

STORIES OF GOD AND GALL:
PRESBYTERIAN POLEMIC DURING THE CONFORMITY WARS OF
MID-SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

JULIE FAN: Stories of God and Gall:
Presbyterian Polemic during the Conformity Wars of
Mid-Seventeenth-Century England and Scotland
(Under the direction of Dr. Megan Matchinkse)

The first study to analyze Presbyterians' paradoxical positioning in polemical and political contests, this dissertation redefines what it meant to be both moderate and passionate in the Caroline era. This project puts literature, theology, and history into dialogue, illuminating how, why, and when certain kinds of Presbyterianism were perceived as constructive or menacing during the 1630s and 1640s. I explore the processes by which Presbyterianism captured, controlled, and appalled the popular imagination, moving Presbyterianism from the margins to the mainstream and back to the borders again. The most significant, complex, historically dynamic cultural agents of the Wars in the Three Kingdoms, Presbyterians sought to transform the ways in which people worshiped while also attempting to stabilize the implications of this profound transformation for ecclesiastical, social, and political order. The wars were neither inevitable nor coincidental, and Presbyterians were neither revolutionaries nor hypocrites.

In the mid-seventeenth century, religious Presbyterian preachers, polemicists, and politicians in Scotland and England were attempting to amend religious and civil society; they promoted institutional changes while defining them as reform. Ultimately, they became victims of their own propaganda. Because Presbyterian policies and appeals were offensive—coercing conformity and demonizing opponents—Presbyterians were

perceived as foes even though they sought to amend and edify, not abuse and destroy. Scottish and English Presbyterians of all sorts (*jure divino* and *jure humano*) were reformers, but the collapse of their alliances with one another and with other Parliamentarians had radical consequences. After introducing the methodology, stakes, and terms of the project in the first chapter, the second chapter argues that British Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents were unified by shared values—truth, order, and godliness—but divided by private priorities. Chapter three explores how moderate Presbyterians, such as Thomas Edwards, could define severe strategies as moderate and charitable. Chapter four clears Presbyterians of charges of hypocrisy by explaining how Presbyterians moved people's affections and stirred people's imaginations to protect them from base pleasures and erroneous opinions. Presbyterians were paradoxical but not hypocritical; they used extreme measures to oppose enormities while striving with sincerity and humility to safeguard souls and society.

For my beloved husband, Neal

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¹Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis* (London, 1645), 1.

² William Prynne, "To the christian reader," *Histrion-mastix, the players scourge or actors tragaedie* (London, 1633), sig. A2v. Prynne's full statement, adapted and condensed for my title, reads, "he who would lively portraiture a Divell, or a deformed monster, must needes draw some gastly lines, and use some sordid colours."

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³Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana* (London, 1646) in *Gangreana* (Ilkley, West Yorkshire: The Rota and the University of Exeter, 1977), 22. The Rota edition reprints all three original parts of *Gangreana* together; it retains the original page numbers. For expediency, I have drawn all references from the Rota edition.

⁴Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist* (London, 1648), 5.

⁵Adam Blair, "The charges of the Scottish commissioners against the Archbishop of Canterbury" (December 15, 1640), Braye Mss 2, ff. 93-95 and Journal of Geoffrey Palmer, December 18 1640, MS KKVI 38, Cambridge University Library, p. 123 in *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*, Ed. Maija Jansson, Vol. 1 of 7: 3 Nov.-19 Dec. 1640 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 648 and 661.

⁶Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity* (London, 1646), 23.

⁷George Gillespie, *Wholesome severity reconciled with Christian liberty; or, the true resolution of a present controversie concerning liberty of conscience. Here you have the question state, the middle way betwixt popish Tyrannie and schismatizing liberty approved, and also confirmed from scripture, and the testimonie of divines, yea of whole churches* (London, 1644), 19-20, 24.

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⁸ Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 178.

⁹ Martin Luther, *Select works of Martin Luther*, Trans. Rev. Henry Cole, Vol. 3 of 3 (London, 1826), 521, 523.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Presbyterian *via media*

I. *Overview of the study and its methodology*

In the 1630s and 40s, religious Presbyterian polemicists, preachers, and politicians were attempting to amend religious and civil society; they promoted institutional changes while defining them as reform. Ultimately, they became victims of their own propaganda. Religious Presbyterians wanted to enhance the existing systems of social order and edification, not destroy them, but they needed the people, parliament, and prince to cooperate with them and with one another so that Britain could purify—and preserve—its church and state structures and operations. Scottish and English Presbyterians of all sorts (*jure divino* and *jure humano*) were reformers, not revolutionaries, but the collapse of their alliances with one another and with other Parliamentarians had radical consequences.

During the early days of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, Presbyterians were controlling their performances and their press. Much has been made of Jenny Geddes's seemingly spontaneous rebellion against the introduction of the new prayer book in Scotland (1637): the female commoner's act of catapulting a stool at a conforming dean's head. That vivid scene fulfills our expectations for the start of a war: an unlikely protagonist protests her oppression by passionately hurling a humble household item at the head of a tyrant's proud minion. It also draws a familiar character sketch of Presbyterians as zealous, turbulent troublemakers. But the Scottish Prayer Book riots

were not wild uprisings by the poor populace; they were pieces of political theatre planned by ministers and aristocrats with vested interests in ending Charles I's personal rule of the church and the state. The much later Pride's Purge riots were genuinely dangerous, both physically and politically, but those protests sought to safeguard the status quo—the magisterially established form of temporal and ecclesiastical government—not overturn it. Both strategic and spontaneous political actions by religious Presbyterians reveal some aspects of the true mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterian character, which was surprisingly moderate: surprising not only because Presbyterians sought temperance but also because their measures and methods were unique. Presbyterians would disobey harmful human ordinances and eliminate abusive offices, but they would also fight to defend magisterial authority and lawful order (lawful by divine institution, human institution, or both). Their belief that God ordains political societies led them to revere magistrates as ministers of God to whom submission is due, but it also led them to esteem and obey God's ordinances before man's and to judge magistrates' ordinances using God's measure: Scripture.

Because Revisionist historians have demonstrated that many personal and local causes contributed to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, some scholars now neglect studies of religious and political discourse during that period, as if discussions of ideology and rhetoric must be separated from history lest it become anachronistic and teleological.¹⁰ This project challenges that disciplinary separatism by exploring ways that Presbyterian stories and slanders both shaped and were shaped by the mid-seventeenth-

¹⁰See Kevin Sharpe, "Approaches," *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England: Essays and Studies* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), 1-9 for a clear summary of popular historiographical methodologies and their relationships to one another.

century wars in Scotland and England. Conceiving of speech as action, I treat the vocabulary of the conflicts as historical events and social instruments: sometimes promoting change and sometimes promoting constancy, sometimes fostering alliances and sometimes fostering animosities. Following Ann Hughes, I refuse both to conflate the signifier with the signified and to privilege one to the exclusion of the other:

In the first place the labels, categories, or stereotypes through which people seek to define what is true or orthodox—and to demonize opponents as outsiders, as the 'other'—have a real impact in a real world because they influence (to put it no stronger) how that world is experienced and understood.... Furthermore, in their own time, labels have to have some plausibility—some recognizable connection to how individuals behave—if they are to have any polemical effect; indeed stereotypes often interact in a complex way with stigmatized groups' self-images in processes of identity formation.¹¹

Language exists in a context that it helps to create. It is alive. It has a legacy, and it leaves a legacy. It repeats the past while evolving in the present and shaping the future.

However, it need not be teleological. Acknowledging that the past helps to constitute the present is not tantamount to saying that "the past has been leading somewhere" in particular, as if that movement were inevitable.¹² Language is unstable, but it is not thereby irrelevant or untrustworthy. Making meaning has always been a confusing game. Historians have to discern the rules by which cultural producers were playing as well as how those rules were modified and broken. That is why historians need the help of literary analysts and why more literary analysts need to join me in attending to this kind of work: close readings of cultural texts.

¹¹Ann Hughes, *"Gangreana" and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11.

¹²Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas*, 4.

This post-structuralist approach helps us put literary bias into perspective. Rather than dismissing "literary, partisan, and generically shaped sources" because they are neither objective records of history and theology nor pure poetry, we can study the complex relationships therein: between language and meaning, events and experiences, perceptions and representations, and imagination and understanding.¹³ Printed texts cannot give us a complete account of an age, but no source can. To concede, as I do, that Presbyterian propaganda was more popular (in capturing people's imaginations) than it was successful (in moving them to comply) is not to suggest that it was less significant. Ideological impacts are frequently invisible and unquantifiable. The potency of language cannot be measured by the fulfillment of anticipated or desired responses. Conceiving of speech as both cultural artifact and cultural creator, we remember to appreciate the theological, ecclesiastical, political, and social values that may be inscribed therein and inculcated thereby.

This study is theological as well as historical and literary because we cannot understand the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, much less Presbyterian positioning therein, unless we attend to doctrine. Recent studies in popular politics and religion, such as Darren Oldridge's *Religion and Society in Early Stuart England*, have veered away from doctrinal discussions because ordinary British subjects were uninterested in academic debates, but this study suggests that Presbyterian ideology was not purely academic; Presbyterians were also anxious about the excesses of Scholasticism.¹⁴ Even if commoners were not reading the pamphlet wars between Presbyterians, Independents,

¹³Ann Hughes, *"Gangreana" and the Struggle for the English Revolution*, 11.

¹⁴See Darren Oldridge, *Religion and Society in Early Stuart England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); see below, chapter four.

and Episcopalians, they were engaged in the struggle over the reputation and reception of Presbyterianism. They were familiar with the stories of Presbyterian martyrs, such as William Prynne and John Bastwick, and heresiographers, such as Thomas Edwards. By discussing doctrine, this dissertation is able both to explain the actions of some of the most infamous Presbyterian polemicists and to make sense of popular reactions to them. Popularity is only one measure of power; though Presbyterianism was never widely practiced in England, its principles and policies were prominent both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and they need to be understood. Real-world outcomes will serve as one measure of Presbyterian polemic, but evolutions in thought and form matter as well. In this project, I put literature, theology, and history in conversation with one another. This dialogue will illumine how, why, and when certain kinds of Presbyterianism were perceived as constructive or menacing during the 1630s and 1640s. We will come to understand the processes by which Presbyterianism captured, controlled, and appalled the popular imagination, moving Presbyterianism from the margins to the mainstream and back to the borders again.

Because of its soteriological focus, this dissertation occasionally intersects with studies of predestination originally pioneered by Nicholas Tyacke and subsequently trodden by other revisionists and counter-revisionists; however, those paths are both narrow and well worn, so this study attempts to blaze new trails. Soteriological anxiety was central to the formation of Presbyterianism and to Presbyterian positioning in the mid-seventeenth-century conflicts; however, reducing soteriology and doctrine to the theories and practice of predestination limits our ability to perceive and understand the nexus of Presbyterian politics: the attempts of religious Presbyterians to govern the

invisible church spiritually and to encourage godly magistrates to govern the visible church not only actively (through reforms and rebukes) but also obediently (without abusing their divine and civil warrants). The Wars of the Three Kingdoms are not attributable to a breakdown in the so-called "Calvinist consensus." Like Peter White, I am skeptical that "a doctrinal consensus" founded on a "Calvinist" theology of predestination "exist[ed]" and served "as a 'theological cement' which held the Elizabethan and Jacobean church together" until the "Calvinist heritage was overthrown in the 1620s by Arminianism."¹⁵ I admit that most Englishmen revered Calvin, and I often use the *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1559) as a proof text for Presbyterianism, but I am not convinced that Englishmen accepted double predestination; even if they did, that would not, in my mind, constitute a "doctrinal consensus" because predestination is not the foundation of the Christian faith. Accepting or rejecting predestination may reinforce or undermine fundamental doctrine, respectively, but faith in Christ does not depend on first accepting predestination. To state my objection directly, studies that follow Tyacke's *Anti-Calvinists* in reducing "[t]he characteristic theology of English Protestant sainthood" to "a belief in divine predestination" both oversimplify core Christianity (the truth) and overcomplicate faith (implying that predestination forms the foundation of true belief and not the scaffolding).¹⁶ I agree with White's conception of a dynamic theological middle ground, one in which there was an ever-evolving spectrum of doctrines with which

¹⁵Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic: Conflict and consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), x-xiii, 1-2.

¹⁶Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1.

theologians could identify themselves and others.¹⁷ However, I question White's decision to explain the complex doctrinal *via media* in terms of predestination alone because that focus reinforces false dichotomies, such as Max Weber's claim, which Tyacke repeats, "Every consistent doctrine of predestined grace inevitably implied a radical and ultimate devaluation of all magical, sacramental and institutional distributions of grace, in view of God's sovereign will."¹⁸ There may have been a polemical tendency, more political than theological, for some to emphasize predestination rather than the sacraments while others emphasized the sacraments rather than predestination, but the two doctrines were not mutually exclusive (or mutually dependent for that matter). Calvin certainly valued both; so did Presbyterians and Independents. Many moderate Christians, including moderate Presbyterians, considered the sacraments to be instruments of grace, means by which God fulfilled his predestined plan to save certain people; they also considered externals of religion, such as ceremonies and discipline, to be spiritual and essential by consequence, though they might be *adiaphora* in form and civil in warrant. Though White might agree with these qualifications, his discussions of predestination belie that fact. In his eagerness to prove that reformers were not debating "Arminianism," he downplays debates over rites of worship and modes of spiritual censorship; he acknowledges the liturgical and sabbatarian contentions, but he does not explore their soteriological foundation because they do not relate directly to predestination.¹⁹ White does not adequately explore how

¹⁷Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic*, 11-12.

¹⁸Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Trans. Ephraim Fischhoff, 4th ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 203 qtd. in Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 10.

¹⁹Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic*, 308.

"the doctrinal balance" in England was at times threatened by doctrines other than predestination.²⁰ Though White's perception of the middle ground was an understandable response to the narrowly focused studies to which he was responding, his excellent, theologically rigorous work (on predestination alone) regrettably exacerbates the already skewed vantage points constructed in the period itself.

Studies that focus exclusively on doctrine, polity, *or* worship instead of balancing the three reinforce or excuse the war-time tendency of mid-seventeenth-century Episcopalians to act as if the invisible church, the national church, and the covenant church are collapsible or the tendency of some early modern Independents to act as if the three spheres were mutually exclusive. Animosities arose between Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Independents in the 1630s and 40s when each stopped focusing on shared values and began to focus instead on realizing their particular vision of the holy commonwealth; this project attempts to identify those common ideals and uncommon plans. In chapter two, "Divisions Among Brothers: Why Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents Were Both Friends and Foes," I explore both the common ground and the private enclosures between Protestant ecclesiastical polities in Britain. I argue that each group was pursuing truth, order, and godliness albeit in different ways.

Presbyterians alienated their allies because they were more zealous for the truth—for promoting and protecting Christian fundamentals—than for order or godliness. Their quests to reform polity, worship, and social pastimes were driven by a deep desire to save souls; they sought an all-inclusive national church (a *mixtum corpus*) with uniformity and meaningful spiritual discipline in all spheres of life. The Presbyterian belief that saints

²⁰Ibid., 311.

may "be religious in the midst of the profane" was a tenet of most reformed churches.

Luther, Melanchthon, Cranmer, Calvin, Beza, and the Westminster Assembly of Divines all agreed that the church militant is a *mixtum corpus* rather than a *putum corpus*.²¹

Augustine set the precedent for these churches when he rejected the Donatist belief in church purity, a belief upheld by the Anabaptists and other Separatist groups.²²

Presbyterian churches were like Donatists in opposing corruptions, but unlike the Donatists and seventeenth-century Separatists, Presbyterians did not expect their members to be fully sanctified; they sought to correct, not cut off, people. They did not expect the visible church to be a perfect mirror of the invisible church. They sought Christian unity and uniformity without expecting peace or perfection.

This study attempts to emphasize the connections between theological, political, liturgical, and social issues, even if those connections and categories are not explored in

²¹"08. What the Church is," *The Augsburg Confession* (1530) in *Documents of the English Reformation*, Ed. Gerald Bray (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 609; "05. The Church," *The Thirteen Articles with Three Additional Articles* (1538) in *Documents of the English Reformation*, 190; "27. The Wickedness of the Ministers doth not take away the effectual Operation of God's Ordinances," *The Forty-Two Articles* (1553), "26. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinder not the Effect of the Sacrament," *The Thirty-Eight Articles* (1563), "26. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinder not the Effect of the Sacrament," *The Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571) in *Documents of the English Reformation*, Ed. Gerald Bray, 300; John Calvin, *Concerning Scandals*, Trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 74; Théodore de Bèze, "Of the holie catholike church of God, of the one onely hedde of the Church. Chapi [sic], 17" and "Of the ministers of the Church, of the making of them, and their offices. Chap. 18," *A confession of faith, made by common consent of divers reformed churches beyonde the seas: with an exhortation to the reformation of the church* (London, 1568), 47v-66r, esp. 54r-v-55r and 65r-v; *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1547) in *Documents of the English Reformation*, 506.

²²Saint Augustine, "Letter 105: Augustine to the Donatists" (409/410) in *Augustine: Political Writings*, Trans. E.M. Adkins and R.J. Dodaro (Port Chester, NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 162-173, esp. 172.

equal depth. Though my focus is religious Presbyterianism, my discussions branch out to treat Episcopacy and Independency and to consider how each ecclesiastical polity defined itself and its obligations to the state. Though my central texts are literary, my analysis is theological, historical, and political as well as rhetorical. This project rejects the polarities imposed by historians adhering to particular methodological camps. It borrows from all without being bound (and thereby biased) by any. The Wars in the Three Kingdoms were neither inevitable (the necessary consequence of constitutional or doctrinal conflict) nor coincidental (a series of events unrelated to ideas). They were part of the struggles over community formation and reformation that define the early modern period.

Like Peter Lake, I assume that "basic structures and tendencies ... emerge" when we analyze and compare "the writings and activities" of particular men who are "engaged" in similar spiritual and political ventures.²³ We can come not only to understand key features of individual and collective thought, emotion, expression, and action but also to appreciate what those ideas, attitudes, expectations, and interventions may have signified to particular people and groups. That is why chapter three, "'To draw a devil, you must 'use some sordid lines'²⁴: Presbyterian Positioning in Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana*," focuses primarily on one Presbyterian polemic. I do not assume that representations by Edwards or other Presbyterians are accurate, but I do assume that they are real: that they affected people's ideas and actions. The effects may or may not

²³Peter Lake, *Moderate puritans and the Elizabethan church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 14-15.

²⁴William Prynne, "To the christian reader," *Histrion-mastix, the players scourge or actors tragaedie* (London, 1633), sig. A2v. Prynne's full statement, adapted and condensed for my title, reads, "he who would lively portraiture a Divell, or a deformed monster, must needes draw some gastly lines, and use some sordid colours."

have accorded with their creator's intentions, but they were meaningful. This project explores some of those meanings. It explores both the connections and the separations between Presbyterian theory and practice, between the "general phenomenon" of Presbyterianism and "particular embodiments" of it in people, practices, and polemics.²⁵ It does not assume that one man or one text can embody Presbyterianism, but it does assume that particular people and polemics may be keys to understanding some aspects of the ideology and its operations. Analyzing both the form and the function of *Gangreana*, chapter three defends Presbyterianism from charges of hypocrisy and excess.

Studying seemingly immoderate polemics by moderate Presbyterians, such as Thomas Edwards and William Prynne, we begin to appreciate that Presbyterian moderation was the result of a complicated balancing act: balancing providence with pragmatism, teaching with learning, exclusiveness with inclusiveness, holiness with humility, essential doctrine with indifferent practices, the church universal with the church militant, liberty with charity. That appreciation arises from an analysis of Presbyterian content as well as form and how they interact with one another as well as with their literary, intellectual, political, and cultural contexts. Using this multi-faceted method, I interpret Edwards's *Gangreana* as a charitable and restrained instrument instead of a malicious and disorderly tirade. Teasing out the tensions between the purpose of *Gangreana* and how it was perceived, we realize that the whole (the Presbyterian agenda) of which Edwards and *Gangreana* are parts is equally fraught. Comparing *Gangreana* to other texts, tenets, and tactics, we find evidence to suggest that

²⁵Ibid., 15.

Presbyterianism was Janus like: multifaceted and mutable as well as single-minded and immoveable.

Mid-seventeenth-century British Presbyterianism was paradoxical. Presbyterian approaches to polity and social structures were parabolic; they were simple in form but complex in practice. There were tensions both within each kind of Presbyterianism and between the two kinds, but those tensions were not necessary negative. Christianity is full of paradoxes: that Jesus could be fully human and fully God; that Christ's healing of lame bodies could be conflated with the healing of their souls; that an ethnic and political nation could be chosen and entrusted with a divine promise; and that one covenant could redeem another. Though mysterious, Christ's nature taught believers that union could be accomplished without combination or integration. Calvin paraphrases that idea thus: "He who was the Son of God became the Son of man—not by confusion of substance but by unity of person."²⁶ Similarly, Presbyterians sought to join civil and ecclesiastical government in an alliance rather than an amalgamation; the substance of the state and the church differed, even though its population overlapped and its interests were aligned. Civil laws and magistrates regulated men politically: "educat[ing]" them, as Calvin says, "for the duties of humanity and citizenship that must be maintained among men"; church laws and ministers regulate men spiritually: "instruct[ing]" the "conscience ... in piety and in reverencing God."²⁷ According to Calvin's theory, Christians who are well regulated spiritually should require fewer political restraints because many civil benefits, such as

²⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Trans. Henry Beveridge, Vol. 1 of 3 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1863), 2.14.1. All references to the *Institutes* are drawn from this collection.

