. Nicholson (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), pp. 268–9.)
- 42 Glynn Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 to 1600*, i (1963), pp. 329–31.
- 43 *Proceedings in the Parliament of Elizabeth I*, i, 1558–1581 ed. T.E. Hartley (Leicester, 1981), p. 31.
- 44 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv, p. 194.
- 45 Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (1578), Sigs. C6^v–7^v; Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv, p. 273.
- 46 Theodore Beza, *A tragedie of Abrahams sacrifice*, tr. Arthur Golding (1577), Preface.
- 47 *Anatomy of Abuses*, pp. 140–3; Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix*, pp. 789–93; John Northbrooke, *A treatise wherein dicing, dauncing, vaine playes or enterluds with other idle pastimes etc. commonly used on the Sabbath day are reprovved* (1577), (Shakespeare Society repr. 1843), p. 92; *Erasmus on his Times: A Shortened Version of the 'Adages' of Erasmus*, ed. M.M. Phillips (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 75–6.
- 48 R.E.E.D., *Covenry*, p. 150; R.E.E.D., *Chester*, p. 75; R.E.E.D., *York*, p. 361.
- 49 *Anatomy of Abuses*, p. 141.
- 50 *Anatomy of Abuses*, pp. 143–4.
- 51 R.E.E.D., *York*, p. 353; R.E.E.D., *Chester*, p. 248.
- 52 Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (1968), pp. 109–20; Lily B. Campbell, *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 238–60; Thomas Lodge, *A Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage-Plays*, ed. D. Laing (1853); Thomas Lodge, *Wits miserie, and the worlds madnesse* (1596), p. 40.
- 53 Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix*, p. 934. Cf. Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, pp. 244–5.
- 54 *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. S.R. Cattley, vi (1838), p. 31; Gosson, *Schoole of Abuse*, Sig. D3; William Crashaw, quoted in H. Mutschmann and K. Wentersdorf, *Shakespeare and Catholicism* (New York, 1952), p. 102.
- 55 What follows is based on Hyder E. Rollins's listings in *An Analytical Index to the Ballad-Entries in the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London* (Studies in Philology 21.1, Chapel Hill, 1924); together with *The Roxburgh Ballads* (Ballad Society, 1869 etc), *The Bagford Ballads*, iv (Ballad Society, 1878), Hyder E. Rollins, *Old English Ballads 1553–1625 Chiefly from Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1920), Hyder E. Rollins, *The Black-Letter Broadside Ballads* (P.M.L.A. xxxiv 1919), *The Eving Collection of English Broadside Ballads in the Library of the University of Glasgow*, ed. John Holloway (Glasgow, 1971), *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights* (1584) by Clement Robinson and Divers Others, (ed.), Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge, MA, 1924), *The Pack of Autolycus*, ed. H.E. Rollins (1972), A
- Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs Commonly Known as 'The Gude and Godlie Ballatis' Reprinted from the Edition of 1567, ed. A.F. Mitchell (Scottish Text Society, xxxix, Edinburgh, 1897), *An Anthology of Popular British Ballad Poetry*, ed. V. de Sola Pinto and A.F. Rodway (1957); and the celebrated Britwell Ballads in the Huntington Library, examined in their originals but also reprinted in *Ballads and Broadside Chiefly of the Elizabethan Period*, ed. Herbert L. Collmann (Oxford, 1912). See also Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1966).
- 56 Franklin B. Williams Jr., 'Lost Books of Tudor England', *The Library*, 5th ser. xxxiii (1978), p. 13. See Rollins 1335, *The judgment of God* (1580) and John Charnock's *The judgment of voyce* (Rollins 1337, 1565–6).
- 57 Rollins, *The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad*, p. 288.