²⁷John Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 2, 3.19.15.

"charity toward men," result naturally from spiritual actions, such as repentance.²⁸ Using this argument, both Erastian and high Presbyterians in the mid-seventeenth century, pushed Parliament to prioritize settling the national church. Religious order, they suggested, would foster civil order, reversing the confusion precipitated by implicit toleration during the years in which the national church was unsettled.

Comparing Presbyterianism to biblical parables and typologies will help us imagine its dynamism—its movement between multiple spheres—and its seeming contradictions—its concomitant clarity and opacity. Parables in the Old Testament, to borrow John Drury's apt description, are "distillation[s] of historical experience into a compact instance which is usually figurative and remains strongly embedded in its narrative matrix."²⁹ They are historical and transhistorical, verisimilar and fictional. Presbyterianism was also conceived (and reconceived) during particular moments; it was tied both in function and in meaning to particular circumstances. Both Presbyterianism and parables "took shape," to appropriate Bakhtin's description of the novel, in the midst of "a contemporary reality that was inconclusive and fluid," and they "w[ere] structured ... in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day reality."³⁰ However, Presbyterianism was *also*, like an epic, tied to an "absolute" time—to divine history—that

²⁸Ibid., 3.3.16-20.

²⁹John Drury, *The Parables in the Gospels: History and Allegory* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 15.

³⁰M.M. Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Ed. Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Slavic Series, No.1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 39.

is "closed and completed in the whole as well as in any of its parts."³¹ Presbyterians thought of themselves as members of two kingdoms at once: the supernatural and the natural; they strove to reform the latter to reflect the former.

The supernatural realm, including the invisible church triumphant, was perfect and constant, but the natural world, including the visible church militant, was imperfect and inconstant. Presbyterians believed that God modeled the natural order on the supernatural, but the Fall and subsequent sin made the natural order prone to decay and corruption. Presbyterians recognized that temporal circumstances varied, and they adapted their policies for reforming people and societies accordingly, but they maintained that God and his truth remained constant, as did their duty to Him. Presbyterians were hopeful that God had a plan for them and their communities; with God's grace, they felt empowered and called to create internally and externally microcosms of the divine macrocosm. They were to strive to perfect the natural order so that it would more accurately reflect the supernatural order. Presbyterians conceded that they would continue to err in the process, but they trusted God's plan and feared the reckoning for disobeying it. Constrained by covenants to obey Scripture above all, Presbyterians sought to regulate their beliefs, actions, and organizations by that divine measure.

I have compared Presbyterians to parables not only because both are meaningful in two interpretive domains at once but also because both are paradoxical, "belonging," as Drury says, "at the same time both to secrecy and revelation, hiddenness and openness."³² The mysterious nature or separating impulse of parables is referenced in Mark 4:11-12,

³¹Ibid., 31.

³²John Drury, *The Parables of the Gospel*, 42.

where Jesus says that parables are useful for conveying truth in a cipher that only the elect, aided by Jesus or the Holy Spirit, can decode: "And [Jesus] said unto them, To you it is giuen to knowe the mysterie of the kingdome of God: but vnto them that are without, all things bee done in parables, / That they seeing, may see, and not discerne: and they hearing, may heare, and not understand, least any time they should turne, and their sinnes should be forgiuen them."³³ Yet Drury emphasizes that parables were typically used to increase (not decrease) understanding: "a theologian reaches for a parable when he is particularly keen to be understood."³⁴ The difference in function can be explained, I think, in part by context: in the Old Testament, Jewish historians were using "imaginative parable[s]" to explain a history that was closed, static, and comprehensible; in the New Testament, even the histories of the Old Testament were reopened and put back into play, but their lessons could only be comprehended by the elect. The past was interpreted as a shadow or type of the present or antitype, and both pointed to an apocalyptic future, one in which all were damned under the covenant of works but some were saved under the covenant of grace. Parables can be magnifying glasses for some and dark glasses for others because some are elected for salvation and some for damnation. Though the revelation was general, the explanation was not.

Drury makes it easy for us to see the similarities between Presbyterianism and parables when he says that the apocalyptic parables in Mark 4 bring together "opposite extremes" to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God is paradoxical: it is "a mystery made

³³John Drury, *The Parables of the Gospel*, 13,16, 39; "Mark 4:11-12" in *Geneva Bible* (1587).

³⁴John Drury, *The Parables of the Gospel*, 38.

manifest."³⁵ This dissertation will argue that Presbyterians also brought together "opposite extremes" to find a divine mean, one that perplexed contemporary Christians with different priorities and one that baffles many scholars today. During the 1630s and 40s, Presbyterians were a convenient whipping post for competing ecclesiastical polities in England in general and for critics like John Milton because they were so rich philosophically and so clever strategically. This project solves the riddle of Presbyterianism, making sense of Presbyterians' puzzling policies and polemics. Chapter four, "Parabolic Polemic: Presbyterian Rhetoric and Poetics," tackles some of the most perplexing Presbyterian habits, such as using historical parables in rhetorical works (including their own performances) while concurrently suppressing other sources of imitation and (in their estimation) scandal: such as playgoing and the beauty of holiness in the church. It compares and contrasts the normative methods of Presbyterians with those of the normative poet, Ben Jonson, and normative philosophers, such as Justus Lipsius, to help us understand how and why Presbyterians reformed Ciceronian and Humanist rhetoric as well as Scholastic and Ramist philosophy while principally rejecting poesy in its most fanciful and pleasing forms.

Studies of early modern conformity and nonconformity have changed our perception of the Puritan movement, including the participation of Presbyterians therein, but they have failed, in my opinion, to give us an equally nuanced understanding of Presbyterianism: one that treats Presbyterianism as more than a polity or a discipline; one that explores sites of consensus as well as sites of conflict; and one that explores theological, political, historical, and literary sources to define (or redefine) the

³⁵Ibid., 55-59, esp. 59.

moderation and enthusiasm of mid-seventeenth-century British Presbyterians.³⁶ Scholars of early modern British religion, history, literature, and culture need to perform close readings of Presbyterian doctrines, dealings, and deeds in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in both high and Erastian forms, and in both impartial and polemical representations.³⁷

Most scholars today remain unaware of what truly defined Presbyterianism in general, how the movement evolved variously, and why mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterians with competing objectives collaborated and collided with one another and with other spiritual and political ideologies of the moment. Some of the forces defining and redefining Presbyterianism both before and during the war period—including spiritual, religious, political, legislative, military, social, and economic shifts—have been carefully examined elsewhere in persuasive historical monographs, but those studies still tend to associate Presbyterianism either with ecclesiastical, political, and social extremism and intolerance or with civil conformity and compromise. They fail to acknowledge that Presbyterians were decorous, much less explore how or why. Presbyterianism sought to defend not destroy, but they were willing to take extreme steps when necessary to remove enormities (be they political or poetical). They consciously attempted, however, to avoid excessive rigor as much as excessive liberty. Joining the

³⁶See Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterianism and English conformist thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) and *Moderate puritans and the Elizabethan church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

³⁷See Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 125-6.

law with grace, Presbyterians practiced kind correction and grateful obedience. Conceiving of "the covenant of grace" as "the covenant of works in disguise," Presbyterians considered themselves simultaneously liberated and bound.³⁸ The Presbyterian systems in mid-seventeenth-century Scotland and England reflect that paradox.

Though there were many immediate, non-theological causes for the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, theology was one weapon in the war. If, as some scholars have suggested, subjects were not interested in theology, we cannot forget that their parliamentary and royalist leaders frequently debated religion (for practical if not principled reasons). The wars were fought with sermons as well as swords, with general parables as well as particular protests. This work explores how theories of salvation, society, dominion, and liberty came together in Presbyterian texts, texts that defined the wars as much as the physical battles. It will chronicle disputes over doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and nationalism that had divided the godly since the Henrican reformation, such as whether the external church promoted salvation or civil submission.

In some ways, this project is about the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, but military and political maneuvers will only be mentioned when they become significant for our understanding of a group's philosophy, soteriology, or aesthetic. What happened during the wars is relatively well known, but much more can be discovered about how ideological associations informed people's perceptions of the war and vice versa. Because the kinds of texts I study *are* personally biased and factually limited, I do not

³⁸David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 3-5.

claim historical objectivity. But the paradoxes and constraints that make subjective writing, such as pamphlets and sermons, imperfect artifacts for the historian make them rich resources for this interdisciplinary study of how religion, politics, and rhetoric intersect. So while this work builds on important histories, such as those by Patrick Collinson, Claire Cross, Harro Höpfl, Claire Kellar, James Kirk, John McNeill, Kevin Sharpe, Thomas T. Torrance, and Peter White, it is inspired by a somewhat eclectic collection of scholars who—each in his or her own way—is a storyteller as well as a researcher: Reid Barbour, Mark Kishlansky, Peter Lake, Kenneth Fincham, Laurence Kaplan, Ann Hughes, William Lamont, David Norbrook, David Stevenson, and David Underdown. Like these interdisciplinary scholars, I will use both reason and imagination, thereby explaining and reanimating Presbyterianism, which was a messy but potentially powerful matrix of spiritual, political, and literary tenets and tactics.

Readers who associate Presbyterianism with precisian and rigor may be surprised by how nebulous they were. For instance, Presbyters disagreed about whether their identity was purely spiritual and about whether it was local or universal. The Presbyterian impulse to settle the literal meaning of the Holy Writ did not exclude disagreements about the church's relationship with the state nor did it lead to boring writing. Though the much-discussed plain style may have been promoted by some Presbyterians, I will demonstrate that rhetorical flare was part of their polemical identity and figurative thinking was part of their theology. As we shall see, Presbyterians had mixed feelings about interpretive variability: though anxiety producing, it was an indispensable asset in their coercive campaigns. The parabolic literature under consideration here is both straightforward and uncertain. Just as Stoics often touted freedom from emotion with one

breath while speaking passionately with their next breath, so too we find Presbyters fixing meaning in one moment and destabilizing it in another. Although the Presbyterian forms I study employ dualistic commonplaces, such as true vs. false and good vs. evil, they also encourage the reader to interact with the text, a process that promotes interpretive variety. There were many kinds of Presbyterians, but there were even more forms of Presbyterian writing and thinking. Presbyterians pushed subscription campaigns, even though equivocation was inevitable, because the movement was active and communal, not static and private. This premise separates my work from that of Professor Lake.

Professor Lake attributes agency and subtlety only to particular Presbyterians, not to the discipline more generally, but I will demonstrate that Presbyterian theories and discourse were themselves flexible and powerful, even in their most didactic forms. Presbyterianism and its literature are promising and perplexing; they both stretch and restrict. The English Constantines before Charles I, according to Professor Lake, demanded accommodation rather than consensus and allegiance rather than perfect obedience. This particular liveness may also be attributed to Presbyterianism in general. Professor Lake misses the suppleness and malleability of Presbyterianism because he defines the program too narrowly. By associating Presbyterianism with scriptural exegesis and discipline in England to the exclusion of communal practice in international contexts, Professor Lake has neglected key elements of Presbyterian soteriology, sociology, and aesthetics. He reminds us that the Roman Catholic elevation of the church to salvific status encouraged Protestants to contrast salvation through church with salvation through Scripture, but I will argue that Presbyterians rejected this antithesis.

Some Independents left the national church to create a purer one. Episcopalians remained within the national church, but they gave up on purifying it through Word and action, allowing it, instead, to inspire in seemingly papist ways: through images and rituals. Presbyterians, by contrast, sought both to purify and to preserve the national church.

I am going to end this introduction with a discussion of terms because we need a clear understanding of the ideas at issue, especially those relating to godliness and order. Presbyterians espousing separate spheres for church and state disagreed about the source of ecclesiastical power, including the power to settle forms of worship and discipline; about whether it resided in the prince, parliament, clergy, or people; and about its inclusion of the civil sword. In parliaments and pamphlets, they debated whether church and state institutions exist by divine or human right (*jure divino* or *jure humano*), whether authority rests in the person or the office, whether spiritual and civil power differ to the extent that they cannot or should not be held in common, whether positive laws are bound by natural law, and under what conditions power can be surrendered, transferred, or resisted. To understand these concerns and why disagreement over them became heated, we have to consider the source: not just the tremors that predicted the eruption but the volcano itself, the theories of church and state bubbling beneath the surface. If we understand the legacy of the conflict, then we can clarify not only what the terms literally meant but also what was at stake when they were employed in the 1630s and 40s.

II. *Covenant theology*

Covenant ideas and covenant theology influenced many seventeenth-century Presbyterian practices. Many Presbyterians maintained "federal theology," defined by David Weir as

"the doctrine that God, immediately after creating Adam, made a covenant with Adam before his Fall into sin." Federal theology posits that a prelapsarian covenant of works "was binding upon all men at all times and in all places, both before and after the Fall, by virtue of their descent from Adam"; though the covenant of works was a spiritual death warrant for sinners, its original purpose was to draw men closer to God. Because God still sought a relationship with men, after the Fall, He created a second covenant, whereby He promised to "kee[p]" and "fulfil[l]" the first covenant through Jesus Christ."³⁹ In other words, God took upon Himself the penalty for breaking the Law but allowed men to continue to benefit spiritually and socially from keeping it faithfully. Similarly, Presbyterians opposed the idea that membership in the visible Presbyterian church was essential to membership in the invisible church triumphant, but they believed that the visible church could be an instrument of salvation, sanctification, and social cohesion.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) says, "There are not therefore Two Covenants of Grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."⁴⁰ The "dispensations" "in the time of the Law" were, according the Westminster Confession, "Promises, Prophecies, Sacrifices, Circumcision, the Paschal Lamb, and other Types and Ordinances ... all fore-signifying Christ to come."⁴¹ The

³⁹David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought*, 3-5.

⁴⁰"Chapter VII: Of Gods covenant with man" in *The humble advice of the Assembly of Divines, now by authority of Parliament sitting at Westminster, concerning a "Confession of faith", with the quotations and texts of Scripture annexed* (London, 1647), 7.6, 17.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 7.5, 16.

"dispensations" "[u]nder the Gospel" were "fewer in number and administred with more simplicity, and lesse outward glory." The Westminster Confession emphasizes that grace "under the Gospel" is distributed through "the Preaching of the Word, and the Administration of the Sacraments of Baptisme, and the Lords Supper."⁴² High Presbyterians, who believed that Scripture was the only rule for worship and who sought positive warrants for all ecclesiastical practices, tended to add ecclesiastical discipline to the list of dispensations or signs of the true church. *An admonition to the Parliament* (1572), written by early English Presbyterians, says, "The outward marks whereby a true Christian church is known are preaching of the Word purely, ministering of the sacraments sincerely, and ecclesiastical discipline which consisteth in admonition and correcting of faults severely."⁴³ High Presbyterians also emphasized that the sacraments of baptism and communion needed to be "annexed unto the word and promise of God to seale and confirm the same in our hearts."⁴⁴ The Scots Confession (1560) stresses that the sacraments "uni[te] and conj[oin]" the faithful with Christ Jesus, raising them "above all things that are visible" and bringing them into the presence and perfection of Christ.⁴⁵ The sacraments are also testimonies, for when Christians "*eat of [the] bread, and drinke*

⁴²Ibid., 7.6, 16-17.

⁴³John Field, *An admonition to the Parliament* (London, 1572), Av.

⁴⁴Church of Scotland, "19. Of the notes wehrey the true kirk is discerned from the false, and who shall be judge of the doctrine" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine, believed and professed by the Protestants of Scotland, exhibited to the Estates of the first Parliament of King James the sixth: Holden at Edinburgh, the 25. of December, in the year of God 1567. where this confession was authorized* (Edinburgh, 1638), 17.

⁴⁵Church of Scotland, "22. Of the sacraments" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine ... of Scotland*, 21-23.

of [the] cup, [they] ... show foorth, that is extoll, preach, magnifie, and praise the Lords death, till he come againe."⁴⁶ The Law was intended to serve the same function, according to high Presbyterians in Scotland; their description of the moral law echoes their description of the sacraments of grace: "To have one God, to worship and honour him, to call upon him in our troubles, reverence his holy name, to heare his word, to believe the same, to communicate with his holy Sacraments, are the workes of the first table."⁴⁷ The second table of the Law, which emphasizes obedience to higher power (without sinning against God), preventing scandals, protecting the weak, and living natural lives of purity, piety, and self-control, is linked to the "good works" that "the Spirit of the Lord Jesus," "dwelling in [justified] hearts by true faith, bringeth foorth."⁴⁸ Discipline was important to all Presbyterians because they believed that there was a "continuall battell which is betweene the flesh and the Spirit in Gods children," a battle in which they needed to defend themselves and one another: "the flesh and naturall man, according to the [sic] owne corruption, lusteth for things pleasant and delectable into the self, and grudgeth in adversitie, is lifted up in prosperitie, and at every moment is prone and readie to offend the Majestie of God."⁴⁹ With the help of the Holy Spirit, the "sons of God" were empowered to "fight against sin" personally and in the community; that battle

⁴⁶Church of Scotland, "23. Of the right administration of the sacraments" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine ... of Scotland*, 25.

⁴⁷Church of Scotland, "15. What works are reputed good before God" and "13. The cause of good works" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine ... of Scotland*, 11-12.

⁴⁸Church of Scotland, "15. What works are reputed good before God" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine ... of Scotland*, 12-13.

⁴⁹Church of Scotland, "13. The cause of good works" in *The confession of the faith and doctrine ... of Scotland*, 11.

was waged with repentance: the faithful "sob and mourne when they perceive themselves [and neighbors] tempted in inquitie."⁵⁰ These Presbyterian articles of faith and doctrine help us understand how Presbyterians could believe that they were saved by grace but maintain that godly commonwealths needed to enforce the moral commandments; how Thomas Edwards could reject "things pleasant and delectable" but embrace the passion of repentance and discipline; and how William Prynne could oppose the theatre but style himself a martyr.⁵¹

The move made by Presbyterians to represent themselves as the new Israelites, as the true church facing religious and political persecution but enjoying a special relationship with God, developed, according to Catherine Davies, quite early in English reformation history and became a predominant form of self-representation among the Marian exiles. Hence we see the rise in federal theology. That federal theology and covenanting language remained persuasive and useful not only to English zealots but also to their counterparts in Scotland can be explained by the ideological training shared by Englishmen and Scots in exile congregations during the sixteenth century.⁵² For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Presbyterians (like their Foxean brethren), rejection and persecution were familiar and even comforting. Temporal infamy and disenfranchisement could be interpreted as signs that they were on the narrow path to

⁵⁰Ibid., 12.

⁵¹Ibid., 11.

⁵²Clare Kellar, *Scotland, England, and the Reformation 1534-1561* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), *passim*.

spiritual salvation.⁵³ This delight in separation and suffering, however, clashed with their aspirations to secure enough political power to pursue spiritual edification and prevent spiritual corruption in the church. Dominion was a term of conflict during the Admonition controversy, and seventeenth-century Presbyterians agreed with this division of spiritual and temporal authority, but Presbyterians had to meddle in state affairs to pursue this separation. To purge the church of prelatical abuse, stop Laudian innovations in worship and canon law, unite the national churches of England and Scotland along Presbyterian lines, and prevent the spread of heresy and profanity, religious Presbyterians had to become political. They also had to address the friction between their belief in soteriological exclusivity (double predestination) and ecclesiastic inclusiveness (a national church with a mixed membership of saints and reprobates).

III. *The visible church*

Presbyterians thought that the true Church, the church triumphant, was invisible. The visible church, the church militant, gave people access to the true church, the figurative body of Christ, but it often did so imperfectly. "The church," the church triumphant, Calvin reminded Parisian Protestants, "is not always discernible by the eyes of men, as the examples of many ages testify."⁵⁴ The tokens of a true church, "the Word

⁵³Catherine Davies, "'Poor Persecuted Little Flock,' or 'Commonwealth of Christians'; Edwardian Protestant Concepts of the Church," in *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England*, ed. Peter Lake and Maria Dowling, (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 78-102, esp. 79.

⁵⁴John Calvin, "Reply by John Calvin to letter by Cardinal Sadolet to the senate and people of Geneva" (Basle, 1539) *Tracts and treatises on the reformation of the faith*, Trans. Henry Beveridge, Vol. 1 of 3 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), 38; William A. Mueller, *Church and State in Luther and Calvin: A Comparative Study* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1965), 81.

of God purely preached and heard" and "the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution," were signs of grace, but even those were not meant to be causes of schism, occasions for separating saints from reprobates.⁵⁵ Calvin cared about the visible church, including its government, but he cared about the invisible church more; he cared more about giving as many people as possible access to true doctrine and ordinances of grace than he did about perfecting the visible church. Thomas Edwards and Robert Baillie shared Calvin's goals. They cared about "decency" (godliness) and "order" (polity) because those values fostered the true invisible church within the true visible church, but they never confused the aids to faith with faith itself.⁵⁶

With Episcopalians, Presbyterians shared a concern with the tangible instruments of salvation, "the Word and sacraments,"⁵⁷ and, with Charles I, Presbyters shared a concern for order and discipline. But Presbyterians wanted a godly, visible church for evangelical, sociological, *and* theological reasons. In his "Conversation with Tudor Christianity," Oliver O'Donovan pleads for a reconciliation in present day Anglicanism between the church and Christ, between institutions and the gospel: "There has to be a bridge between evangelical theology and ecclesiastical theory; that is, there has to be a theology of the church as such, which in turn will be the basis for the administrative tasks

⁵⁵John Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 3, 4.1.8-9.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 4.3.9.