- 58 Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, pp. 615–19.
- 59 Rollins, *Old English Ballads*, pp. xxviii–ix; Hyder E. Rollins, 'William Elderton: Elizabethan Actor and Ballad Writer', *Studies in Philology*, xvii (1920), pp. 199–245; *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights*, p. 101. *The gods of love* was printed in *The Times* on 17 November 1958 from a MS. copy in the possession of James M. Osborn. (Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, p. 260.) *The pangs of love* was parodied in *Knaue ze not God Omnipotent and Was not Salomon the King*, both in *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*. (Rollins, *The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad*, p. 288.)
- 60 John Hall, *The Court of Virtue* (1565), ed. Russell A. Fraser (New Brunswick, NJ, 1961). Four copies survive, all imperfect, that in the Huntington Library (completed by the BL copy) providing the basis of this text. The surviving fragments of *The Court of Venus* are edited by Russell A. Fraser (Durham, NC, 1955). For Brice's moralisation, see Collmann, *Ballads and Broadside*, no. 13. Hall also published *Certaine chapters taken out of the Proverbes of Salomon . . . translated into English metre* (1550) but the credit for this mostly belonged to Thomas Sternhold. 'A ballade againste nigardie and riches' with which Hall's *Proverbes* ends also occurs in the Catholic collection BL, MS. Add. 15225, fols. 7^v–9^v. In the preface to *Proverbes*, Hall displays the almost prurient fascination with vice which was characteristic of moral plagiarizers and writers of moral interludes, attacking 'these gygolat getis' who dye their hair yellow and paint their faces.
- 61 H.P. Clive, 'The Calvinist Attitude to Music', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, xx (1958), pp. 302–7.
- 62 Maurice Frost, *English and Scottish Psalm and Hymn Tunes c. 1543–1677* (1953).
- 63 The analysis is based on Rollins's *Analytical Index*, with the addition of certain ballads in the Huntington Library collections not included by Rollins.
- 64 The earliest reference to *Greensleeves* occurs in the *Stationers Register* for 3 September 1580, when Richard Jones was licensed to print *A newe northern dittie of the Lady Greene Sleeves. Greene Sleeves moralized to the Scripture* appeared on 15 September 1580.
- 65 They included *A most excellent godly new ballad: [shewing] the manifold abuses of this wicked world, the intolerable pride of people, the wantonnesse [of] women, the dissimulation of flatterers, the subtilty of deceivers, the beastlines of drunkards, the filthinesse of whoredome, the unthriftines of gamesters, the cruelty of landlords, with a number of other inconveniences. (The Pack of Autolycus, no. 1.)*
- 66 The connection with the *Song of John Careless* seems complex. *A godly and vertuous songe or ballade made by the constant member of Christe John Carelesse* (from which two lines are adapted in *King Lear*, I.iv.171–2) occurs in BL, MS. Sloane 1896, fols. 11–12, and was printed by Miles Coverdale in *Certaine most godly, fruitfull and comfortable letters* (1564) and often reprinted. In 1583 the tune of *John Carelesse* was used for *A declaration of the death of John Lewes, a most detestable and obstinate hereticke burned at Norwich the xviii daye of September 1583* and in 1586 another ballad was set to the same tune. (Rollins, *Old English Ballads*, no. 8.)
- 67 It seems to have been the third most popular Elizabethan hit tune, coming after 'Packington's Pound' and 'Fortune My Foe'. (Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, pp. 564–70; *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights*, p. 90n.)