⁵⁷Archbishop Cranmer, "4. Justification," *The Thirteen Articles With Three Additional Articles* (1538) in *Documents of the English Reformation*, 188.

of church organization.”⁵⁸ Renaissance Presbyterians pursued that very same objective. Presbyterians argued that salvation was the work of God alone while maintaining that God often chose to use the visible church—with its preaching, sacraments, and discipline (to a greater or lesser extent)—to confer his grace and commune with his people. This theology offered a new *via media* between not only Independency and Roman Catholicism but also between each of these and Episcopalians. For Sectarians, the visible church merely reflected the invisible church. For Catholics, the visible church was the only means of entering the invisible church. For Episcopalians, the relationship between the visible and the invisible church remained as mysterious as the actual number of the elect. But for Presbyterians, the visible church could strive to reflect the invisible church and be an instrument of salvation and yet remain imperfect.

The visible church mattered to radicals and orthodox Englishmen for different reasons. Separatists wanted to found a new Jerusalem on earth, one in which each church reflected the holiness of God and in which reprobates could be disciplined—bound or loosed—by their own congregation (by the local minister and lay elders). Episcopalians also wanted to renovate the church, but their plan for restoring the beauty of holiness differed both in substance and in purpose. Emphasizing the restoration of the church building, uniformity in liturgy, and discipline (by higher ecclesiastical courts), they sought not only to glorify God but also to magnify the prince’s power. The goals of Episcopal church reform were social as well as spiritual. Restoring spiritual order, the prince could—they argued—secure the temporal peace and prosperity of England as well

⁵⁸Oliver O’Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1986), 92-3.

for God blessed the church and state together.⁵⁹ Presbyterians empathized with Separatists' calls for ecclesiastical discipline because they agreed that unrepentant or uneducated reprobates should not endanger their souls by partaking of the Lord's Supper or endanger the congregation by polluting or degrading it.⁶⁰ However, Presbyterians disagreed on whether the scandalous should be suspended from the Lord's Supper but admitted to the other ordinances or whether they should be excommunicated completely. Though Presbyterians agreed with Independents in allowing lay elders to censure, like Episcopalians, they wanted to entrust this power to special councils within the church, not to the entire congregation. Like Episcopalians, Presbyterians respected hierarchy; they recognized that higher authorities should govern particular congregations. Their quest for order may well remind us of John Calvin, who valued unity in the church as essential for religious as well as civil life.⁶¹ Because the Genevan reformer looked to man as well as Scripture for ecclesiology,⁶² his image of the visible church was the model for the flexible approach of Erastian Presbyterians rather than the strictly apostolic model advocated by high Presbyterians. Concern with the visible church is at the heart of church

⁵⁹William Laud, *Seven sermons preached upon severall occasions* (London, 1651), in *The Works of the most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D.D.*, Vol. 1 of 7 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847).

⁶⁰Thomas Bakewell, *The ordinance of excommunication* (London, 1645), A4; See Harro Höpfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 63, for a discussion of Calvin's view on the importance of sacraments and the preservation of them through excommunication.

⁶¹Harro Höpfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin*, 38-41.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 42-3.

and state conflicts not only between Presbyterians and their Protestant brethren but also within Presbyterianism itself.

IV. *Theories of spiritual and temporal jurisdiction:*

Episcopalians and Erastian Presbyterians advocated a single jurisdiction over both spiritual and temporal affairs. Single-kingdom theorists suggested that the authority to govern both spheres rested in a single head who would enforce a single set of laws. The subjects in the each sphere were also the same; they would receive edifying doctrine from the church and discipline from the state, but the church and the state were two parts of a public body or two instruments for strengthening a particular individual. Some argued that the state had a divine right to manage all institutions, including spiritual ones. Others argued from precedent; there were Old Testaments precedents for centralized power (one man could hold spiritual and temporal offices and distribute spiritual and temporal censures).⁶³ Advocates of this system supported ecclesiastical participation in external discipline insofar as the state saw fit to delegate coercive powers. Excommunication by bishops and/or councils was respected by one-kingdom theorists; excommunication by pastors and congregations was not.⁶⁴

⁶³See "II Chronicles 19: 8, 11," *Geneva Bible*. See also John Whitgift's argument, in *Defense of the Aunswere* (London, 1574) in Donald Joseph McGinn, *The Admonition Controversy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949), 416, that Jehoshaphat distributed authority over "matters of the Lord" and "the king's matters," a point that Thomas Cartwright, *Repye to an answer* (London, 1573) in *The Admonition Controversy*, 415-16, had overlooked in his discussion of this passage, a discussion that focused on the separation of ecclesiastical and civil offices.

⁶⁴John Whitgift, *Answer to a certen libell intituled, An admonition to the Parliament* (London, 1572) in *The Admonition Controversy*, 514 concurs with Cartwright in seeing excommunication as "the last and greatest punishment in the church" and in hoping that "it may be restored again to the first purity," but he and Cartwright disagree about the

Debates over ecclesiastical discipline rehearsed familiar arguments about authority to instruct and coerce souls and about the need for holiness in the community. Unlike Anabaptists (and the Cathari and Donatists before them), those supporting state-determined churches had little reason to pursue congregational purity at the cost of civil peace. Believing that children of both the old and the new covenant were frequently called to live in a *mixtum corpus*, they could imagine that the trials of the elect or the participation of the ungodly might serve some divine purpose.⁶⁵ Separating the elect from the reprobates on earth was considered futile because hypocrites would persist in the church and presumptuous because only God knew the larger plan. Neither love of God nor love of neighbor—the two tables of Mosaic Law—could justify the disturbance of this body. This theory comforted those who feared separation and rebellion. If a church of saints was unprecedented and unrealistic, then why endanger the souls of weak brethren and the lives of all in the kingdom by trying to purify the church more than God himself required? As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, moderate Presbyterians were more similar to Episcopalians than Independents, but their desire for order did not eliminate their desire for godliness; rather, it was one lens through which they assessed godliness.

As I will discuss at greater length in subsequent chapters, moderate Presbyterians, such as Thomas Edwards and Robert Baillie, thought that neglectful office holders should be discharged, but they were willing to consider reforms to offices and polities. In

source of *ius excommunicandi* and the actions that warrant the exercise of this power (516-7, 527).

⁶⁵See "Psalm 10:16," *Geneva Bible* and Herman J. Selderhuis's discussion of this passage in "Church on Stage: Calvin's Dynamic Ecclesiology" in *Calvin and the Church: Papers Presented at the 13th Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society*, Calvin Studies Society Papers 2001 (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Studies Society, 2002), 51.

Gangreana (1645) Edwards tried to rally Parliament to "restrain mens nature and wantonnesse" because he believed that God "ordained" governments to that end.⁶⁶ In the 1640s, Independents disagreed with Edwards' conception of civil government. In place of governments, Independents like Henry Burton proposed church fellowships, a model more consistent with the old covenant than the new.⁶⁷ Though Presbyterians rejected universal grace, they embraced universal membership in the visible church. Edwards emphasizes that Presbyterians want to serve everyone by preventing and mitigating sins; Independents, he suggests, were serving only themselves (and that poorly) by separating from the sinful rather than strengthening and supporting them.⁶⁸

Presbyterian social policy was inclusive; they thought that their high expectations and strict limits protected the entire commonwealth. The general rules for public behavior prescribed by Presbyterians would, Edwards thought, lessen civil as well ecclesiastical peril, thereby helping reprobates as well as saints to enjoy a peaceful life. Edwards calls himself and his informants for *Gangreana* (1645) (those who help him document "the Proceedings and wayes of the English Sectaries") "lovers of truth, peace, and order."⁶⁹ While one-kingdom advocates emphasized that the church on earth would remain imperfect, they nevertheless acknowledged the importance of the visible church for society. Presbyterians thought that the only possible sign of election was good works, but these were to be performed with humility and love rather than a vain belief that salvation

⁶⁶Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 121.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 128.

⁶⁸Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 152-4.

⁶⁹Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 4.

could thereby be merited. In other words, works were fruits of the spirit that brought glory to God, benefit to neighbors, and assurance to the individual rather than essential practices for justification. In this context, private virtue was of little value, and Antinomianism made no sense; faith was intended to improve relationships and build community.⁷⁰

With a common confession, liturgy, and discipline, anxious Presbyterian ministers and magistrates hoped to discourage schism and revolts. When all subjects professed to believe the same doctrine, then no one could become a stumbling block and all could retain some hope of salvation. One-kingdom theories appealed to polities that did not want to be measured or pressured on the one hand by foreign powers advocating international unity (in the name of the pope or “the best” reformed models on the continent) and on the other by individuals exempting themselves from all jurisdiction (in the name of their conscience). Some one-kingdom theorists flirted with Luther’s theory that God’s sphere of influence was separate from man’s, but while Luther essentially privatized faith, men like Whitgift wanted to keep the practice of faith within the public domain: i.e. under temporal control and subject to canons promoting uniformity. The particular church could thus become an instrument of the state as well as an instrument of God. Temporal values of obedience and peace could be aligned with spiritual interests, such as salvation. Though one-kingdom theories arguably freed the church from spiritual idealism, they linked the church to social expediency both in form and in practice. In the name of preventing division within the church, lay leaders could

⁷⁰A sermon of good workes annexed unto faith in *Certaine sermons or homilies appointed to be read in churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth I (1547-1571)* (London, 1623) (Gainsville, FL: Scholars’ Fascimilies & Reprints, 1968), 31-9.

justify injunctions that promoted civil order more than devotion. As we will see in subsequent chapters, Presbyterians fought that excess; they wanted both peace and piety. Episcopalian theorists saw themselves as governors of the “external regiment of the church”⁷¹ rather than the inner regiment of souls, but that was a problematic distinction because it seemed to suggest that belief could be separated from practice.

Episcopalians appreciated that they could use fewer officials to enforce laws and meet subjects’ needs; one person could manage spiritual and temporal matters for both sinners and saints. Church officials, such as bishops, could serve both the church and the state, and Christian princes (with a few extra steps) could argue for supremacy in ecclesiastical matters:

It is true that an ecclesiastical minister doth much differ from a civil magistrate touching his ministry and spiritual calling; yet is he not so distinct that he may exercise no such civil office wherein he may do good and which is an help to his ecclesiastical function. As the civil magistrate may in some things exercise jurisdiction ecclesiastical and meddle in matters of the church, so may the ecclesiastical person in some causes use civil jurisdiction and deal in matters of the commonwealth if it shall be thought expedient or necessary by chief magistrates.⁷²

Although one-kingdom theories lent themselves to mixing spiritual and temporal matters, overlap between the two domains was not necessary; for instance, magistrates might agree that doctrine should be defined by ministers alone, and ministers might agree that the sword should be used by the state alone.⁷³

⁷¹John Whitgift, *Defense of the aunswere* (1574) in *The Admonition Controversy*, 293.

⁷²John Whitgift, *Defense*, in *The Admonition Controversy*, 286.

⁷³Claire Cross, Introduction, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*, Historical Problems Studies and Documents 8 (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1969), 17-18, somewhat surprisingly begins her discussion of the Elizabethan church with excerpts illustrating these exceptional views. She quotes Elizabeth’s injunction, May 22, 1572,

However, those who wanted to govern the saint and the sinner or the church and the state separately more commonly advocated a two-kingdom system. In this theory, spiritual and temporal jurisdictions were clearly distinct. Discussions that identify two separate sources of authority sometimes emphasize that spiritual government is intended to promote inner sanctification while civil government seeks outward peace and prosperity.⁷⁴ The former governs those who are willing and able to obey God while the latter represses reprobates and corrects backsliders. While the visible church and members therein might need the state's protection (or even coercion), they did not rely on the state for authority or Scriptural interpretation. God—in the form of the Holy Ghost or Christ—was considered the immediate head of the visible as well as the universal church. The head of state was not supposed to have special status within the church. Scripture rather than either custom (whether patristic or contemporary) or the crown was to be the model for ecclesiastical practices, and Scripture was considered to be self-evident (at least in the essentials of salvation). Two-kingdom theorists who advocated the priesthood of all believers imagined that each individual was empowered by the Holy Spirit to interpret Scripture and correct his neighbor; those who advocated clerical authority tended to value a humanist approach to exegesis. In stressing the education of clergy, this branch of two-kingdom theorists shared interests with one-kingdom theorists, but the

empowering clergy to determine doctrine within a larger quotation that emphasizes Parliament's continued power in this domain. Wentworth emphasizes that Parliament intends to exercise its full authority in the spiritual domain, despite the clerical privilege approved by the Queen. She quotes Edward Dering to emphasize the difference between lay leadership and clerical leadership. I would argue that his discussion of a secular sword permits his Lutheran-sounding theory of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction to be accommodated within the one-kingdom system that was restored by Elizabeth.

⁷⁴James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation* Kirk (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 262.

former tended to balance calls for clerical leadership with encouraging lay participation; two-kingdom theorists tended to have republican impulses. In practice, ecclesiastical politics could become quite complicated.

V. *Higher powers*

Conversations about the magistrate and the clerical office, about obedience to princes and obedience to God, about the universal, invisible church and its temporal, visible counterpart, about secular versus holy discipline, and about whether earthly kingdom are distinct from spiritual ones all tended to mention Matthew 22: 21, “Give therefore to Cesar, the things which are Cesars, and give unto God, those things which are Gods,”⁷⁵ or Romans 13: 1-5:

Let every soule be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordeined of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves condemnation. For Magistrates are not to be feared *for* good workes, but *for* evill. Wilt thou then bee without feare of the power? doe well: so shall thou have praise of the same. For he is ye minister of God for thy wealth, but if thou do evill, feare; for he beareth not the sworde for nought: for he is the minister of God to take vengeance on him that doeth evill.⁷⁶

⁷⁵"Matthew 22:21," *Geneva Bible*; Martin Luther, *On secular authority: how far does the Obedience owed to it extend? [Von Weltlicher Oberkeit]* in *Luther and Calvin on secular authority*, Ed. and Trans. Harro Höpfl, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 28.

⁷⁶"Romans 13: 1-2," *Geneva Bible*.

Both books could be used to justify state jurisdiction and obedience, but Matthew 22 distinguishes spiritual and temporal domains while Romans 13 blurs the lines between the two by emphasizing the secular sword. Two-kingdom theorists could use Matthew to emphasize the limits of the magistrate's (or the bishop's) power and to defend the separation of the spiritual from the temporal domain. In *An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, George Gillespie emphasizes that ecclesiastical discipline need not threaten the state. While Scottish Presbyterians claim ecclesiastical discipline from Scriptural warrant rather than the crown, they continue to recognize the monarch's power in civil matters. Those who would accuse Presbyterianism of threatening the "Prerogative of Princes" should read Matthew more clearly, he argues: "Sure I am, when our Saviour saith, *Render unto Cesar the things which are Cesars, and unto the things which are Gods*; he doth plainly insinuate, that the things which are Gods, need not to hinder the things which are Cesars."⁷⁷ In *On Secular Authority* (1523), Luther mentions Romans, but he privileges Matthew because he is reminding the magistrate he does not have authority over the church.⁷⁸ By contrast, Augustine, who also mentioned both Matthew and Romans, privileged the latter because he was admonishing the Christian to be a good and obedient subject of the state.⁷⁹ Calvin borrows from both the Augustinian and

⁷⁷ George Gillespie, "To the Reader," *An assertion of the government of Scotland in the points of ruling-elders, and of the authority of presbyteries and synods* (Edinburgh, 1641).

⁷⁸ Martin Luther, *On secular authority* in *Luther and Calvin on secular authority*, esp. 28.

⁷⁹ Augustine, *Augustine on Romans* (*Exp. Quarundam Propositionum ex Epistula ad Romanos*), 41, 43, Cetedoc Clavis 0280 in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 313-14; See also Luther, *On secular authority* in *Luther and Calvin on secular authority*, 27-8.

Lutheran models; he follows Luther in using Romans to constrain magistrates, but he also wants Christians to obey their civil leaders.

Calvin's treatment of "civil government" in the *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1559) somewhat diminishes the two-kingdom theory by emphasizing that princes represent God and that subjects must respect rulers as they respect their heavenly sovereign: "obedience which is rendered unto princes and magistrates is rendered to God, from whom they have their authority."⁸⁰ When the magistrate punishes, he does so on God's behalf: "though the Lord binds the hands of men, he does not bind his own justice, which he exercises by the hands of magistrates."⁸¹ When the subject obeys the state, he is also obeying God. The Geneva Bible's commentary on Romans 13 takes seriously the negative implications of this reasoning: "God is authour of this order: so that such as are rebels, ought to know, that they make warre with God himselfe."⁸² Note that those writing the Geneva commentary used Romans 13 to emphasize obedience but Matthew 22 to emphasize the limits of obedience; again we have evidence of the Presbyterian *via media*. Note the important caveat at the end of this comment: "The Christians must obey their Magistrates, although they be wicked and extortioners, but so farre forth as the authoritie that God hath over us may remaine safe unto him, and his honour [God's] be not diminished."⁸³

⁸⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.20.10.

⁸² "Side note 3" in "Romans 13," *Geneva Bible*.

⁸³ "Side note 5" in "Matthew 22," *Geneva Bible*.

In Calvin's thinking, obedience to the state could honor God, but God could also be honored apart from the state. Calvin wanted rulers to use the sword to protect and purify the church, but he did not give them authority over doctrine. When Calvin references Paul's discussion of magisterial discipline in verse four of Romans 13, he is discussing the secular sword, not doctrine: "Paul says of the magistrate, that 'He beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.'"⁸⁴ Luther, however, wants to distance discussions of justice from discussions of God or God's people. He argues that rulers should have coercive power in secular affairs, not spiritual affairs. Church discipline is unnecessary because Christians should naturally be obedient. Bishops should not need coercive power because it is antithetical to their role as spiritual governors. In the spiritual kingdom, the Holy Spirit—rather than the sword—moves men.⁸⁵

Luther's *On secular authority* takes as its starting premise that church and state jurisdiction are completely distinct. Because Romans 13 treats "superiors and powers," Luther thus concludes that it must pertain to civil polity and not to soteriology; he refuses to conflate church and state authority: "It follows that he [Paul] is not talking about faith and is not saying that worldly authority ought to have the right to command faith. What he is talking about is outward goods, about commanding and ruling the earth." Using Paul, Luther emphasizes that secular authority is over secular acts, not Godly acts, like faith: "In other words, secular obedience and power extend only to taxes, duties, honour,

⁸⁴John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.10; See "Romans 13:4," *Geneva Bible*.

⁸⁵Martin Luther, *On secular authority* in *Luther and Calvin on secular authority*, 18-21; esp. 26-7.

fear, outward things.” The state could demand the “outward things” that belonged to it, and it could use the sword toward this end, but it could not claim authority over—or coerce—the soul. Similarly, Christians could claim jurisdiction over their consciences and sacred books but could not use the sword toward this end or concern themselves with worldly values, such as “life and goods.”⁸⁶ Luther wanted bishops to be pastors, not censors or lower magistrates.⁸⁷ He believed that Christians would naturally be obedient, so the church would not need a separate ecclesiastical discipline. The only ecclesiastical discipline that Luther supported was Scriptural persuasion, not punishment: “The use of force can never prevent heresy.... This is where God’s Word must fight. And if that does not win, then secular power can certainly not succeed either, even if it were to fill the world with blood. Heresy is a spiritual thing; it cannot be struck down with steel, burnt with fire or drowned in water.”⁸⁸ The sword could return to the state for repressing reprobates: punishing the unjust for disturbing civil peace.⁸⁹

The Basel reformer, Oecolampadius, followed Luther in advocating a two-kingdom approach to jurisdiction, but he allowed for more overlap between the two domains. He was not opposed to ecclesiastical discipline unlike the anxiously anti-papal Luther. Oecolampadius was comfortable discussing the visible church and the best system for compelling appropriate behavior therein. He constructed a consistory that

⁸⁶Ibid., 27.

⁸⁷Ibid., 26-7, 32.

⁸⁸Ibid., 30.

⁸⁹Ibid., 28, 32.

prefigured Calvin and the Scottish Congregation.⁹⁰ His *Oration on the Restoration of Excommunication* discusses the meaningful differences between spiritual and civil jurisdictions and censures, but it also considers how laymen and magistrates could cooperate with ministers in discipline.⁹¹ As is common in two-kingdom theories, we see a discussion of reprobates: those citizens of the state who did not—perhaps even could not—participate in the local church, much less be members of the universal church of the elect. While he refused to concede that the church depended upon the state for power, he recognized that the church needed the state to support it not only in allowing excommunication but also in instituting civil statutes that would, to borrow McNeill’s phrase, “establis[h] the Word of God, Christian morals, civic peace, and unity.”⁹² The councils were reluctant to be bound by the church. They did not swear oaths to be godly until February 1529, when “iconoclastic disturbances” encouraged them to act.⁹³ Events seem to have persuaded them that temporal and spiritual goals could be aligned. The consistory that Oecolampadius designed shared both two-kingdom and one-kingdom attributes. This “board of twelve censors consisting of the four pastors, four magistrates, and four representatives of the lay people” may have derived its authority from the church, but it allowed laymen to meddle in church affairs.⁹⁴ As Ernst Stähelin has

⁹⁰John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 80-2.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 83-4.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 81.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 83.

suggested, Oecolampadius is arguably the father of Presbyterianism.⁹⁵ At its inception, Presbyterianism was already holding in tension its ideals of ecclesiastical discipline and state cooperation. Members of the Christian Civil League were nervous about this paradigm in which magistrates sitting on the board were acting on behalf of the church rather than the state. Fearful that excommunication might not prevent civil discord, the Christian Civil League demanded that reprobates be punished by the state. When excommunicated citizens refused to repent after a month of forced separation from the church, they would receive civil penalties.⁹⁶ Although this move empowered the state by acknowledging the power of the secular sword, it suited the two-kingdom theory because it recognized that not all citizens could be saints and that reprobates could be constrained through civil means.