- 68 Thomas Nashe, *Works*, ed. R.B. McKerrow (1915), iii, 104.
 69 Cathedral Archives and Library Canterbury, MS.X.4.1 (i), fol. 51. I owe this reference to Dr R.J. Acheson.
 70 *A Compendious Book*, pp. xxxiii–iv.
 71 The evidence is in Maunsell's *Catalogue. (The Court of Virtue*, p. xiv).
 72 Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (1981), pp. 194–218.
 73 *Anatomy of Abuses*, p. 171. For a more balanced view of the Elizabethan musical profession, see W.L. Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society from Elizabeth to Charles I* (Princeton, 1953).
 74 See a number of cases from the *Acta* of the Canterbury Archdeacons Court, including the case cited, in my *Religion of Protestants*, pp. 206–7. On minstrels and ballad singers and vendors as vagrants, see A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: the Vagrancy Problem in England 1560–1640* (1985), pp. 97–8. John Walsall, *A sermon preached at Pauls Crosse* (1578), Sigs. Eiii, Ev.
 75 Lovell, *A dialogue between custom and vertice*.
 76 Thomas Lodge wrote: 'Eldertons nose would grin at them if they should but equal the worst of his Ballads.' (*Wits miserie*, p. 10.) And Thomas Nashe of a 'red nose Ballet-maker'. (*Works*, iii, p. 133.) See Rollins, 'William Elderton', *Rollins, Old English Ballads*, p. xviii. An example of Elderton's 'fytting' is his *Reprehension aganste Green Slaves* (Rollins 2276, 13 February 1581.)
 77 Nicholas Bownd, *The doctrine of the Sabbath* (1595), pp. 241–2.
 78 Preface to Coverdale, *Goostly psalms and spirituall songs* (before 1539); quoted, Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, p. 33.
 79 *Acts and Monuments*, v, pp. 404–9; Rollins, *Old English Ballads*, p. xi. For some French parallels, see Philip Benedict, *Reven During the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 60. Donald Kelly, *The Beginnings of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 97–100.
 80 *Acts and Monuments*, viii, p. 416, v, p. 445.
 81 *Acts and Monuments*, viii, p. 578. In 1546 one Essex villager rebuked another for a song he had sung at a bridal feast, abusing the images of the saints as idols: 'Hunte, though thou be nowght thy selfe, entyce none order man to be bad as thou arte,' (PRO, S.P. 1/130, fols. 451–2. I owe this reference to Dr Susan Bridgen.) See a similar Essex case in G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police: the Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 32.
 82 *Acts and Monuments*, v, pp. 403, 445, viii, pp. 214, 554–5; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xviii (i), no. 447, p. 267; Huntington Library, Britwell Ballads no. 34 (HEH 18295).
 83 My chief debt in what follows is to Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979).
 84 *Certaine Psalmes chosen out of the Psalter* (c. 1549), Sig. A3^v; William Baldwin, *Canticles or Balades of Salomon* (1549), Sig. A3^v; Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, pp. 23, 37. See also Rollins, *The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad*, p. 259. King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 217–26. Hallert Smith, 'English Metrical Psalms in the Sixteenth-Century and their Literary Significance', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, ix (1940), pp. 249–71. Smith seems to me somewhat to underplay the denunciation by English psalmodists of 'ungodly songs and ballads'.
 85 Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, pp. 36, 63, 67, 34–5.
 86 Clive, 'Calvinist Attitude to Music', pp. 86–7, 100–3.
 87 The earliest references are in *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. J.H. Nichols (Camden Society, xlii, 1848), p. 212, and *Zurich Letters*, ed. H. Robinson (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1842), p. 71.
 88 Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, p. xv.
 89 Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, pp. 57–71.
 90 R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981).
 91 Michael Leslie, 'The Dialogue Between Bodies and Souls: Picture and Poesy in the English Renaissance', *Word and Image*, i (1985), pp. 16–30. On Emblematism, see

- Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, chapter 6, 'Protestant Emblematism: Sacred Emblems and Religious Lyrics'.
 92 Huntington Library, Britwell Ballads no. 58, HEH 18319.
 93 Jill Finsten, *Isaac Oliver: Art at the Courts of Elizabeth I and James I* (New York, 1981), i, p. 137, ii, p. 231.
 94 Stephen Bateman, *A cristall glasse of chrisitian reformation wherein the godly maye beholde the coloured abuses used in this our present tyme* (1569).
 95 Richard Bernard, *Contemplative pictures with wholesome precepts* (1610).
 96 Pages 5–6: 'The azured skie his comely curtaine, his privie chamber, the place of unspeakable pleasure. His face is a flame of fire, his voice thunder, his wrath, dread and terrible horroir. If he meete his enemies, he rides upon the wings of the winde, his chariots are without number: he raineth upon them snares to entrap them, fire to devour them, hailstones to kill them: he sends a smook to smother them, a stormy tempest to terrifie them, the stuncke of brimstone to annoy them and hote thunderbolts to shoote them thorow.'
 97 Desiderius Erasmus, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings*, ed. John C. Olin (New York, 1965), p. 106; Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or The Defence of Poesy*, ed. G. Shepherd (Manchester, 1965), pp. 99, 101 and *passim*.
 98 K.J. Höltgen, 'The Reformation of Images and Some Jacobean Writers on Art', in *Functions of Literature: Essays Presented to Erwin Wolff on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. U. Broich, T. Stemmier and G. Stratmann (Tübingen, 1984), pp. 126, 142.
 99 Höltgen, 'Reformation of Images', p. 136; E.K. Chambers, 'The First Illustrations to "Shakespeare"', *The Library*, 4th ser. v (1925), pp. 327–9; J. Dover Wilson, 'Titus Andronicus on the Stage in 1595', *Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (New York, 1975), pp. 122–3.
 100 King, *English Reformation Literature*, pp. 127–8.
 101 Wager, *The longer thou livest*, lines 469–70, 483.
 102 Höltgen, 'Reformation of Images', pp. 127–9.
 103 John Carter, *A plaine and compendious exposition of Christs Sermon on the Mount* (1627), p. 42; 'An Homily Against Perill of Idolatry', *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches* (1811 edn.), p. 200.
 104 Huntington Library, MS. HA Inventories Box 1, no. 1.
 105 C.L. Kingsford, 'Essex House, Formerly Leicester House and Exeter Inn', *Archaeologia*, xxiii (1923), pp. 1–54.
 106 Richard Simpson, 'Sir Thomas Smith and the Wall Paintings at Hill Hall, Essex: Scholarly Theory and Design in the Sixteenth-Century', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, cxxx (1971), pp. 1–20. (I owe this reference to Dr Michael Leslie.)
 107 Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (1983), pp. 453–4.
 108 Witness an inventory of things found in the house of Mrs Hampden of Stoke in Buckinghamshire on 27 January 1584, which included 'ii pictures upon parchment', 'a picture of Christe' and 'a picture of (as it is termed) the Judgment daye' – all of which were assumed to be incriminating. (PRO, S.P. 12/167/47.) In the same year, a search of the house of Roger Smyth, gentleman, in Holborn yielded 'xii prynted superstyrous pictures' (PRO, S.P. 12/172/106), while in Paris Garden in Southwark a raid by the constables on the home of Hewghe Katlyn (again in 1584) uncovered 'certayne pictures . . . and on crucifix', which were delivered to the recorder of London. (PRO, S.P. 12/176/16.)
 109 Susan Foister, 'Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth-Century English Inventories', *Burlington Magazine*, cxxiii (1981), pp. 273–82. I am grateful to Dr George Bernard for alerting me to Dr Foister's findings. Of course, as the preceding footnote tends to suggest, woodcuts and other prints were more prevalent than works of art of a kind and value which would lead to their inclusion in inventories, and to an extent which cannot now be known.
 110 Charles Thomas-Stanford, *Sussex in the Great Civil War and the Interregnum 1642–1660* (1910), pp. 151–5. I owe this reference to Anthony Fletcher.