The next generation of Presbyterians in Scotland and England also struggled to balance church purity with state security. They balanced the realism of Zurich with the idealism of Basel. They admitted that some members of the visible church were actually reprobates. The Scottish Confession of Faith (1561) says “the reprobate may be joynd in the societie of the elect” but not persevere; “darnell, cokle, and chaff, may be sawin, grow, and in great abundance lye in the myddis of the wheat,” and they may for a while be mistaken as wheat, but they remain weeds and will eventually be sorted out and destroyed.⁹⁷ They did not accept partial impurity in the church as an excuse for temporal jurisdiction over the church. Like Oecolampadius, the British Presbyterians pragmatically

⁹⁵Ibid., 84.

⁹⁶Ibid., 83-84.

⁹⁷“The Giftis Freilie Gevin to the Kirk,” in *The works of John Knox*, Ed. David Laing, Vol. 2 of 6 (Edinburgh, 1846), 119.

admitted that state support was helpful because it ensured civil peace and bolstered church reforms, but they insisted that the *auctoritas* was given directly to the church by God. The prince was meant to be an outside defender, not an intermediary. One of the leaders of the Lords of the Congregation who was most influenced by Oecolampadius, Erskine of Dun, is considered the likely author of a letter to Mary of Guise emphasizing the limits of princely authority.⁹⁸

This letter emphatically argues that princes have no more power in the church than their subjects because Christ is the only head—and trustworthy shepherd—of the kirk; princes’ secular power does not entitle them to control the church, especially in doctrine. While conceding that monarchs are special servants of God, this Presbyterian letter argues that a monarch’s ministry is purely civil:

Tak heid that ye pas nocht the limittis and boundis of your awin office, nother entyr be impir in Christis kingdome vsurpeand forther powr vnto you nor he has gewin, ffor thocht all kingdomes bayth temporall and spirituall pertenis to God, yit hes God distributit the ministerie diuerslye, that is the temporall kingdomes in the gouernment of mortall men, and makis thame princes of the erthe, for the mentenance of commown welthis and ciwill polacies. Bot the gouernment of the spirituall and hewinlie kingdome, the kirk of God we mein, he hes onlie committit to his sone Christ, ffor he is the heid thair off, all wther ar her memberis vnder him.⁹⁹

This interpretation of the two-kingdom theory—that there is an important “difference betwix God and Cesar” and what “pertenis” to each—is stricter than that articulated after the death of the Dowager Queen when the Congregation was putting forth its beliefs less

⁹⁸James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, 235-6.

⁹⁹“Ane letter wrettin to the queinis grace and regent, be the professouris of Christis ewangell, in the realme of Scotland” in *Spalding Club Miscellany*, Vol. 4 of 5 (1849), 89; James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, 235-6.

defensively.¹⁰⁰ In the *Confession of faith* published in 1561, chapter fourteen, “Of the Civile Magistrat,” charges kings with the “maintenance of the trew Religioun” in addition to “civile policey.”¹⁰¹ The differences between the letter and the article are subtle but speak to the relative optimism of the Presbyterians in each political circumstance. In the letter, the Lords begin by lamenting that the regent has dampened their hopes for magisterial reform; their original “haill expectatioun and howp wes that God sould make your grace [Mary of Guise] that instrument to set up and menten his word and trew wirschiping, to be any defence of his pvir flok and congregation, and the dowputting of all idolatre, abhominatioun, and superstitioun,” but her actions against the reformers and in favor of papacy had changed their “howp[s]” to “greit hewines.”¹⁰² This discussion reveals that the reformers were open to magisterial reform in the sense of magisterial support *for reform*, but they were quick to distance themselves from claims of magistrates to direct reform.

Evidence that the Congregation believed in separate jurisdictions for church and state is prevalent in Knox’s works. When defending the Parliament of 1560, which he and other Lords of the Congregation had called, he seems to argue that parliamentary power is unnecessary for ecclesiastical reform: “for all that we did was rather to schaw our debtfull obedience, then to bege of thame any strength to our Religioun, whiche from

¹⁰⁰ See “Matthew 22:21,” *Geneva Bible*.

¹⁰¹ “The confessioun of faith professit and belevit be the protestantis within the realme of Scotland, publischeit by thame in Parliament, and be the estaitis thair of ratifeit and approvit, as hailsome and sound doctrine, groundit upoun the infallable trewth of Godis word” (Edinburgh, 1561) in *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 118-19.

¹⁰² “Ane letter wrettin to the Queinis grace” in *Spalding Club Miscellany*, Vol. 4, 88.

God hes full powar, and neideth nott the suffrage of man.”¹⁰³ Even if Knox and the Congregation believed this claim to authority from God directly rather than through his agent, the monarch, or the people’s representatives, the parliament, their efforts to secure the regent’s backing and—failing that—to secure the semblance of civil lawfulness through Parliamentary acts, suggest some nervousness about how this strident position would be received. We find Knox, for example, reassuring the monarch in 1566 that the radical articles limiting princely jurisdiction that were attributed to the Lollards of Kyle were rejected by the Congregation, which continues to recognize and value monarchy. After listing the ninth Lollard article, “That Christ at his cuming has tackin away power from Kingis to judge,” Knox uses a parenthetical remark to suggest that this article must have been fraudulently added by “ennemies” (i.e. by papists) because reformers cannot help but note the scriptural warrant for princely authority:

(This article we dowbt not to be the vennemouse accusatioun of the ennemyes, whose practise has ever bene to mack the doctrin of Jesus Christ suspect to Kingis and rellaris, as that God thairby wold depose thame of thair royall seattis, whare by the contrair, nothing confermes the power of magistratis more then dois Goddis wourd...).¹⁰⁴

Although most of the reformers who directly or indirectly influenced Presbyterian theology can be classified as “magisterial” because they allowed the state to participate in the reform process, each theorized secular cooperation differently. Luther and Calvin both attended to the political circumstances of their host nation. Luther was especially sensitive to the contemporary situation and adapted his attitudes toward civil jurisdiction strategically. He distinguished the church and state when he distrusted secular powers:

¹⁰³John Knox, *Works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 126.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 8-9.

“In 1522/3, he was mindful chiefly of rulers hostile to reformation. But when Luther’s mind was on sympathetic princes and magistrates, or on the threats posed ... by ‘fanatics’ ..., a quite different account of ‘secular authority’ made its appearance.”¹⁰⁵ Calvin had also considered how the affairs of state might empower or threaten the church, but he was more hesitant to change his theory of magistracy. In the early 1540s, the Genevan reformer had hoped that Charles V and the German princes might sponsor protestant reforms.¹⁰⁶ When this ideal of state support was shattered by the emperor’s active assault on radical reformers—illustrated in his attack on the Schmalkaldie League at Mühlberg in 1547 and in his subsequent outlaw of all forms of Lutheranism (1548),¹⁰⁷ Calvin continued to recognize the power of princes and magistrates. He was less prepared than Luther to modify his teachings on church and state power to further his cause. He was also more successful in setting up a system that encouraged but controlled lay participation in church affairs. In Geneva, the church and state were not distinct. Though the magistrates were not responsible for writing church ordinances or liturgy, they did elect pastors. In so doing, they were able to set the general direction in which church doctrine developed. But this power was not only diffused by the number of people involved but also by the number of counsels. Erastian Presbyterians in the mid-seventeenth-century also discouraged abuse by distributing ecclesiastical power between the church and the state.

¹⁰⁵Harro Höpfl, Introduction, *Luther and Calvin on secular authority*, x.

¹⁰⁶John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, 205.

¹⁰⁷Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Age of Reformation*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), 189-90.

VI. *Concluding remark*

In the preceding discussion of terminology, I have introduced sixteenth-century disputes about the purpose, organization, and management of spiritual and civil society so we can understand the source of tensions between Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents and between high and Erastian Presbyterians in the mid-seventeenth century, tensions that the next chapter will analyze in particular case studies.

Chapter 2: Divisions Among Brothers: Why Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents Were Both Friends and Foes

I. *Overview*

This chapter argues that in the mid-seventeenth century, British Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents were unified by shared values but divided by private priorities. Protestant faiths shared a common measure: scripture; they also shared defining ideals: truth, order, and godliness. However, they disagreed on questions of authority, interpretation, and precedent: whether scripture was filtered through right reason, whether scriptural lessons were obvious to even the simplest readers, and whether its laws and precedents were general or particular and extraordinary (temporarily applicable) or ordinary (applicable to all times and places). Consequently, the core Protestant standards of truth, order, and godliness were neither esteemed equally nor explained identically by all traditions.

Presbyterians, for instance, tended to cherish truth above all. They sought ecclesiastical order, political obedience, ecclesiastical discipline, and social purity as guarantors of essential doctrine because they based salvation on faith in Christ alone. Polity and worship were important but not salvifically essential. Episcopalians agreed with Presbyterians that the visible church, which would never be perfect, could not be conflated with the invisible church, which would eventually be sanctified fully, but their response to this tenet differed from Presbyterians' response. Presbyterians conceived of the visible church as a spiritual instrument or efficient cause for the elect. Preaching and

sacraments were salvifically powerful insofar as they related to Christ. Though they only directed the elect to Christ, none could foretell who would be saved, so they needed to be offered to all and offered in such a way that they could be useful rather than harmful. The externals of religion were highly esteemed insofar as they aided the predestined.

Presbyterians sought purity in worship and order in polity to advanced truth in doctrine.

Confident that God would "preserve" the elect, however imperfect their beliefs or actions, Episcopalians tended to attach more importance to order than to doctrine or discipline. Restraining the masses from inquiring into truth and confusing themselves and others, they sought a doctrinal reformation that would prevent presumption; considering complete sanctification an unreachable goal, they emphasized reverence and morality. They conceived of the visible church as an expedient society founded, like all "politick Bod[ies]," both on man's "natural inclination" for "fellowship" and on laws that safeguard the "common good."¹⁰⁸

Unlike Episcopalians, Independents respected the right of every individual both to seek positive scriptural warrants for offices and discipline and to worship in purity among godly saints. They rejected the notion that all members of the civil commonwealth are members of the visible church and that civil magistrates should have coercive power in the church. Independents envisioned saints with demonstrated holiness (and thus assurance of election) congregating voluntarily (rather than parochially and under constraint) to worship God according to apostolic precedents (without any human institutions). Though they loved truth and appreciated order, they denied assemblies the

¹⁰⁸Richard Hooker, "Book 1," *The laws of ecclesiastical polity in The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr. Richard Hooker, containing eight books of The laws of ecclesiastical polity, and several other treatises*, Vol. 1 of 3 (Oxford, 1793), 238-9.

right to determine doctrine and magistrates the right to compel conformity. Believing that godliness starts within (through the movements of the Holy Spirit) and cannot be imposed from without, liberty of conscience was paramount.

Throughout both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Reformed faiths contemplated and disputed how they could simultaneously be united in soteriology and divided in ecclesiology. Those, like most Episcopalians, who sharply differentiated fundamentals from *adiaphora* and conceived of the visible church as mixed, spiritual and temporal society, had an easier time rationalizing that tension than those, like many Independents, who both rejected all customs and ceremonies not explicitly mentioned in scripture and who conceived of the church as a collection of saints following Christ alone.¹⁰⁹ An anxiety about language was central to Independents' fear that any ecclesiastical practice not explicitly mentioned in scripture constituted "will-worship."¹¹⁰

The parabolic nature of language—its ability to signify multiple and sometimes unrelated things, its shared and separate meanings, its existence both as producer and product of historical moments and cultures—made some reformers, such as Presbyterians and Independents, quite nervous. To varying degrees, they rebelled against the perceived scholastic tendencies 1) to use reason as a measure for theology; 2) to replace literal with allegorical meaning; 3) to dispute for pleasure rather than for profit; and 4) to undermine confidence in the truth by allowing individuals to challenge doctrine and laws after they have been settled. Scholastic tendencies provoked a myriad of reactions among

¹⁰⁹Henry Burton, *Protestation protested* (London, 1641), A4v-B, B3r and *Grand Impostor unmasked* (London, 1644), 4-5.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

reformers.¹¹¹ Some sought to divorce both scriptural exegesis and religious practice from human arts (whether philosophical or poetic). Others proposed one standard for discovering truth and another for communicating it. Some rejected public consensus, seeking instead to determine meaning privately through conscience. Others rejected private opinion, instead embracing authoritative determinations.

Presbyterians thought Christian magistrates should limit the proliferation of ideas without coercing belief. Temporal restraints were sometimes needed to prevent or stop the spread of vice, especially among reprobates, but that disciplinary office differed from the teaching office of ministers. Presbyterians believed strongly in shared meaning and collective identity; that is why they strongly opposed the divisions and dissensions promulgated through Independency. Yet Presbyterians recognized that charitable communion and correction was an office of sanctification, not justification. In other words, the elect should promote unity and uniformity while acknowledging that it was an unrealistic goal both because some members of the visible church would never be saved and because sanctification was a process that would not be completed on earth. Some parts would never really belong to the whole; some individuals would persist in misunderstanding (holding fast to their separate meaning) because the Holy Spirit had not equipped them to embrace the truth (to commune with Christ). Because the workings of the Holy Spirit were inscrutable, anyone could be a potential saint; thus, all individuals needed to be persuaded and admonished, but those spiritual disciplines would ultimately

¹¹¹See Martin Luther, *Disputation against scholastic theology* (1517) and "Concerning the Letter and the Spirit" from *Answer to the hyperchristian, hyperspiritual, and hyperlearned book by Goat Esmer in Leipzig* (1521) in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, Ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1989), 13-20, 74-103, esp. 78-81; Francesco Petrarca, "To Tommaso de Messina, against aged dialecticians," *Familiarum rerum libri*, 1.7.

only benefit the elect. Dialogue was a charitable endeavor, but its benefits were limited, so its uses should be as well.

As the next chapter will demonstrate, Presbyterians were willing to dispute but not contend, to chastise but not scorn, to restrain but not compel. The first Scottish *Buke of Discipline*, for instance, advocated prophesyings; during those edifying meetings, Scripture was to be interpreted communally but not confusedly. Contentions, heresies, and scandals were forbidden because they could undermine the purpose of the practice, to strengthen faith: "But least that of a profittable Exercise mycht aryise debate and strife, curiouse, peregryne and unprofitable questionis ar to be avoided. All interpretatioun disaggreing from the principallis of oure faith, repugnyng to cheritie, or that standis in plane contradictioun to ony uthir manifest place of Scripture, is to be rejected."

Moreover, "invective[s]" were only appropriate when "heresy" were endangering the souls of the weak; invective was medicinal, and it was to be used moderately: "with sobrietie."¹¹² Sharp words, like disputations, were to be used charitably or not at all.

This chapter explains why Presbyterians, who had so much in common with Episcopalians and Independents, felt threatened by—and on behalf of—them. That fear motivated Presbyterians to behave in ways that others found threatening. Though their unpleasant and extreme means of correction and coercion were motivated by kindness as well as concern, others interpreted them as cruel. Presbyterians evaluated the value of ceremonies and disciplines by their purpose and outcome; similarly, they measured strong emotions and severe strategies by their function and effect. While Presbyterians valued social virtues, such as soberness, both as fruits of spiritual virtues and as restraints

¹¹²John Knox, *Buke of discipline* in *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 242-44.

on spiritual vices, such as profanity, they were eager to distinguish the former from the latter. In other words, they recognized that visible piety born out of inward holiness was substantially different from visible piety coerced by outward threats. They strongly supported secular as well as spiritual discipline, but they did not confuse the two, and they did not want weak Christians to do so either.

The case studies offered here are perplexing. If we are to understand how Presbyterians could seek a strong state and a strong church linked by members and by common values, such as order and purity, but not by means or by outcome, then we must study Presbyterians sometimes referred to as "Erastian." In this discussion, the term will be used to denote those, such as William Prynne and Thomas Edwards, who vested civil government with authority over church government. Though Erastian Presbyterians tended to pursue order before purity, as did some Episcopalians, men like Prynne and Edwards still sought truth above all; in so doing, they demonstrate their Presbyterianism. Because the writing strategies of such Erastian Presbyterians were determined, I think, by the complicated principles of the authors, we must consider the relationship between the philosophy and the form. This chapter will examine the former, explaining how Presbyterians distinguished themselves from their Christian brothers. The next chapter will examine the latter, reflecting on the consequences of their literary method.

II. *"Quondam Fellow-Sufferers"*¹¹³: John Bastwick, Henry Burton, and William Prynne

Addressing the Star Chamber at the censure of John Bastwick, Henry Burton, and William Prynne on June 16, 1637, Archbishop William Laud accused these men, who

¹¹³Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis* (London, 1645), 1.

styled themselves faithful martyrs, of being frauds. He argued that they were not true Christian heroes because they were neither suffering passively nor for religion. On the contrary, these men, he argued, were guilty of the sin for which they attacked him and other Caroline bishops: innovation in religion. I begin this chapter with the antipathy between Archbishop Laud and Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne for several reasons. First, while we may expect to find both sides casting aspersions at their opponents, we may not expect to find them volleying the *same* aspersions back and forth. Each side accused the other of seeking to alter the established religion; each also charged the other with hypocrisy. This tendency to use the same terms albeit in different ways is central to my thesis of shared values mitigated by private priorities. Although the alleged innovations and deceptions differed as did, on occasion, the ways that each side defined the terms, there was common ideological ground. Divergences in the objectives and instruments of each ecclesiastical "way" should not overshadow their core connections.

The trial of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne also reminds us that the alliances of the 1630s differed from the alliances of the 1640s. In the 1630s, Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne could be tried together because their agenda was the same: exposing the danger that the bishops posed to the church and the state. In 1643, Robert Baillie, a Scottish Erastian Presbyterian, could still use the trial of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne as a byword for prelatical presumption and injustice.¹¹⁴ Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne had not yet turned from fighting Laud to fighting one another, and when they did so soon thereafter, they went astray, in Baillie's opinion. In 1652, Baillie would thus lament,

¹¹⁴Robert Baillie, *Life of William now Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury examined* (London, 1643), 29.

"These years bygone too much time hath been lost among us on Ceremonies and Disciplinary Questions....Would to God that our too too long and hot skirmishes about purging of the ditches of Bishops, and Ceremonies, had not cast open at our backs the gates of our great Towers, and given opportunity to our Enemy to undermine the very foundations of our Church."¹¹⁵ The problem with the Laudian bishops to Baillie's thinking was their Arminian doctrine, not their office. Baillie's opposition to Independents is really an opposition to their privileging pure practice over truthful doctrine: "For it is a greater sinne to depart from a Church which I professe to bee true, and whose Ministry I acknowledge to be saving, then from a Church which I conceive to be false, and whose Ministers I take to have no calling from God, nor any blessings from his hand."¹¹⁶ Baillie's emphasis on truth, justification *sola fides*, above the externals of religion, including ecclesiastical offices and outward worship, distinguishes him as a Presbyterian. When Presbyterians disputed church polity and worship, they were trying to safeguard doctrine. When English Presbyterians, such as Bastwick and Prynne, and Scottish Presbyterians, such as George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford, disputed questions concerning polity, ceremonies, and discipline, they were endeavoring to save British souls by identifying essential doctrine and eliminating threats to it, whether those threats were theological, circumstantial, social, or political.

Independents, such as Henry Burton, Thomas Goodwin, and John Goodwin, were also invested in evangelism, but most of their charity was reserved for their Christian

¹¹⁵Robert Baillie, *A Scotch antidote against the English infection of Arminianism* (London, 1652), A2v-A3r.

¹¹⁶Robert Baillie, *A dissuasive from the errours of the time* (1645), 104.

brothers and sisters. Goodwin's plan for saving lost souls entails, he says, "[S]ending forth ... able and faithfull men with all Christian incouragement, to preach the Gospel in all the darke places and corners of the land." He anticipates the "conversion and gaining in of those that are yet without [the pure, gathered church], and uncovered."¹¹⁷ From what we know about semi-separatist practices, we can infer that Goodwin was thinking of Independent ministers who preached in established churches, encouraging those who, as he says, "are yet unconverted" to believe and follow Christ.¹¹⁸ Independents were committed to spreading true doctrine, but it was not their endgame. Their goal was to obey Christ, as commanded in scripture, and that meant "separat[ing] [them]selves from all corruptions of the world, and humane inventions."¹¹⁹ Independents sought pure ordinances, unpolluted by superstitions or superstitious men. Visible churches needed to be purged of more than just the "service-book" and "hierarchy," according to Burton; they needed to be purged of all who believed in those things and in the authority of government to establish them.¹²⁰ From Burton's description of a private church covenant, we get a clear picture of his vision for a true church and its offices of charity: it is a "declaration of free assent, and voluntary agreement to walk in the wayes of Christ with the Church, whereof they are members, and to perform all service of love to one another, submitting themselves to the Order and Ordinances of Christ, in that Church

¹¹⁷John Goodwin, *Antapologiasiates antapologias* (London, 1646), 149.

¹¹⁸Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 97-98.

¹¹⁹Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis* (London, 1645), 22.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 13.

respectively."¹²¹ Independents gathered together outside of the parochial church to found an apostolic church that could obey Christ, rather than magistrates, and edify the saints, rather than reprobates. Though both semi-separatists and separatists defined their pursuits of liberty for tender consciences and godliness in the church as charitable, their decisions to go into exile and to gather themselves into exclusive, voluntary congregations demonstrate that they were more concerned with protecting the pure from scandal" than saving "the poore sheepe in the wilderness."¹²² Bastwick and Edwards were highly offended by those actions, which seemed selfish, not saintly.¹²³ Because Independents rejected the national church system and coercive discipline, those who wandered from the truth (whether individuals or whole congregations) might be lost forever. That possibility frightened Presbyterians. Presbyterians wanted to search for the lost sheep and return them to the fold. In a prayer as stirring as it is apt, John Calvin begged God to strengthen ministers and magistrates for that very task:

May He give this grace not only to us but also to all people and nations on earth, bringing back all poor ignorant people from the captivity of error and darkness to the right way of salvation. For that purpose may He raise up true and faithful ministers of His word who do not seek their own profit and ambition but only the exaltation of His holy name and the salvation of His poor flock. On the contrary, may He will to wipe out all sects, heresies, and errors, which are seeds of trouble and division among His people, so that we may all live in good brotherly agreement together. By His Holy Spirit may He guide all kings, princes, and authorities who have the rule of the sword, so that their governing may not be in avarice,

¹²¹Ibid., 14.

¹²²John Bastwick, *The utter routing of the whole army of the Independents & Sectaries* (London, 1646), 21-22.

¹²³Ibid.; Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia: or, a full answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr Goodwin, Mr Nye, Mr Sympson, Mr Bridge, Members of the Assembly of Divines* (London, 1644), 18-24.

cruelty, or tyranny, or any other disordered feelings, but in good justice and righteousness. May we also who live under them give them the honor and obedience due to them, and by real peace and tranquility may we serve God in all holiness and honor.¹²⁴

Independents, like John Goodwin, thought it was too dangerous to have wolves lay down near sheep.¹²⁵ But Thomas Edwards and other Presbyterians maintained that wolves were easier to control from within the pen. They were less likely to act like wolves when they were expected to behave like sheep, and as long as they did behave like sheep, they posed a minimal threat. To extend the analogy even further, even true sheep sometimes behaved like wolves; only one lamb, Christ, was pure and constant.

Though Presbyterians acknowledged that Christians would never be fully sanctified on earth, they nevertheless felt obligated to reform the community thoroughly. A truly godly commonwealth, they imagined, would be free from scandals in all spheres of life. I use the word scandal here to emphasize that Presbyterians worried about sins, not vices; they worried principally about how their reactions to trials would affect God's relationship with them and with the community. Again, Calvin's words clearly capture this emphasis:

It is true that it would be a great thing if we could walk in integrity with our neighbors, that we should do no evil to anyone, that we should be chaste and moderate, sober in our life, fleeing all drunkenness and intemperance, that no blasphemy should come out of our mouths, and such like. Behold, these are great virtues, and one does not always see them. But this is not the principal matter. The principal thing is ... that in serving God, if we are assailed with many annoyances, if the devil directs combat against us and sets ambushes for us, if people are so malicious and

¹²⁴John Calvin, *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, Ed. and trans. Elsie Anne McKee, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 151-2.

¹²⁵John Goodwin, *Antapologesiates antapologias* (London, 1646), 119.

perverse that one pricks us, another strikes us, another tries to ruin us, ... still we must bless God's name.¹²⁶

All vices may truly be reduced to one head: sin against God; thus, all virtues and forms of purity amount to nothing, indeed—amount to sin, if we curse God. Presbyterians opposed anything that could overthrow the foundation of faith either directly or by consequence, including many indifferent things, such as church offices and social recreations. They did not think that individuals were sufficient to resist the temptations of their fancies.

Without external restraints, people would trust their own opinions and follow their own impulses to their eventual damnation. Presbyterians promoted communal accountability through national uniformity in polity and worship, ecclesiastical discipline, and coercion by means of the civil sword because all individuals—be they masons, ministers, or magistrates—needed correction and edification.

Despite the significant differences that emerged in the priorities, perspectives, and policies of the "*quondam* fellow-sufferers," they continued to share values in the 1640s. For example, both Independents and Presbyterians, like the Episcopalians before them, genuinely thought that their church way was the safest. Safest *for whom*? Safest *in what way*? When we answer those questions, we complicate our comparison and remember that their plans were irreconcilable in many respects. Each could only win if the other lost. The legendary Protestant consensus was based on compromise, not full agreement. When the stakes were low, no one was winning much, but no one was losing much either. When Carolinians decided to end the game by winning, so too did the other groups. Each felt threatened, so each in turn threatened the others. That does not imply, however, that everything had changed. The game was more intense and less friendly, but all

¹²⁶John Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 149-50.

participants were using the same chips, which I have broadly identified as truth, order, and purity or doctrine, discipline, and godliness. During the conflicts that emerged between Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne in the mid 1640s, they used the terms of abuse from the 1630s because their norms had not changed, even if their priorities had.

In the mid 1640s, Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne regarded one another as not only theological opponents but also occasional villains. In 1646, Bastwick was accusing Burton and his fellow Independents of being worse than prelates, and Burton, in turn, was claiming the same thing about Bastwick and his fellow Presbyterians. In *The utter routing of the whole army of all the independents and sectaries* (1646), Bastwick states boldly that Independents have replaced papists and prelates as the greatest threat to the church and state:

And as for the Independent government, as it is most certain it hath neither precept nor president for it in all Gods holy Word, so it is far more tyrannicall and lordly then that of the Pope or Prelates *tending to nothing but an Anarchy and confusion in Church and State*: And therefore that they with all their trumperies and desperate practices, with all their unrighteous dealing, ought to be abhorred and abominated, whatsoever seeming sanctimony they make shew of, by all such as truly fear God and wish the peace of Zion and the good of the State and Kingdomes in which they live.¹²⁷

Notice Bastwick's complaints about Independency: 1) that it is instituted by man rather than scripture, 2) that it is "tyrannical and lordly," and 3) that it will lead to "anarchy and confusion." The first two charges had formerly been used to discredit practices of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Given the hierarchical structure of those churches, they were less frequently associated with external "anarchy and

¹²⁷John Bastwick, *The utter routing of the whole army of the Independents and sectaries* (London, 1646), sig. A4r-v.

confusion"; hence, Bastwick's claim that the "seeming sanctimony" of Independents is even more dangerous "than that of the Pope or Prelates." At least the bishops in both ecclesiastical polities supported disciplinary measures that would suppress doctrinal errors.

Also notice Bastwick's defense of scorn. He advises readers to "abhor" and "abominate" "Independent government" as a means of ensuring peace in the invisible church and wellbeing in civil societies. Those verbs may denote both hatred and aversion.¹²⁸ That association is crucial. Loathing Independency was not the aim; it was the means of encouraging people to recoil from danger. The intent of Presbyterian scorn was to help people to recognize and avoid sources of harm, not to punish them. When Presbyterians *slandered* Independency, they did so with what they considered to be due cause; they were discrediting the untrustworthy, not maliciously lying. Moreover, Bastwick distinguishes between the sin and the sinner, declaring that the former may be loathed, but the latter is not: "The Presbyterians as they are bound, hate all false wayes, but they hate not the persons of any, that is the practice of all the Sectaries, as it is well knowne."¹²⁹ Hating people, Bastwick suggests, is ungodly. On that, Presbyterians and Independents concurred. On which of them was guilty of hostility and whether it was directed at sinners, sins, or saints, they quarreled. They also disputed whether the accusations were true admonitions or false mistreatment.

¹²⁸See "abhor" and "abominate" in *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd Ed., online version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹²⁹John Bastwick, *The utter routing*, sig. E4v.

Just as Bastwick cast upon Independents terms of contempt formerly used to describe prelates—terms such as "proud," "uncharitable," "tyrannical," and "lordly," Burton similarly disparaged Presbyterians.¹³⁰ They both accused one another of having what Edmund Calamy called an "Episcopal spirit."¹³¹ In *Conformities deformity* (1646), Burton condemns Presbyterians' "spirit of Antichristian pride and tyranny, of rebellion and treason in lifting up a Papal throne above the Kings and Kesars, above Kingdoms and Commonweals, to the enslaving of the whole Nation in their souls, bodies, and estates."¹³² According to Burton, all those defending either hierarchical church governments (of any kind) or conformity not only supplant Christ as head of the church but also supplant "Kings and Kesars" as head of the state; the "vilest of men," they endanger souls and society alike.¹³³ Presbyterians were likewise concerned about the dangers of "will-worship" and of ambition. High Presbyterians, like Bastwick, who saw in the Bible a general pattern for the church in all ages, concerned themselves with human innovations to true worship. Not surprisingly, they determined that it was the Independents, not the Presbyterians, who were guilty of following "vaine and wicked traditions of their own braine," such as church covenants, in their gathered congregations.¹³⁴ Erastians, like Prynne, who rejected clerical claims of "divine

¹³⁰John Bastwick, *The utter routing*, sig. A4v-B, C3, F, F4-G2.

¹³¹Edmund Calamy, *The door of truth opened* (London, 1645), 14.

¹³²Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity* (London, 1646), 21.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 4, 6, esp. 17.

¹³⁴John Bastwick, *The utter routing*, sig. A4v.

authority," worried most about popish ambition.¹³⁵ In *Truth triumphing over falsehood* (1644), William Prynne says that the ideas of Independents are "destructive to the very fundamentall Power and Being of *Parliaments*; and as bad or worse then the Popish *Gunpowder plot*, to blow up the Sovereign Ecclesiastick, and Civill Authority of this High Court [Parliament], in all succeeding Ages."¹³⁶

Comparing Independency to the *Gunpowder plot*, Prynne equates physical threats with ideological ones, Papist theories of two-kingdom rule with Independent ones, religious decisions (objectives of English Catholics in 1604 and of Independent in 1644) with political outcomes (the sovereignty of King James in 1604 and of the Long Parliament in 1644), and the past (the gunpowder plot) with both the present (the Independent plot) and the future (potential anarchy). Prynne uses a condensed form of exemplary storytelling or similar situation typology to emphasize the correspondence between the Papist plot and the Independent proposals for toleration. That mode of amplification in which a past historical event is interpreted as a shadow of events to come was often adopted by Presbyterians because it seemed safer and more legitimate than fanciful examples. Unlike allegories, which empowered the interpreter to ignore the literal meaning of the signifier and impose a meaning of his or her own creation,

¹³⁵ John Bastwick, *The utter routing*, B4v, G3v; William Prynne, *Suspension suspended; or, the divine of syon-colledge late claim of the powers of suspending scandalous persons, from the Lords Supper (without sequestering them from any other publicke ordinance, or the society of Christians) and that by the very will and appointment of Jesus Christ (not by vertue of any ordinance of Parliament) from whom they receive both their office and authority; briefly examined, discussed, refuted by the Word of God, and arguments deduced from it; and the contrary objections cleerly answered* (London, 1646), sig. Av, 1.

¹³⁶ William Prynne, Epistle Dedicatory, *Truth triumphing over falsehood, antiquity over novelty* (London, 1644), sig. A3v.

typologies linked one message with another, making them mutually constitutive rather than mutually exclusive. Each limited and refined the other without erasing either. In other words, the interpreter used one to understand the other, thereby employing reason but not fancy. In addition to preventing men from inventing and pursuing personal truths, similar situation typologies appealed to Presbyterians because they suited their notion of God's providence: that God sometimes authorized harmful events to chastise the faithful. Threatening events were warnings that God's people were meant to interpret and heed. Minor worries often presaged more daunting ones to come. Independency, Prynne would have his readers believe, was an ever-increasing menace to the church and the state. Like English Catholicism at the turn of the century, it might appear moderate enough to be accommodated, but the longer that outward cooperation was accepted as sufficient signs of goodwill to the national church, as in the participation of preachers with gathered congregations in parish services and in the Assembly of Divines, the less likely it was that the true motivations of Independents would be discovered before irreparable damage was done.

The goal of the Gunpowder plot was to change the sovereign so that jurisdiction over the church could also be changed. Catholic plotters were not trying to abolish the English monarchy; they were trying to abolish the monarch's ecclesiastical supremacy by installing a monarch who would willingly submit to the Pope, as Queen Mary had.¹³⁷ By comparing Independents to Gunpowder plotters, Prynne was emphasizing that the Congregational Way prevented temporal powers from possessing final authority in

¹³⁷"LXXVI. Mary's Second Act of Repeal," 1 & 2 Philip and Mary, cap. 8 (1554) in Henry Gee and William John Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), 385-415.

church government. In 1644, Independents were not yet plotting to remove Charles I or purge the Parliament; however, they were, like Gunpowder plotters, trying to reduce the sovereign's ecclesiastical authority, and Prynne imagined that one reduction of power could lead to another. If Parliament could be stripped of control over church affairs, then it could be stripped of its control over civil affairs as well.

For Catholics, Independents, and Presbyterians alike, nonconformity and civil disobedience were often considered matters of eternal salvation or damnation; that does not imply, however, that their theologies were identical. In all three traditions, ecclesiology and soteriology were linked; all envisioned salvation occurring within their visible churches. However, Catholics alone believed that people obtained full justification (second justification) through church ordinances and other good works, which increased grace and "delivered [them] as from sinne, so from eternal death and condemnation on the reward of sinne."¹³⁸ That doctrine was rejected by most Protestants; Henry Burton, for example, in *The Christian bulwarke* (1632), criticizes Catholicism for suggesting that people could help to save themselves:

[T]hough they [i.e., Catholics] name imputation, which they call the communication of Christs righteousness, as the formal cause of our justification: yet they mane nothing else, but that Christ has merited, that charity should be infused into our hearts, whereby we should be justified: which in summe, is as much to say, as Christ became a Saviour, by whose merit every man might bee made his owne Saviour; and that by another kinde of righteousness, than that of Christ imputed.¹³⁹

¹³⁸Richard Hooker, *A learned discourse of justification, workes, and how the foundation of faith is overthrowne* (Oxford, 1612) in *The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr. Richard Hooker, containing eight books of The laws of ecclesiastical polity, and several other treatises*, Vol. 3 of 3 (Oxford, 1793), 431-91, esp. 435.

¹³⁹Henry Burton, *The Christian bulwarke against Satans battery; or, the doctrine of justification ... layd out...* (London, 1632), 50.

Though Henry Burton rejected magisterial reformation in the 1640s, when he became convinced that Christians must purify themselves (as opposed to being coerced) and worship God as He alone commanded (rather than as commanded by humans in church canons and parliamentary statutes), he never embraced the Roman Catholic tenet that people could cooperate with God in their salvation. The Protestant teaching that God imputes his righteousness to men through church ordinances, which inspired separatists and semi-separatists to purify those ordinances by removing corrupt rituals and corrupt communicants, differed from the Roman Catholic teaching that infused righteousness made works, such as participation in ordinances, salvifically meritorious. Burton did not change his mind about the formal cause of justification; instead, he changed his mind about the efficacy of corrupt instrumental causes: "the Word of God preached" and "the holy Sacraments administred," those "subordinate, conditionall, and ordinary meanes, whereby we should receive Christ for ours."¹⁴⁰ Protestants considered godly preaching and participation in the sacraments of baptism and communion visible marks of the true church and instruments through which most people received God's grace. They honored true visible churches because God converted people as they participated in them, but Protestants did not restrict God to operating solely through church ordinances:

[A]lthough by the meanes of these, to wit, the Word and Sacraments, men are ordinarily brought unto salvation in Christ ... yet ... God, being an absolute and free agent, that can worke above meanes, and without meanes....hee can, and doth without them save all those that belong to the Covenant of grace, elected in Jesus Christ, the onely absolute meanes.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 337-38.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

Protestants held that God could use other means to impute Christ's righteousness to the elect if he so ordained.¹⁴² That reverence for God's inscrutable will may have contributed to Independents' anxiety about mixed churches established by civil authority, an anxiety that led some to separate entirely from parish services and others to separate from their ordinances.

Concerned that God tended to withdraw His grace and presence from corrupt high places and to punish those who failed to remove all remnants of idolatry, some Protestants made discipline a third token of the visible church. In the sixteenth-century, both English and Scottish Presbyterians did so. *An admonition to the Parliament* (1572), the plea of English Presbyterians to reform the church to apostolic purity, reads, "The outward marks whereby a true Christian church is known are preaching of the Word purely, ministering of the sacraments sincerely, and ecclesiastical discipline which consisteth in admonition and correcting of faults severely."¹⁴³ The eighteenth article of the Scottish Confession of Faith (1561), "Of the notis by whiche the true kirk is discearned from the fals, and who shalbe judge of the doctrine," also accounts discipline an outward mark of the particular church in which Christ communes with the elect:

The nottis, signes, and assured tokenis whairby the immaculat spouse of Christ Jesus is knawin from that horrible harlote the Kirk malignant, ... we beleve, confesse, and avow to be, first, The trew preaching of the word of

¹⁴²See William Laud, "Conference with Fisher," in *The works of the most reverend father in God, William Laud, D.D., sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, Vol. 2 of 7, Ed. William Scott, Library of Anglo-Catholic theology (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1847-1860), 64 where Laud notes God may save people without sacraments, though he ordinarily elects to use them: "That baptism is necessary to the salvation of infants, (in the ordinary way of the Church, without binding God to the use and means of that sacrament, to which he hath bound us,) is express in St. John iii."

¹⁴³John Field, *An admonition to the Parliament* (London, 1572), Av.

God; Secondlie, The ryght administratioun of the sacramentis of Christ Jesus, whiche mun be annexed to the worde and promisse of God, to seall and confirme the same in our hartis. Last[ly], Ecclesiasticall discipline uprychtly ministred, as Godis word prescribed, whairby vice is repressed, and vertew nurished.¹⁴⁴

In the 1640s, both high Presbyterians (in Scotland and England) and English Independents retained these tokens. For instance, the Scottish divine, Samuel Rutherford, includes "discipline" with "word" and "sacraments" in his discussion of "the external Policie" of the visible church according to Scripture.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Henry Burton, defending gathered congregations in 1645, emphasized that their "ecclesiastical censures" removed scandals so that "the whole truth of Christ" could be "preached, received, and professed": "But do you not know, that there are three speciall visible marks of a true visible Church, The Gospel purely preached, the Sacraments duly administred, and Discipline rightly practised?"¹⁴⁶

While both Independents and high Presbyterians highly valued discipline, their conceptions of the practice differed significantly. Independents conceived of it as a purely spiritual operation within a gathered community of true Christians; they had no need for ecclesiastical and civil dominion. High Presbyterians, however, wanted to discipline saints and sinners alike; thus, they valued both ecclesiastical and temporal

¹⁴⁴*The Confessione of the fayht and doctrin beleved and professed by the Protestantes of the realme of Scotland exhibited to the estates of the sam in parliament adn by thare publict votes authorized as a doctrin grounded upon the infallible wourd of God* (Edinburgh, 1561) in John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, Ed. David Laing, Vol. 2 of 6 (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1846), 110.

¹⁴⁵Samuel Rutherford, *The divine right of church-government and excommunication* (London, 1646), 16.

¹⁴⁶Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis* (London, 1645), 20.

censures. They were quick, however, to distinguish spiritual rebukes from secular punishments. The duty of ministers, according to Samuel Rutherford, is the "Spiritual removing of Scandals, by the saving of the Spirit in the day of the Lord ... and a gaining of the Soul of an offender," and the duty of godly magistrates is "punish[ing] evil doing with the Sword."¹⁴⁷ Evil doing for Rutherford, however, includes spreading false doctrines:

[W]e conceive the godly Magistrate does not persecute the Saints, if he draw the sword against adulteries, murtherers, rapt, robberies, even in Saints, and we hope you, at least some of you are of the same minde with us: now spirituall whoredome, perverting of the right wayes of the Lord, *Socinianisme*, professed and taught to others, even in Saints, to us is worse and more deserve the sword then adulterie: for false teachers are evill doers, and so to be punished with the sword, Rom. 13.3,4, and called *evill workers*, Phil. 3.2, such as rub the pest of their *evill deeds* upon others.¹⁴⁸

Rutherford argues that while ministers engage in the "spiritual removing of scandals," magistrates should engage in the civil prevention and removal of scandals. By establishing a national church with pure doctrine as well as pure worship, secular sovereigns curb many kinds of "evil deeds." Independents, by contrast, did not think that true churches needed civil protection apart from a religious liberty or toleration.

High Presbyterians in the 1640s were like sixteenth-century Presbyterians; they warned magistrates not to interfere in the church's independent spiritual jurisdiction, but they invited princes and parliaments to using their civil powers to defend the true church. In sixteenth-century England, Presbyterians asked magistrates to reform the church by establishing "a right ministerie of God, & a right government of his church, according to

¹⁴⁷Samuel Rutherford, *The divine right of church-government and excommunication*, B3r.