111 Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, Campbell, *Divine Poetry*, King, *English Reformation Literature*.

112 Richard Simpson, 'Smith and the Wall Paintings', pp. 6-7.

113 K.J. Höltgen, *Francis Quarles (1592-1644)* (Tübingen, 1978), p. 216.

114 Charles Garside Jr, *Zwingli and the Arts* (New Haven, 1966); Clive, 'Calvinist Attitude to Music', p. 86.

115 *Tragedie of Abraham*, Preface.

12

Piety in the pedlar's pack: continuity and change, 1578-1630

TESSA WATT

Pedlars and ballad sellers had a reputation as 'masterless' men and women at the nether regions of society; often prosecuted as vagrants, and forced by economic hardship into petty crime.¹ Writers like Shakespeare and Robert Greene described pedlars who doubled as pick-pockets, while the record books show that real chapmen were indeed often accused of theft at fairs and markets.² Ballad sellers were not approved of by Protestant reformers like Nicholas Bownde, who considered the possibility of printing the psalms as broadsides, but rejected it on these grounds: 'Indeed, many of the common singing men are so ungodly, that it were better for them to leave their mouths stopped, then once to open them to pollute such holy and sacred songs.'³

However, despite this disapproval, and whether willingly or unwittingly, the pedlar of print could be a messenger bearing God's word into towns and villages across the country. Richard Baxter, who grew up in the village of Eaton Constantine in Shropshire, recorded how, around 1630, 'a poor pedlar came to the door that had ballads and some good books: and my father bought of him Dr Sibb's *Bruised Reed*'.⁴ This book of sermons by the Puritan divine helped to strengthen the adolescent Baxter in his convictions, and gave him 'a livelier apprehension of the mystery of redemption'.

It is rare to find concrete references in this period to pedlars of print coming directly to the door, and to a small village such as Eaton Constantine. Ballad sellers appear most frequently in the court records of large cities such as Norwich, and they are often to be found at the major fairs.⁵ However, we do know that in 1578 a pedlar in Cambridgeshire ventured

Reprinted from M. Spufford, ed. *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995).

several miles off the main road to the village of Balsham, where he sold 'lytle bookes' in the churchyard. One of these books was bought by 'a young barber-surgeon who does not appear to have been very prosperous, since he was also a patcher of old clothes, and swore on oath that he would be "worthe nothinge" if his debts were paid off'. His wares cannot have been very expensive; nor did the arrival of this itinerate bookseller, in itself, seem to cause any special remark.⁶

Did this pedlar's visit have anything to do with the presence of the Family of Love in Balsham, and did the 'little books' include the teachings of the Familist leader Hendrick Niclaes? In 1574, just a few years earlier, six Balsham yeomen confessed to holding private conventicles in their houses, and in 1580 four of them were imprisoned as members of the Familist sect.⁷ A local leader of the sect in Wisbech owned over half a dozen books of Hendrick Niclaes's teachings, and other followers in the area must have had access to Familist writings.⁸ Works which were printed at a Familist press in Cologne in this period included the cheapest and most portable of wares: a broadside of 1575 contains a blessing and grace to be said at table, and another offers an 'abc' for the Family's children.⁹

Our pedlar could have collected these broadsides from one of several booksellers in Cambridge, who were used to acquiring books published on the Continent for their scholarly clientele. The Cambridge stationer and bookbinder John Denys was apparently doing a brisk trade with the Continent, and in particular with the city of Cologne where the Familist works were printed. He died of 'plague' in 1578, the very same year our pedlar visited Balsham. His inventory of 1578 lists a copy of Avenarius's *Precationes* which was printed in Cologne in that same year of 1578.¹⁰ Of course, the distribution of heretical works was not to be undertaken lightly, and it seems unlikely that an ordinary pedlar would wander the county carrying Familist broadsides to show to all and sundry. If our pedlar did distribute Niclaes's writings it would mean he had special connections with the Familist yeomen and was a regular and trusted supplier. If he did not, the Balsham sect may have got their books directly from a Cambridge bookseller, or perhaps from the London-Cambridge carrier. Certainly the Quakers of the seventeenth century used carriers to send their books, and in 1654 the Atherston-London carrier took the risk of carrying 100 copies of a Quaker pamphlet for distribution.¹¹ Or the Familists may have been served by a specialist pedlar of their own faith. The London stationer Michael Sparke remembered travelling around the country selling Roman Catholic books, during his apprenticeship between 1603 and 1610, and it may be that the Familists, too, had their own supplier who has escaped the record books.¹²

In the absence of further evidence it seems fair to assume that our Balsham bookseller was an ordinary petty chapman, possibly with a small but risky sideline feeding the Balsham Familists with seditious print. For