¹⁴⁸Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist* (London, 1648), sig. A5.

the scriptures" free from "al popish remnants both in ceremonies and regiment" and other things "which the Lord himself in his worde commandeth"; in sixteenth-century Scotland, Presbyterians asked magistrates to reform the church by ratifying the determinations of the Assembly and by passing civil statutes "to the praise and defence of good men, and to revenge and puniss all open malefactouris."¹⁴⁹ In both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, high Presbyterians maintained that God empowered spiritual and civil governments separately; they were designed to support one another, but neither depended on the other for authority. The Pope had been wrong to claim sovereignty over princes, and parliaments or princes would be wrong to establish themselves as heads of the church. Using that logic, John Knox was able to defend the Confession of Faith of 1560. In keeping with the Presbyterian desire for magisterial coercion of evil-doers, the Parliament of 1560 was asked (and agreed) to ratify the confession. The legitimacy of that Parliament was in question because it did not have a royal warrant. While Knox maintained that the Parliament inherently possessed the prince's power, suggesting that the Parliament's acts were lawful, he also insisted that only God's warrant, accordance with Scripture, was needed to reform the church.¹⁵⁰ John Knox rejected the idea that the church's authority resided in the magistrate or civil laws.

¹⁴⁹John Field, *An admonition to the Parliament* (London, 1572) sig. A2, A; *The works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 118-125, esp. 118.

¹⁵⁰John Knox, *The works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 124-27, 184. Knox emphasizes the divine institution of the church for the people as opposed to the people's institution of the church for God: "all that we did was rather to schaw our debtfull obedience, then to bege of thame any strenth to our Religioun, whiche from God hes full powar, and neideth nott the suffrage of man, but in so far as man hath neid to beleve it, yf that ever he shall have participatioun of the lyfe everlesting" (126).

On that point, high Presbyterians differed from Erastian Presbyterians. All Presbyterians valued true doctrine more than pure ordinances; the values that Samuel Rutherford shared with William Prynne were more important to him than those he shared with Henry Burton. However, high Presbyterians, like Rutherford, thought that the church possessed the right to call its own assemblies and make binding ecclesiastical decisions, whereas Erastian Presbyterians, like Prynne, thought that only the state had the authority to call assemblies and ratify their conclusions. Whereas high Presbyterians sought to remove all church practices not recommended in Scripture, Erastian Presbyterians sought to remove only those that were scandalous, those that undermined people's confidence in Christ alone as their sole savior. High Presbyterians conceived of all "Lawis, Counsaillis, or Constitutionis ... imposed upone the consciences of men, without the expressed commandiment of Goddis word" as will-worship, which was "damnabill to mannis salvatioun."¹⁵¹ Erastian Presbyterians denied that "there is an exact and most absolute forme of Church-Government prescribed to all Churches in the Scripture, from which no man must vary in the least title"; they also denied that national churches coerced consciences beyond the "point of obedience."¹⁵²

Though high Presbyterians and Erastian Presbyterians disagreed amongst themselves about jurisdictional boundaries and disciplinary practices, both differentiated sacred and secular practices without elevating one over the other. They did want the church to decide temporal matters or the state to define fundamentals of the faith. Even high Presbyterians who claimed that because the church's authority came directly from

¹⁵¹*The works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 184-86.

¹⁵²William Prynne, *Truth triumphing over falshood, antiquity over novelty* (London, 1644), "To the reader," 106, *passim*.

God, assemblies could meet and determine ecclesiology without magisterial permission nevertheless recognized that the externals of religion were nonessential. They tended to actively resist lawful authority only when nonessential things were promoted as essential: when church canons (promulgated by the Church of Rome or by the Church of England) or scandalous church doctrines (promulgated by Independents and Sectarians) were endangering souls. Active resistance for Presbyterians did not entail rebellion; they may have been bold enough to censure magistrates, but they did so through legitimate political means: they lawfully appealed to other magistrates and took up arms when ordered to do so by rightful civil powers. Presbyterians wanted disputes over ecclesiology, whether they were between the Church of Rome, the Church of England, Presbyterians, Independents, or Sectarians, to be debated and settled peacefully through pamphlet dialogues and synod determinations because precedents in Scripture and early church practice warranted those means. By comparing Independents to Catholic Gunpowder plotters, Prynne was expressing his concern that they would not fight fair and would not conform to the religion that the Assembly would recommend and the Parliament would ratify.

William Prynne was not the first to believe that change was a slippery slope; nor was he the first to use the Gunpowder plot analogically. In 1634, Prynne was tried in the Star Chamber because the state feared that if it lost moral authority then it would lose civil authority as well. Criticizing the crown's management of public behavior was tantamount to impeaching the crown for failing in its office of maintaining God's order in human society, a duty which Charles I took very seriously. If the sovereign did not fulfill his God-given office, then he could—according to conciliarists, constitutional theorists,

and jurists of the Roman law—be replaced.¹⁵³ During that trial, Lord Richardson compared Prynne to a Gunpowder plotter: "This monster spittes noethinge but venome, and that att every man; the gunpowder traytors would blowe the state into the ayer, and this man will dampne them all to hell."¹⁵⁴ Gunpowder, Richardson suggests, destroys bodies, and when it destroys the physical body of the sovereign and his councilors, as it was intended to do in 1604, it becomes a means of revolution. Words, suggests Richardson's analogy, can also be instruments of revolution; they damage reputations and set off devastating reactions as surely as gunpowder. When *Histrion-mastix* (1633) condemns the souls of sinful princes and people, it justifies rebellion and war. Remember that advocates of the Church of England were principally concerned with order; for them, debates about office were more important than debates about doctrine. That's why both Archbishop Laud and judges on the Star Chamber chose to focus on the political implications of *Histrion-mastix* instead of Prynne's own focus: eliminating spiritual scandals.

William Prynne's treatment of the Gunpowder plot as a shadow of an Independent Plot further supports the theory that there was a common language of abuse in the 1630s and 1640s; the Gunpowder plot could be invoked whenever groups were attempting to overthrow the established order. Though Prynne cared more about doctrine than about office, he cared more about office than discipline, so he appropriated the Church of

¹⁵³See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought: The Age of Reformation*, Vol. 2 of 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 36-49, 113-34.

¹⁵⁴"The Proceedings in the Star Chamber: Attorney Regis versus William Pryn, Esp. Thomas Buckner, Clarke, Michael Sparkes, and others" (Add. MSS. 11, 764, ff. 8b029) in *Documents relating the proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Camden Society New Series VIII (Westminster, 1877), 20.

England's strategies of ensuring order. As I have previously suggested, because opponents shared values, they could borrow one another's defensive tactics whenever their priorities aligned. Predictably, Erastian Presbyterians found Episcopalian theories of civil power useful more often than did high Presbyterians or Independents. Erastian Presbyterians and high Presbyterians shared a main objective, but they disagreed about the guarantors thereof; Erastian Presbyterians elevated issues of authority over issues of sanctification (as a means of protecting doctrine), and high Presbyterians elevated purity over polity (as a means of protecting doctrine).

Viewed from an alternate angle, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Independents concurred about the problems (damnation, social chaos, and will-worship) but not about 1) what solution(s) should be pursued—uniformity and transparency in doctrine, outward obedience to established worship, or apostolic ordinances and separate ecclesiastical censures, 2) in what order, 3) for what reason, or 4) with what urgency.¹⁵⁵ For instance, Reformers (Presbyterians and Independents alike) disliked confusion as much as defenders of the established church (princes and prelates) did. About that much, they could agree. About how to unify, stabilize, and reform the three kingdoms, they disagreed because Presbyterians worried most about doctrinal confusion; Episcopalians worried most about confusion in the social order; and Independents worried most about confusion in the constitution of the true church.

¹⁵⁵See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Ed. Michael Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) for a discussion of debates on wisdom and eloquence fraught in a similar way: common values but uncommon priorities and approaches.

In the 1630s, the Lords of the Star Chamber valued peace and stability more than truth; they considered the smallest threat to sovereign authority a significant threat to religious, social, and political order. They saw parliamentary and common law, over and above doctrine, as the surest safeguards for national security. The legal precedents used to condemn Prynne for *Histrion-mastix* authorized the state to punish not only liars but also truth-tellers. They were willing to punish subjects for publicizing factual "newes" (the truth!) if it was deemed "seditious" and thus threatened civil concord.¹⁵⁶ Somewhat prophetically, Lord Heath claimed that Prynne's contempt of the magistrate could spread, promoting widespread disobedience, even regicide.¹⁵⁷

For historical precedents that dissatisfied subjects may rebel, we need only look to the Bye Plot of 1603. According to Mark Nicholls, those plots resulted from James's seeming betrayal of his Catholic subjects:

[I]n return for protestations of loyalty to the Stuart cause, he [William Watson] had received from James VI and his ministers indefinite but promising assurances of future toleration. Like the Gunpowder plotter Thomas Percy after him, [William] Watson seems to have built on these non-committal platitudes in subsequent discussions with friends, and it is clear that he felt betrayed when no immediate toleration was forthcoming after March 1603. This, combined with fears built on thin foundations that the Jesuits were themselves plotting a coup before the coronation, prompted Watson to devise an action which would remind the king forcibly of his supposed obligations.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶*Documents relating to the proceedings*, 19: "Statues of 21 Ed. 3 condempned [sic] them that disperced lyes and tales to be imprisoned tyll they founde the author; this man hath noe author but himselfe, therefore, perpetuall imprisonment. For the same, 12 Ric, 2 cap. 11, great punishmente such as the Kinges counsell should thincke fitt. 1 & 2 Phill. & Marye, pillorye and loss of eares for seditious newes. 1 of Eliz., revived in the xxiii Eliz."

¹⁵⁷*Documents relating to the proceedings*, 19.

¹⁵⁸Mark Nicholls, "Treason's Reward: The Punishment of Conspirators in the Bye Plot of 1603," *The Historical Journal* 38:4 (1995): 821-42, esp. 822.

If disappointment and disillusion motivated those involved in the Bye Plot, so too did desperation, and though Jacobean scholars now attribute the Gunpowder plot to years of careful planning for a Spanish succession rather than anger over James's policies towards recusants, it too was a frantic final attempt to improve conditions for Catholics.¹⁵⁹ It remains for us to consider whether desperation also marks the so-called rebellions of the 1630s and 40s.

King James I's theory was that uniformity in ecclesiastical doctrine and government prevented both religious and civil unrest; his son Charles embraced that theory wholeheartedly, enforcing it with swords as well as statutes. The Stuart theory was that subjects demonstrated not only obedience but also consent by participating in the "Orders of the Church of England," which commanded hearing the Word of God read and taught in private and public prayers," "acknowledging their offences to God, and amendment of the same, in reconciling themselves charitably to their neighbours where displeasures have been," "often times receiving the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ," "visiting the poor and sick," and "using all godly and sober conversation."¹⁶⁰ Even if individuals privately disapproved of the established religion, they did not pose much of a threat to the public so long as they conformed and kept their opinions to themselves. This notion accords with the laws governing heresy and King James's understanding of his role as protector of the church. Heretics were to be judged by ecclesiastical courts but punished by the authority of the prince. As Sir Edward Coke

¹⁵⁹Christopher Durston, *James I* (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1993), 59.

¹⁶⁰*Constitutions and canons ecclesiastical* (London, 1603 and 1633), C2.

explains in *The third part of the Institutes of the laws of England*, the burning of the heretic, who had a fearful "disease of the soul," was commensurate to ridding the community of someone with a fearful "disease of the body": "he that is a leper of his body, is to be removed from the society of men, lest he should infect them, by the king's writ *de leproso amovendo*: so he that hath *lepram animae*, that is, to be convicted of heresie, shall be cut off, lest he should poyson others, by the king writ *de haeretico comburendo*. But if the heretick will not after conviction abjure, he may by force of the said writ *de haeretico comburendo* be burnt without abjuration."¹⁶¹ Thus, King James had lawful cause to depict himself as the principal physician in his public proclamations promoting conformity:

Wherefore, forasmuch as by way of providence to preserve their people from being corrupted in Religion, pietie and obedience, is not the least part of Royall duetie, wee hold our selfe obliged both in conscience and in wisdom, to use all good meanes to keepe our Subjects from being *infected* with superstitious opinions in matter of Religion, which are not onely pernicious to their owne soules, but the ready way and meanes to corrupt their duetie and allegiance, which cannot be any way so surely performed, as by keeping from them the *ministers and instruments of that Infection*, which are the priests of all sorts ordained in forraine parts, by authoritie prohibited by the Lawes of this land.¹⁶²

In this passage, the King is speaking particularly of ejecting Catholic priests, but he treated nonconformist English ministers similarly for they could also be "instruments" of "corrupt[ion] in Religion, pietie, and obedience." Though James removed (from the country or from their office) those who would not conform, he first tried to reconcile

¹⁶¹Sir Edward Coke, "Of heresie," *The third part of the institutes of the laws of England* (London, 1797), 42.

¹⁶²James I, *Having after some time spent in settling the politique affaires of this Realme*, Proclamation from February 22 (London, 1603), emphasis mine.

them for he desired "that Uniformitie ... may be wrought by Clemencie, and by weight of Reason, and not by Rigour of Law."¹⁶³ After all, the law allowed even heretics to abjure their false doctrines rather than be burnt. James gave both recusants and "factious Ministers" an opportunity to demonstrate their trustworthiness by following the Ecclesiastical canons of 1603.¹⁶⁴ Catholics and dissenters alike were charged with obeying the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, consenting to the 39 Articles of Religion, and using the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁶⁵ Compliance with the English Church's forms of worship signaled submission to the crown rather than the pope or private fancy. Thus, conformity became a test case for rebellion as well as a "lov[ing] and gentl[e] way of "reclaim[ing] all that be in the ministerie, to the obedience of [England's] Church Lawes" and of removing "all grounds and occasions of Sects, Divisions, and Unquietness."¹⁶⁶

James's policies for uniformity principally protected his power and his person; when he intervened in church affairs, he did so out of duty, as a godly magistrate; he was not, like Presbyterians, trying to save souls. The idea that ecclesiology could be an instrument of the state was not new. Under Queen Elizabeth I, recusants had been allowed to demonstrate their loyalty by swearing an oath that, like the Jacobean policy of conformity, treated religious obedience as a sign of—and means of ensuring—civil submission and peace:

¹⁶³James I, *The care which wee have had*, Proclamation from July 16 (London, 1604), 2.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵*Constitutions and canons ecclesiastical* (London, 1603 and 1633), esp. B4-C2.

¹⁶⁶James I, *The care which wee have had*, Proclamation from July 16 (London, 1604), 2.

I, A. B., do humbly confess and acknowledge, that I have grievously offended God in contemning her majesty's godly and lawful government and authority, by absenting myself from church, and from hearing divine service, contrary to the godly laws and statutes of this realm: and I am heartily sorry for the same, and do acknowledge and testify in my conscience, that the bishop or see of Rome has not, nor ought to have, any power or authority over her majesty, or within any her majesty's realms or dominions: and I do promise and protest, without any dissimulation, or any colour or means of any dispensation, that from henceforth I will from time to time obey and perform her majesty's laws and statutes, in repairing to the church, and hearing divine service, and do my uttermost endeavour to maintain and defend the same.¹⁶⁷

From this recusancy oath, we may infer that the Elizabethan state monitored church attendance to assess the chances of rebellion. Church attendance was a measure of civic unity. That does not imply, however, that the state overlooked the spiritual function of participating in communal worship. Elizabethan statutes conceive of the church as an instrument of both the political and the spiritual society, of the earthly sovereign and the Heavenly Sovereign. According to Elizabethan defenders, reciprocity between the two spheres benefited the subject. If to "contemn her majesty's godly and lawful government and authority" is to contemn God, then to respect civil authority is to respect God. This logic accords with the one-kingdom reading of Romans 13: with the idea that magistrates are God's ministers and that submitting to them is a way of submitting to Christ. Elizabethan magistrates promoted the idea that in godly commonwealths like England Christians could achieve "actual sanctifying righteousness" (increased sanctification) by being law-abiding subjects.¹⁶⁸ Christian subjects could demonstrate and increase their

¹⁶⁷*The Act Against Recusants* (1593), 35 Elizabeth, cap. 2 in *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. Henry Gee and William John Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 507.

¹⁶⁸See Richard Hooker, *A learned discourse of justification, workes, and how the foundation of faith is overthrowne* (Oxford, 1612) in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*

piety by humbling themselves before godly magistrates; though that act was political, it could also be spiritual. Episcopalians often coded the values they shared with Presbyterians and Independents (truth, order, and purity) in civil terms. Remember that Richard Hooker's great defense of the Church of England was founded on the notion that the visible church is a political society as well as a society supernatural; thus, the church is governed by many kinds of positive laws, some of which are commanded by God and some of which are commanded by human authorities.¹⁶⁹

In the theology of the Church of England, church government and salvation are recognized as separate operations, but the connection between the two spheres is stressed. Episcopalians considered some divine truths to be inaccessible, but natural and political orders served as shadows of the truth. Queen Elizabeth's statutes do not claim that civil submission is salvific; however, they do treat civil submission as an act that can draw man closer to God. Recognizing the benefits of having recusants' loyalty transferred from Rome to London (and the liabilities of divided loyalties), England exploited Catholic lines of reasoning. The recusancy oath does not go so far as to associate obedience with justification or disobedience with purgatory and damnation (as Roman Catholics did), but it does appropriate the Christian practice of repentance. Turning away from the pope is figured as turning away from sin. Turning towards the prince is figured as turning toward

(1793), 431-91 for the following definition of actual righteousness. There are "two kinds likewise of sanctifying righteousness, Habitual, and Actuell. Habitual, that holinesse, wherewith our soules are inwardly indued, the same instant, when we first beginne to be the Temples of the holy Ghost. Actuell, that holinesse, which afterwards beautifieth all the parts and actions of our life" (453-54).

¹⁶⁹Richard Hooker, *The eight books of ecclesiastical polity* in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 1, 166-69, 238-67, 285-89, esp. 277-79.

Christ. In the church, repentance was as a sign of justification and election; it was an outward sign of an inward condition. In the state, repenting of heretical Catholic doctrines and allegiances became a corresponding sign of sincerity; it demonstrated that the subject was genuinely submissive and not being hypocritical.¹⁷⁰

In the early modern Church of England, participation in the church militant is not the same as participation in the church triumphant; subjects enter the visible church by being born in the commonwealth, but they enter the invisible church by being adopted by God through the efforts of Christ. The prince is the head of the visible church, but Christ is the head of the church universal. According to Richard Hooker, the great apologist of the Church of England, the visible church is the domain of "righteousness of *sanctification*," and the church triumphant is the domain of the "righteousness of *justification*."¹⁷¹ In other words, the visible church can advance the work that Christ has begun, but its advancements relate to encouraging Christ-like behavior in the world rather than facilitating man's self-justification before God. This theological distinction affects how we interpret subscription and conformity within the Church of England and how we understand the Stuart habit of declaring those who publicly break canons of the Church of England anathema.

According to William Laud, the habit of excommunicating dissenters associated with the Council of Trent was not comparable to habit of excommunicating dissenters

¹⁷⁰William Barlow, *The summe and substance of the conference, which, it pleased his excellent Majestie to have with the Lords, Bishops, and other of his clergie...at Hampton Court, January 14, 1603* (London, 1604), 41-43.

¹⁷¹Richard Hooker, *Discourse on justification* in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 3, 433, 437, 453-457 (emphasis mine).

within the Church of England because the implied offence and the motivating for removing offenders differed. The Church of Rome considers its canons fundamentals of the faith, i.e. pertinent to salvation or damnation, and nonconformists to be heretics. The canons of the Council of Trent, especially canons 7 and 8 "On the Sacrament of Order" and canons 4, 9, 12, 19, 24, 27, and 30-32 "On Justification" do emphasize the role of the visible church in justification and declare "anathema" all who challenge the order or ordinances of the Church of Rome.¹⁷² Some Roman Catholics, especially Jesuits, believed the pope to be infallible and thus divinely equipped to interpret both Scripture and church traditions. They maintained that the power to "bind or loose" souls to their eventual salvation or damnation or heaven belonged to the supreme pontiff at Rome rather than to the entire militant church, as Archbishop Laud maintains.¹⁷³ According to Laud, many Jesuits also "ma[de] present tradition" in "the city of diocese of Rome" "the infallible Word of God unwritten."¹⁷⁴ The Church of England, by contrast, did not consider all of its canons essential, its private dissenters heretics, or its church governor infallible. According to Laud, the national church did not force people to hold present church tradition, including the English canons, as fundamental to the faith, even though the particular, visible church could give weak Christians a "moral motive to believe"

¹⁷²"The Council of Trent: the sixth session and the twenty-third session," *The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent*, Ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 44-49, 174, Hanover Historical Texts Project, <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent.htm>

¹⁷³Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Vol. 2, 144-46; William Laud, *Conference with Fisher in The works of ... William Laud*, Vol. 2, 209.

¹⁷⁴William Laud, *Conference with Fisher in The works of ... William Laud*, Vol. 2, 104, 141, 146, 210.

Scripture.¹⁷⁵ The Church of England only sought "peaceable consent" to the canons and public conformity in worship.¹⁷⁶ It did not "declare an anathema against them, if some peaceably dissent in some matters remoter from the Foundation"; it declared an anathema against those who disturbed the peace by publicly pronouncing the Articles "superstitious" or "erroneous."¹⁷⁷ In other words, church traditions within England were admittedly fallible but not seriously scandalous; they were expedient, and dissenters were bound to obey them, not believe them.

The Church of England valued many kinds of "external act[s]," but they did not value them as instruments of justification. John Calvin, in his sermon on Galatians 5:1, says that papists "look no further than the external act" and thus make disobedience of the pope's ceremonies a venial, and potentially a mortal, sin.¹⁷⁸ When Richard Hooker attributed to church ordinances the power to sanctify, he lobbied that they be classified spiritually as well as socially, but their spiritual classification differed from that maintained by the Church of Rome at the Council of Trent. Hooker distinguished one spiritual operation, justification, from another, sanctification; he also preserved the distinction between actions of a purely civil purpose and those with a mixed civil and spiritual function. Because it influenced both "outward actions" and "inward cognitions," religion, according to Hooker, was mixed; it surpassed "positive Laws." Far from

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 95-98.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 60.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁷⁸John Calvin, "Absolved only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: sermon on Galatians 5:1-3" in *John Calvin's Sermons on Galatians*, Trans. Kathy Childress (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997), para. 5, <<http://www.reformedsermonarchives.com/cal1.htm>>.

conflating political government and spiritual government or conflating government of the visible church by bishops and godly magistrates with government of the invisible church by Christ and the Holy Spirit, Hooker appreciated the differences between the spheres.¹⁷⁹ Points of intersection are not points of obliteration. Rather than co-opting one another's domain, the law and religion reinforce one another, as do particular churches with the universal church. Following Hooker, orthodox members of the Church of England believed that religion makes men just (and thus good civil subjects), and princes keep religion right (so that heresies and superstition do not corrupt doctrine).¹⁸⁰ The church's mutually beneficial relationship with the state, wherein the sovereign's protection cultivates due obedience, corresponds to its relationship with God, wherein God's blessings inspire proper worship. Participating in the established church does not guarantee salvation, but it does promote it; it also promotes public peace and providential protection: "Indeed God doth liberally promise whatsoever appertained to a blessed life, to as many as sincerely keep his law, though he be not exactly able to keep it. Wherefore we acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well, we utterly renounce."¹⁸¹ For members of the Church of England, church conformity yields both spiritual and civil benefits, though it alone is not salvific.

¹⁷⁹Richard Hooker, Book 5 of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in *The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr. Richard Hooker, containing eight books of The laws of ecclesiastical polity, and several other treatises*, Vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford, 1793), 16.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 7, 9, 12, 16.

¹⁸¹Hooker, *A discourse of justification* in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 3, 440.

By making conformity indifferent to salvation, the English government could entice recusants and dissenters to participate for civil rather than spiritual reasons. Subjects with tender consciences could reconcile themselves to conforming by interpreting it as civil submission rather than spiritual backsliding. This attitude that indifferent practices could benefit participants without burdening them extended to particular acts of worship and attitudes about the church. Using this line of reasoning, Hooker defended the Church of England's concern with church beautification and consecration:

Again, albeit the true worship of God be to God in itself acceptable, who respecteth not so much in what place, as with what affection he is served; ... notwithstanding it is, that the very majesty and holiness of the place where God is worshiped hath in regard of us great virtue, force and efficacy, for that it serveth as a sensible help to stir up devotion; and in that respect, no doubt, bettereth even our holiest and best actions in this kind. As therefore we every where exhort all Men to worship God; even so, for performance of this Service by the People of God assembled, we think not any place so good as the Church, neither any exhortation so fit as that of David, *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*.¹⁸²

Both Presbyterians and Independents, however, worried that the "beauty of holiness" would be mistaken by the weak for the holiness of beauty. Participants in beautiful worship services might become guilty of adoration, rather than devotion, and few safeguards were in place to prevent that error. Outward conformity in the Church of England, the decency of the religious rites, was not an accurate measure of inward conformity, the truthfulness of the beliefs concerning those rites. Though the canons of the Church of England did not claim that church practices were essential, ignorant parishioners might assume that they were. Political order was not the best guarantor of

¹⁸²Richard Hooker, Book 5 of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 2, 51-2.

truth, but Episcopal divines in England were content so long as the fundamentals of the faith remained. That goal was modest given Laud's belief that it was impossible for the fundamentals to be lost entirely or permanently. As a whole, the militant church, he says, cannot err "in absolute foundations" though she may err "in deduction and superstructures," which "may prove dangerous to the salvation of some, which believe [them] and practice after [them]."¹⁸³ Laud's faith in the true church far outweighed his concern for individuals led astray by corruptions therein. He certainly favored moderate reforms, as suggested by his defense of the Church of England's deviations from Roman Catholic traditions, but Laud worried more about schism, the "rent in the Church" that could result from doctrinal disputes, than about scandals.¹⁸⁴

Mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterians shared with Episcopalians a fear of separation and confusion, so they sought uniformity within a national church, but they shared with Independents a fear of "Prophanation and Scandall," so they wanted greater reforms than the Church of England had permitted.¹⁸⁵ The challenge was creating a middle ground in which unity could coexist with purity, in which the visible church could remain a *mixtum corpus* but restrain sin, and in which civil magistrates had the power to confirm and coerce while spiritual ministers retained the power to determine doctrine and use ecclesiastical censures. Independents and Sectarians "who separate themselves from others, under this very pretence of being more holy, and living more devoutly than

¹⁸³William Laud, *Conference with Fisher in Works of ... William Laud*, 178-9, 184.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 166, 183-4.

¹⁸⁵William Prynne, "Epistle dedicatory," *Truth triumphing over falshood; Prynne, Foure serious questions of grand importance* (London, 1645), A.

others” were, according to Prynne and Edwards, endangering lives and souls.

Questioning the power of civil authorities to command church participation could lead to widespread rebellion because people could challenge other sovereign prerogatives as well. Allowing false doctrines and dangerous practices to proliferate unchecked could endanger weak Christians as well as invite God's wrath.¹⁸⁶

The kind of conformity demanded in the Church of England offered some civil and spiritual protection, but Presbyterians deemed it inadequate. When subversive elements conform externally without conforming in conscience, they may, according to Presbyterians, become more treacherous, hence Prynne's comparison of Independents to Gunpowder plotters. When opponents are only punished for being visibly disruptive, they may stop acting out, but that may covertly continue to undermine the premises, practices, or privileges of the establishment. Invisibility may deprive dissenters of certain kinds of power (the power to compel, for instance), but it endows them with other kinds of power (the power to undermine true doctrine and pure practice cunningly without being discovered). The Church of England had identified and punished the most overtly radical fringe elements but had not rooted out equivocators, such as the Gunpowder plotters. It had not adequately, according to Presbyterians and Independents, prevented and corrected spiritual errors and abuses, the kinds that could "prove dangerous to the souls of some" and could motivate others to rebel. The Church of England admitted to its fellowship those with tender consciences who did not agree with all of the doctrines or external rites so long as they conformed because the national church's objectives were civil as well as spiritual. They were content to keep dissenters quiet if not truly converted,

¹⁸⁶William Prynne, "Epistle to the reader," *Truth triumphing over falshood*.

but this unity was not permanent. Dissenters did not abandon their dreams of reform. Presbyterians sought a national church so doctrinally sound and externally reformed that Independents could obey it in good conscience. That goal was conceivable because high Presbyterians, who shared with Independents' the belief that Scripture was the only rule both for essentials and nonessentials, were willing to grant civil authorities some spiritual duties, such as ratifying and reforming.

Independents, however, had a very different notion of order than did Presbyterians (of all persuasions) and Episcopalians. Though they were willing to partner with Presbyterians to abolish prelacy and resist the king, their antipathy for conformist plans and their desire for ecclesiastical jurisdiction independent not only of the state but also of higher ecclesiastical authorities remained a point of contention. Like the shallow consensus within the English church in the early seventeenth century, the agreement between Independents and Presbyterians in 1641 not to discuss contentious issues, such as church government, did little to foster genuine unity or a lasting accord.¹⁸⁷ As Edwards complains in *Antapologia* (1644), Independents had (by 1643) made their principles and preferences clear, even if their statements were indirect:

All of you have not constantly forborne *to publish your opinions by preaching* [as the authors had suggested], but you have vented your principles and opinions, by preaching, sometimes more generally and covertly, (yet so as your followers understand you,) and sometimes particularly and plainly: In a more generall and covert way, you have done it often, under preaching for purity of Ordinances, the standing for the Kingly office of Christ, the being in a Church-way, the performing of all ordinances and the due and right order, &c. wherein you doe for your way just as the Malignant Ministers preaching against the Parliament and for

¹⁸⁷Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 88, 95.

the Cavaliers, under generalities, preaching against Rebellion, and fighting against the King, and rising up against him, and for peace, &c.¹⁸⁸

The Independents needed Parliamentary license to worship apart from the parochial church without civil penalties, so they needed to "publish [their] opinions" to convince them to tolerate partial (if not total) separation. They did not, however, acknowledge either Parliament's or the Assembly's power to determine church polity and worship. For Independents, all elements of church practice were supposed to be based on Scripture alone, and Scripture, they thought, established Christ as the sole head of not only the church triumphant but also particular visible churches. Independents were reluctant to propose a national ecclesiastical polity because they denied 1) that the entire nation belonged in the visible church, 2) that visible churches should be parochial, and 3) that humans had any authority to determine church principles and policies. That reluctance both frustrated and frightened Presbyterians, such as Prynne and Edwards, who, like Episcopalians, conceived of the national church as a spiritual and civil safeguard.¹⁸⁹

For Erastian Presbyterians, national order was second only to doctrine; statutes mandating uniformity in the government of churches along classical lines and the use of the *Directory of Worship* would hold particular congregations and people accountable, preventing heresies as well as rebellions. Erastian Presbyterians neither tyrannized

¹⁸⁸Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia: Or, a full answer to the Apologeticall Narration of Mr Goodwin, Mr Nye, Mr Sympson, Mr Burroughs, Mr Bridge, Members of the Assembly of Divines* (London, 1644), 214, 215. I added the qualification in brackets, but the parenthetical remark is Edwards's.

¹⁸⁹Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977), 127-8.

consciences by declaring anathemas against canon-breakers nor licentiously freed consciences from being bound by a right understanding and practice of God's fundamental laws. They did not return, as King Charles I had wished, to "the government of the Church ... as it was under the reigns of Elizabeth and James, with full liberty for the ease of their consciences who will not communicate in that service established by law."¹⁹⁰ Demanding obedience without belief had, Charles thought, traditionally eased tender consciences. Dissenters were allowed to hold private opinions, such as contempt for the teachings and worship of the established church, as long as those opinions remained private. Outward conformity appeased the English monarchy. Erastian Presbyterians seem more sensitive to the spiritual function of indifferent things than those, such as Charles I, who were willing to free consciences from a normative interpretation of church ordinances. In the realm of *adiaphora*, Erastian Presbyterians often pursued priorities associated with Episcopacy (putting the safety of the body over the safety of a member) or with Independency (eliminating scandals), but when indifferent things undermined fundamentals (people's adherence to the truth), they ceased to be indifferent. Admittedly, outward conformity may have been sufficient for some members of the Long Parliament, but they passed statutes empowering the Presbyterian Church to inquire into inward conformity as well. Though Parliament established itself as the court of last appeal, it gave ecclesiastical bodies the power to "examine and censure" parishioners. Using, "Admonition, Suspension, or Excommunication," classical

¹⁹⁰ *Calendar of state papers, domestic series, of the reign of Charles I, 1645-47*, Ed. William Douglas Hamilton, Vol. DXIII (London, 1891), 311; "Proposition 4," The King's Propositions to be Discussed at Uxbridge" in *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, 3rd edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 286-287.

assemblies could reinforce true doctrine and restrain sins of thought and deed, "converting and reducing ... Recusants, or any other in Error or Schism." "Congregational Eldership, consisting of the Minister or Ministers, and the other ruling Officers of that Congregation," could "inquire into the knowledge and spiritual estate of any Member of the Congregation, to admonish and rebuke, to suspend from the Lords Table those who are found by them to be ignorant and scandalous, and to Excommunicate."¹⁹¹ Though Erastian Presbyterians wanted the state to be involved in church affairs, they distinguished political and spiritual aims, using civil punishments for the former and ecclesiastical censures for the latter. Presbyterian government and worship was instituted by Parliament, and violators were punished with monetary fines, not spiritual censures.¹⁹² "[C]ases of Conscience or other difficulties in Doctrine" remained under the purview of classical assemblies.

Though high Presbyterians, such as Samuel Rutherford, claimed that Presbyterian polity, liturgy, and discipline were already established by divine right and did not depend on civil authority, they may have appreciated the care with which Erastian Presbyterians distinguished between civil and sacred duties and punishments. High and Erastian Presbyterians may have disagreed about *where* to separate political and spiritual powers and *why* those boundaries were best, but they agreed that the two spheres should not be confused. Erastian Presbyterians agreed with their clericalist brethren that the purposes of ecclesiastical censures (authorized by Parliament) were to prevent scandals and

¹⁹¹*Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, Ed. C.S. Firth and R.S. Rait, Vol. 1 of 3 (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1911), 1198-9.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, 582-607, 749-59, 1188-1215, esp. 756-59.

encourage belief. By contrast, Jacobean subscriptions and Caroline anathemas were designed to prevent or punish rebellion and to repress vice, aims more political than spiritual. Charles I may have empowered the church by acknowledging divine rights therein, but he mixed the spiritual and the temporal spheres by claiming his own authority by divine right and by giving bishops temporal duties, which sometimes conflicted with their sacred duties (if protesters are to be believed).

Inclusion and exclusion had to be carefully balanced in Presbyterian ecclesiology. Like Independents, Presbyterians valued godliness within the visible church; however, unlike Independents, who felt obliged by scriptural precedents to exclude from their gatherings those not yet justified and sanctified, Presbyterians felt obliged by scriptural precedents (interpreted differently) as well as by natural and positive laws both to include and to compel the unrighteous so that they might thereby be saved. Notice the diction of Presbyterian Settlement; its discipline is designed to "conver[t]" as well control dissenters, heretics, and separatists. On the one hand, church ordinances were essential to the ordinary process of salvation, so heathens needed them even more than saints. On the other hand, "ignorant and scandalous" people could anger God and endanger their souls by participating inappropriately. High Presbyterians and Erastian Presbyterians disagreed on how to reconcile the potential benefit with the potential danger. High Presbyterians encouraged the dissolute to worship and socialize with the orthodox (in the hope that the Holy Spirit would thereby help and heal them) but prevented the scandalous from taking communion (in the fear that they would offend God and be damned). Erastian Presbyterians were unconvinced by the biblical precedents justifying that compromise. They agreed that Scripture empowered the church to excommunicate "Schismatically,

Hereticall, scandalous Christians" fully, but they did not think the church could ban them from one ordinance (communion) while including them in other ordinances (preaching, prayers, singing, etc.).¹⁹³ Sacraments, Prynne reminds his readers, are designed to strengthen the weak, so reprobates need more opportunities to take communion, not fewer: "The Lords Supper is frequently, not rarely to be Administered as well to unregenerate Christians to convert them, as to regenerate to confirme them."¹⁹⁴

According to Erastian Presbyterians, such as Prynne, suspension from Lord's Supper may be spiritual, but the spiritual benefit is general (for the whole congregation) and defensive (preventing heresy or backsliding). Forced suspension may protect the flock, but it seldom recovers the lost sheep.¹⁹⁵ In excommunication, Prynne suggests, the benefits multiply for the community and the offender alike. "Cut[ting] off a rotten member" isolates the infection completely so that no one is exposed to the contamination.¹⁹⁶ That isolation may typify the offender's eventual damnation, helping him or her to understand the stakes and encouraging him or her to reform. The benefits to that approach, however, are tenuous. When unrepentant sinners are truly excluded from Christian society, the serious consequences may motivate them to reform. That is the spiritual purpose of excommunication: motivating reprobates to repent and once again seek saving ordinances. Alienated offenders may, however, respond in the opposite way. Their hearts may harden, and they may become more sinful and more subversive. That is

¹⁹³William Prynne, *Suspension suspended* (London, 1646), 9.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 10-11.

why Seneca in *De officiis* recommends clemency for those who are not yet hardened criminals. That is also why Presbyterians greatly feared separation. Without close disciplinary oversight and without motivations to improve, souls could be irreparably lost, society could be destabilized (rather than defended), and God could decide to punish the entire nation. For high Presbyterians, suspension was a form of spiritual clemency; it was a lenient censure, designed to recover the lost before they wandered too far and could no longer return. Erastians like Prynne were willing to permit the practice when it was instituted *jure humano*, by civil authority, rather than *jure divino*, by divine warrant. After many solicitations by high Presbyterians, Parliament gave "Ministers and Presbyteries power to keep ignorant and scandalous persons from the Lords Supper," but it conferred a limited power, one designed to protect outward decency and order.

Independents, such as Henry Burton, believed in Christian testimony and oversight, but they differentiated evangelism, which obliged them to communicate with unbelievers, with discipline, which obliged them to separate from contaminated people and practices. In *Vindiciae veritatis* (1645), Burton tells Bastwick that churches are duty-bound (to God rather than the state or the assembly) to give "an account of their proceedings" to other churches that question their doctrines or practices.¹⁹⁷ Yet Burton did not recognize parochial churches as true churches or the Assembly as a collection of saints to be entrusted with protecting the church. When Burton lost confidence in the godliness of his "quondam-fellow-sufferer[s]," he may have changed his approach to disputations with them. A disputation between Christians would be governed by apostolic precedents for godly consultation and discipline within and between congregations, but a

¹⁹⁷Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis* (London, 1645), 5.

disputation between a saint and a sinner might be governed by Old Testament precedents of division between Jews and Gentiles or between the clean and the unclean.¹⁹⁸

Whether Henry Burton considered his "quondam-fellow-sufferer[s]," John Bastwick and William Prynne, as brothers to be disciplined or heretics to be disowned may influence our assessment of his—and their—rhetoric.¹⁹⁹ In his preface to *Vindiciae veritatis* (1645), Burton defends his sharp style with Bastwick as a necessary means of removing a state- and soul-endangering tumor: "For I perceived that no Answer coming, a tumor began to grow, which needed timely lancing, to prevent some extreame inflammation hastening to a head, while the humour flowed in so fast: Therefore I hasted ... if possible to recover our Brother. So as if I be quick and short with him it is to save him with feare, plucking him out of the fire."²⁰⁰ The premise of this defense is that a different kind of rhetoric is permissible when the threat is serious and imminent, when someone's salvation is at stake. That same logic was used to excuse the stories of God's vengeance recorded in *A divine tragedie lately acted* (1636), a collection of cautionary examples inspired by God's own rhetoric:

Himselfe therefore hath vouchsafed to record (even in sacred writ) many notable examples of his avenging justice, both generall, Nationall, and personall, for al posteritie to contemplate; prefacing some of them with special *Memorandum* for our serious consideration of them...*for this very end, that they might be examples unto us, not to lust after evil things as they lusted*, nor to trace the footsteps of their sinfull wayes, lest we should incurre the selfe same *exemplarie punishments* as they sustained.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 4, 6, 7, 13.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., *passim*.

²⁰⁰Ibid., A3v.

²⁰¹Henry Burton, *A divine tragedie lately acted* (London, 1636), A2v.

God's judgments, he says, were meant to "frigh[t] wicked men from their evill courses."²⁰² When placed on a continuum with *A divine tragedie lately acted, Vindiciae veritatis* appears antagonistic because Presbyterians get cast as "wicked men" whose "evil courses" must be changed. Yet if Burton is to be believed, then his words were meant to be spiritually curative. Burton contrasts his cautionary criticisms with Bastwick's audacious accusations, which Burton characterizes as acrimonious and abusive. Burton accuses Bastwick of "opposing ... the Persons of those [he] calls *Independents*," "speaking nothing but daggers, and daring":

Doe you [Bastwick] not call them [Independents] Beasts? Grolls? Pussoists? Wild geese? Old geese? a company of Jugglers? Sticklers against Parliament and *Presbytery*? a generation of cunning and crafty jugglers? cunning deceivers? and fighters against God? violators of all the lawes of God and Nature? the most dangerous sect that ever yet the world produced? a company of rats among joyn'd stooles? Despisers of Magistracy? a generation of men, not worthy to give guts to a Beare? Moone-calves? All the *Independents* put together, have not so much learning as any one of a thousand other Ministers? A Wheele-barrow (such as they trundle White-wine vinegar on) fitter for them then a Coach? Stirring up all along Magistrates and People to cut them off? making them odious to the *Scots*?²⁰³

Although Burton is certainly justified in taking offence at such statements, given that they were meant to discredit the Independents, some of the remarks move beyond character assassination to classify as claims of genuine debate. Even without the more substantive and logical points, such as the claim that Independents are "[d]espisers of magistracy," Bastwick is acting as a legitimate orator insofar as he follows the Ciceronian tradition of

²⁰²Ibid., A2.

²⁰³Henry Burton, *Vindiciae veritatis*, 28.

using ethical and pathetic appeals and the Platonic aim of pursuing the public good.²⁰⁴

While Burton claims to be more interested in whether Bastwick is a good Christian than a good rhetor, the two activities were linked for religious polemicists. As the next two chapters will consider in more detail, questions concerning the form and function of Christian rhetoric, especially what kinds of persuasion are decorous for Christians, is inseparable from this discussion of how Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Independents could share values but not priorities. Examining the paradoxical ways that early modern polemicists adapt Ciceronian rhetoric—elevating, eliding, or eliminating argument, pleasure, and passion, we may better understand the religious and political tensions in England in the 1630s and 40s. This chapter has demonstrated that values—truth, order, and purity—were held collectively but harnessed independently. Doctrine, office, and discipline mattered to all, but they vied for preeminence. Though omnipresent, those commonalities were sometimes difficult to perceive in the fog of confusion and contempt.

²⁰⁴See Michael Mack, *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), for a brief overview of the rhetorical traditions that influenced Sir Philip Sidney. See Plato, *Gorgias*, Ed. Terence Irwin, Clarendon Plato series (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), 82 for the argument that the "rhetor, the craftsman, the good one," will "always have his mind on this; to see that the souls of the citizens acquire justice and get rid of injustice, and that they acquire temperance and get rid of intemperance (*ackolasia*) and that they acquire the rest of virtue and get rid of vice" (504d).

Chapter 3: To draw a devil, you must "use some sordid lines"²⁰⁵:
Presbyterian Positioning in Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana*

I. *Overview*

In his speech at the Star Chamber trial of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne, Archbishop Laud argued that they deserved rebuke not only for lying (both in their pamphlets and in their defenses of them) but also for spreading a contagion of dissent through their diseased writing: "But of all Libels they are most odious which pretend Religion: as if that of all things did desire to be defended by a Mouth that is like an open Sepulchre, or by a Pen that is made of a sick and a loathsom Quill."²⁰⁶ That statement raises questions about reformed writing, questions that this chapter will attempt to answer: can invective instruct, should decorum govern polemic, and is it logical, godly, or hypocritical to use one enormity to fight another? According to Presbyterian polemicists, their central objective—stopping the spread of heresy—justified their means: long, seemingly scornful pamphlets. According to their opponents, passionate Presbyterian works like Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana* only "bles[s] the vanitie and wickedness of the world with the venting" of "vagrant, loose, scandalous and lying

²⁰⁵William Prynne, "To the christian reader," *Histrio-mastix, the players scourge or actors tragaedie* (London, 1633), sig. A2v. Prynne's full statement, adapted and condensed for my title, reads, "he who would lively portraiture a Divell, or a deformed monster, must needes draw some gastly lines, and use some sordid colours."

²⁰⁶John Rushworth, "Laud's speech at the Censure of Burton, Bastwick and Prynne, 1637," *Historical collections of private passages of state: 1639-40*, Vol. 3 of 8 (London, 1721), 116-133.

reports against the Saints, and servants of God."²⁰⁷ Due to the potentially offensive rhetorical methods and subject matter, not to mention the bias of the readers, Presbyterian literature was often perceived as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. The rest of this chapter will explore the confusion created by the perceived similarities between the maladies (the "vanitie and wickedness of the world") and the medicine (the graphic, contentious, and severe Presbyterian disputations and heresiologies). To interpret that ambiguity accurately, we must weigh form against function.

Particular kinds of appeals were conducive to particular priorities. Thus, this chapter will also discuss the aims of Presbyterians and how they deviated from those pursued by Episcopalians and Independents. Though Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Independents shared values and vocabularies, their conflicting priorities prevented them from reaching common conclusions about narrative strategies and audiences. Eager to embody peace, promote stability, and inspire obedience, Episcopalians often employed logical and ethical appeals. The skill of John Whitgift, Richard Hooker, and William Laud in arguing points and their stylistic restraint were consistent with their concerns: right reason, church tradition, law, obedience, and the beauty of holiness. Defining themselves in opposition to Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents changed their modes of persuasion as well. Though issues of judgment, precedent, polity, authority, responsibility, and right worship occupied Presbyterians and Independents, they approached those topics evangelically and fundamentally, filtering their perspectives through their interests in saving souls and following Scripture. Zealous to reach heretics, save souls, preserve doctrine, persuade Parliament, and unify the church, Presbyterians

²⁰⁷John Goodwin, *Cretensis* (London, 1645), 16-17.

frequently relied heavily on pathetic appeals. They were trying to capture the imaginations and emotions of audiences so they would then attend to the arguments and instructions. As both William Prynne's *Histrio-mastix* (1633) and Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana* (1646) attest, pathetic appeals were inevitably tied to logical and ethical ones. However, Presbyterians were pessimistic about the viability and reliability both of reasoning with heretics and of using human works or human authority to establish authorial credibility.

Presbyterians wanted to *use* but not *abuse* the emotional, intellectual, and social skills that helped humans relate both to God and to neighbor. They wanted to avoid the interpretive pitfalls associated with superstition, idolatry, allegory, Scholasticism, and will-worship as well as the temptations of dominion, Donatism, and satire. An eclectic list at first glance, those habits share a radicalism that Presbyterians judged to be inappropriate and counterproductive. Moderate versions of those habits, however, could sometimes be helpful in opposing those excesses. Presbyterians tried to be both decorous and self-controlled in their use of passion; in so doing, they considered themselves superior to Independents. Though they might show fear to evoke fear, for example, fear would be, for them, a means to a higher end, such as repentance. Their task was not easy. They had to choose the ideal emotion, moderate its intensity, and carefully inject it at the right moment to provoke the wanted response. Because they themselves were instrumental in the task, they had to keep their own sensations and desires in check. They could not indulge their affections or advance their own ends. Whether the device was an emotion, such as fear, or a genre, such as heresiology, Presbyterians used them with caution; they did not want human devices or their own human reactions or aims to

impede the divine work. Writing was not the only domain in which they practiced that balancing act. Presbyterians faced similar struggles when administering church ordinances and spiritual censures. Indeed, doctrinal disputations, heresiologies, and scourges were extensions of orthodox church offices: preaching and disciplining.

Because of original sin, unrestrained humans gravitated, in Presbyterian opinion, toward license in both spiritual and social activities, including writing, teaching, worshiping, ruling, admonishing, and recreating. Though Presbyterians could certainly err in those pursuits, they took steps to prevent error. In writing, for instance, they tried to avoid satire and panegyric. Unlike Independents, who used vitriol when irritated by corruption or who bragged about their own sanctity when justifying separation, Presbyterians tried to fight spiritual diseases and defend their polity without being mean or immodest. When they did blame or praise, they did so carefully and ironically: they ascribed unexpected and unconventional meanings to those acts.

That "paradoxical positioning" will be explored both here and in the next chapter in the risky works of two Erastian Presbyterians, Thomas Edwards and William Prynne. I coined the phrase, "paradoxical positioning," to identify when Presbyterians were so determined to contradict opponents that they risked the appearance of personal hypocrisy. Paradoxical positioning will help us to appreciate the obsessive, severe heresiology by Edwards, *Gangreana* (1646), and the excessive, oppressive player's scourge by Prynne, *Histrion-mastix* (1633) fight excess with excess, albeit mitigated and redefined. In those works, Edwards and Prynne used perilous modes against themselves.

Because their forms were as suspicious as their subjects, they became targets of attacks: both verbal and physical (Prynne even lost his ears). Presbyterian polemic gave

opponents reason to believe that the popular character sketches of "The Hypocrite" and "The Puritan" were accurate, but I will argue that they were not. Arguably, the broad and funny characterizations predisposed the English populace to dismiss Edwards and Prynne as charlatans; we must try to avoid a similar bias. To that end, this chapter will separate the myths of anti-Presbyterian propaganda from the facts of Presbyterian rhetoric.

Opponents sometimes had just cause to question Presbyterians methods and objectives, but their literary tactics did align with their theological teachings and political priorities. We may appreciate competing interpretations of their practices and beliefs, but we should try to understand Presbyterians on their own terms as well.

That Presbyterians were considered hypocrites is no surprise; what is surprising is the possibility that Presbyterians played the fool to conquer true folly. They fought hubris, hate, and vanity with power plays, contempt, and images while insisting that their mirroring was strategic and reformed. To reach their subjects and adjust to their circumstances, Presbyterians used admittedly scandalous forms, but they sought to avoid potential scandals by using those forms in new ways and by advertising their unique intentions.

II. *"A cure according the cause"*²⁰⁸

Let's briefly return to the trial of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne—because the trope with which the reformers defended themselves is apt; it calls attention to the

²⁰⁸Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana* (London, 1646) in *Gangreana* (Ilkley, West Yorkshire: The Rota and the University of Exeter, 1977), 22. The Rota edition reprints all three original parts of *Gangreana* together; it retains the original page numbers. For expediency, I have drawn all references from the Rota edition.

interpretive ambiguity of the reformers' methods. You may recall that Laud accused the three men of attempting to corrupt the church and state. The reformers, in response, admitted that they were temporarily causing the commonwealth pain, but they absolved themselves of moral wrongdoing by interpreting their acts as cures for the diseases introduced under Laud. In the 1640s, when these men turned on one another and appropriated Laud's earlier accusations, each once again justified his own severe actions as healing rather than malicious. In *Utter routing*, Bastwick styles himself as a physician not only of the body but also of the soul:

Dr in Physick and Physician in Ordinary to all the Ill-dependents and Sectaries to sweat them with Arguments twice a year gratis, spring and fall, who discovering their distempers and malidies finds by the severall symptoms of their diseases that they are very unsound root and branch, and therefore ought with their venemous and intolerable Toleration of all Religions) to be shunned and avoyded as a company of infected persons by all such as are sound in the faith.²⁰⁹

Notice that Bastwick says he must "sweat" the "Sectaries" to "discove[r]" their errors. His diagnostic method may be harsh, but the threat thereby uncovered is much worse. His response to heresies, horror and anxiety, is similar to Thomas Edwards's in *Gangreana*, a "catalogue and discovery of errours, heresies, blasphemies, and pernicious practices" that adopts the commonplace medical trope as well.²¹⁰ Bastwick may seem pessimistic here about the prognosis of the "infected persons" and more anxious to prevent the spread of the "diseases" to "such as are sound in the faith" than to cure the carriers of the contagion, but the disciplinary philosophy of Presbyterians suggests otherwise. Alluding implicitly to Matthew 18:17, "And if he refuse to heare them, tell it unto the Church: and if he

²⁰⁹John Bastwick, frontispiece, *The utter routing ... of Independents* (London, 1646), A.

²¹⁰Thomas Edwards, frontispiece, *Gangreana*, A.

refuse to heare the Church also, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a Publicane," Bastwick is raising the issue of excommunication; by cutting off an unrepentant sinner from the sacrament, all church ordinances, or all Christian society (depending on the accepted form of this church discipline), Christians were hoping to not only to prevent a spiritual decay in the Church but also to promote a spiritual awakening in the sinner.

Presbyterians tried to reconcile twin impulses, which the gospel writer explores in chapter 18 of Matthew: God's desire to restore the erring to the path of righteousness while preventing the righteous from straying. The Presbyterian *via media* concentrated on joining but not combining, confusing, or choosing between dualities: invisible and visible, saint and sinner, self and other, doctrine and discipline, spiritual and temporal, before and after, part and whole, division and unity, internal and external, and clemency and correction. The visible church, according to Presbyterians, should welcome but restrain all men. Though the Presbyterian divine, John Bastwick, for instance, encouraged the Independents and Sectaries to return to orthodox practice, he warned them that the church would not tolerate heresies or other stumbling blocks. Like the shepherd who cares enough for one sheep to leave the flock to save the one who is lost, Presbyterians cared enough to seek the return of semi-separatists and separatists, but Presbyterians also heeded the verse in Matthew warning of damnation: "Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foote cause thee to offend, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life, halt, or maimed, then having two hands, or two feete, to be cast into everlasting fire."²¹¹ They read the verse literally; they thought excommunication and other severe censures were sometimes necessary. Purging but preserving (foes) and protecting but

²¹¹"Matthew 18," *Geneva Bible* (London, 1587).

unifying (congregations), Presbyterians created a *via media* that was open to all but not always easy or enticing; Presbyterianism offended those who wanted to travel the outlying roads alone.

Independents, like Henry Burton, agreed with the impulse to purge and to protect but disagreed with the counterbalances imposed by Presbyterians: namely, preserving and unifying. When Archbishop Laud introduced innovations, Burton opposed both the man and his policies; he did not attempt to forgive Laud or reform prelacy. For Burton, Laud was comparable to the offending member in Matthew's parable; he was the source of corruption that must be cut off. In the prefatory epistle to *Imposter unmasked* (1644), Burton also uses the medical trope; he styles himself a doctor who can stop Laud's "malignancy" from spreading and can cure "simple hearted people" who may have mistook Laud's "poison" for "sugared potion."²¹² Unlike Laud, who was infamous for offering sweet poison, Presbyterians became infamous for offering bitter medicine. In *An utter routing*, Bastwick recommended uniformity and excommunication, two treatments that many found unpalatable. Though their prescriptions were potentially unsafe and unkind, Presbyterians were thinking about divine judgment and biblical charity (about soteriology and eschatology), not about bodies and pleasure. Though the Presbyterian Church embraced saints and sinners alike, differentiating them was essential (or could be in certain circumstances). Fear of mistaking something deadly for something beneficial led them to write exposés because that form was transparent; it allowed people to see and

²¹²Henry Burton, *The grand impostor unmasked, or, a detection of the notorious hypocrisie, and desperate impiety of the late Archbishop (so styled) of Canterbury, cunningly couched in that written copy, which he read on the Scaffold at his execution (Jan. 10. 1644) Alias, called by the publisher, "his funeral sermon"* (London, 1649), A2v.

judge the truth for themselves: that harmful things are unpleasant. I am using the term, *exposé*, to signify forms, such as heresiologies and sources, that—to borrow Bastwick's figure—"sweated" its subjects in an attempt to melt away masks and purge poisons.

To reveal vice as vice, Presbyterians and Independents, had to show just how ugly and dangerous it really was. In his apology "To the Christian reader" introducing *Histrio-mastix* (1633), Prynne vividly argues that point:

hee who stirres a noisome kennel, must needes raise some stench; he who would lively portraiture a Divell, or a deformed monster, must needs draw some gastly lines, and use some sordid colours: so he who will delineate to the life, the notorious lewdnesse of Playes, of Play-haunters, is necessarily enforced to such immodest phrases as may present it in its native vileness; else he shall but conceale or masque their horrid wickednesse that none may behold it, not rip it open that all may abhorre it.²¹³

Decorum requires that horrible sins seem horrible, and Prynne's conceit of Christian responsibility obligated him to find the truth, however repulsive, and expose it. Sanitized descriptions would neither be honest nor have the desired effect: rousing sinners from complacency. As I argued in the last chapter, Presbyterians valued truth above order and godliness; even obedience and piety could be sinful when unaccompanied by right belief.

The phrase, "see the truth," is the overarching imperative of Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana*. He begs fellow Christians to open their eyes and see the fruits of church disunity and disciplinary negligence: "Schisme makes way to Heresie, and separation from the Church to separation from the head, men falling to that."²¹⁴ Ocular language, words such as "see," "observe," and "perceive," as well as associated figurative language,

²¹³William Prynne, "To the Christian reader," *Histrio-mastix*, sig. A2v.

²¹⁴Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 124.

such as "discover" and "show," recur throughout the text.²¹⁵ That diction is evident in the following passage, which stresses that Independency is breeding heterodoxy: "Hence all men may see as in a clear glasse what Independency is, that hath brought forth in a few yeers in England such monsters of Errors as are named in this Catalogue; most of the persons who vented these Opinions, and are fallen to be Anabaptists, Seekers, Arrians, yea, Anti-scripturalists, being within these 5. or 6. yeers Independents, and of the Church way." If the "fruit" of Independency is "error," then Independency cannot be God's way.²¹⁶ The notion that heresy is contagious and all consuming is central to *Gangreana* and to the Presbyterian promotion of conformity. It is the organizing principle of Edwards' heresiography. At the beginning of each edition, the "catalogue of the errors, heresies, blasphemies" illustrates that idea. Instead of using the approach later employed by Samuel Rutherford, a Scottish Presbyterian divine, in *A Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist*—dissecting each sect separately (detailing its history and beliefs) and then comparing sects with one another, Edwards lumps all of the dangerous beliefs together in one long list. That method embodies the theory that toleration is a slippery slope. When so many false doctrines flow from the same fount, they need not be distinguished from one another; they are all polluted. By including only false doctrines in *Gangreana* and by grouping them together under one implied heading—"intolerable"—Edwards helped his readers reach the desired conclusion on their own.

²¹⁵Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 124, and "To the Christian Reader," *The second part of Gangreana*, A2.

²¹⁶Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 124.

Presbyterians privileged doctrine and respected logic, but they understood that theological controversies could confuse popular audiences. Ordinary Englishmen did not need to understand theological controversies, Edwards thought; they just needed to differentiate true and false doctrine. Thus, *Gangreana*, which appeals not only to magistrates and ministers but also to ordinary English subjects, joins precept and example. Beliefs may be hard for the general populace to judge, but actions (the fruits of faith) could easily be categorized as good or evil. For example, some Independents were claiming that separation promotes piety; instead of discussing the biblical justifications for separation, as did some academic disputations written by Edwards himself, *Gangreana* disproves the claim by examining the evidence, the conduct of Sectarians: "I could tell true and certain stories," says Edwards, "of many Sectaries who were exceeding precise and strict before they fell into those wayes, but are abominable loose now; and let but a man turne Sectary now adayes, and within one halfe year he is so metamorphosed in apparell, hair, &c. as a man hardly knows him."²¹⁷ That general character sketch—that a Sectarian is one whose behavior degenerates—enables readers to participate in "discovering" them. Readers are empowered to join Edwards in heresy hunting not only by sending him accounts to be included in *Gangreana* but also by thinking of relevant examples from their community as they read: "desiring the Reader as he goes along, to supply the defects, by calling to minde all particulars he knows and hath heard of."²¹⁸ In so doing, readers would confirm Edwards' thesis and potentially realize that Independency is dangerous. They might recognize the importance of well-ordered church

²¹⁷Ibid., 73.

²¹⁸Ibid., 62.

discipline. As readers of *Gangreana* used the stories therein to evaluate the practices of neighbors, identifying error so it could be avoided and possibly even reported back to Edwards for further evidence of heterodoxy's spread, they renewed a practice formerly encouraged by the Church of England's High Commission Court. Having earned a reputation for oppression and injustice under Archbishop Laud, the High Commission was abolished in 1640, and nothing was established in its place, but Presbyterian heresiographies were filling that vacuum.²¹⁹ Though Presbyterians did not approve of the High Commission because it was prone to abuse, they did approve of discipline by higher authorities and by laymen.²²⁰

Presbyterians disagreed amongst themselves about spiritual and civil discipline: high Presbyterians posited a two-kingdom theory of polity and clerical power *jure divino* not *jure humano*, while Erastian Presbyterians favored a one-kingdom theory of polity in which discipline was established (but not administered) by the magistrate; however, all Presbyterians wanted a more thorough discipline than the non-communion used by Separatists. Presbyterians did not want anyone to escape spiritual correction. When exiled from Independent churches, unrepentant sinners leave without being reformed and without being restrained from hurting others. They are free to establish their own churches, where corruption may spread and contaminate others.²²¹ Even if magistrates

²¹⁹"Charles I, 1640: An act for repeal of a branch of a statute primo Elizabethæ concerning commissioners for causes ecclesiastical," *Statutes of the Realm*, Vol. 5: 1628-80, Ed. John Raithby (London, 1819), 112.

²²⁰Thomas May, *The history of the Parliament of England, which began Nov. 3, 1640* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. P, 1854), 376; John Bastwick, *The utter routing of the ... Independents*, Fv-F2.

²²¹Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 140-141.

punished heretics, as some Independents desired, civil penalties would not restore the lost souls.²²² Excommunication, by contrast, could not be eluded and would prevent the shameless from joining and thereby harming others. In theory, Presbyterian excommunication protected society and refined sinners, "delivering" them "up to Satan" to save their souls.²²³ Thomas Edwards and other Presbyterians defended excommunication as kind severity. John Calvin thought excommunication "the most salutary remedy for chastising the guilty."²²⁴ Excommunication forced people to face their wrongdoing and to associate it with their spiritual and social deprivation. This linking of cause and effect is akin to *Gangreana's* method, which opens with the sources of offense—bad doctrines, and proceeds to the manifestations of offense—bad deeds.

Recounting transgressions was a risky move because it could be interpreted as petty or personal, as railing satire rather than cautionary tales. Indeed, in *Cretensis*, John Goodwin says Edwards' design with *Gangreana* was "to entertaine and feast the prophane world" with fruit from "the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah," with "grapes of gall" from "clusters bitter" served as wine that is as dangerous as "the poyson of dragons, and the cruell venome of Aspes."²²⁵ In *The second part of gangreana*, Edwards replies to that specific passage with an acknowledgement that his subject

²²²Ibid., 169-170.

²²³Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 154; Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against independent government of particular congregations* (London, 1641), 28.

²²⁴John Calvin, *The necessity of reforming the church* (1544) in *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, Trans. Henry Beveridge, Vol. 1 of 3 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), 206.

²²⁵John Goodwin, *Cretensis*, 18, 50.

matter—"the Heresies, Blasphemies, and practices of the Sectries"—is indeed "poysonous and venemous," but the style is charitable: "the way of handing those things, is healing and medicinall to cure the Reader of those stings and poysons, which by eating of those sower Grapes of the Sectaries they have contracted." "[B]y laying open the Errours, Heresies, &c. their evill danger, and discovering remedies and cures proper for them," Edwards strives to "hea[l] ... these Nations."²²⁶ By way of defense, Edwards includes a letter from one reader of *Gangraeana* who at first expected to find little of worth in a "gangreane" but subsequently became convinced both of its necessity and of its decorum. If the style is "inflamed," it is nevertheless decorous, the minister suggests, because it is a "cure according to the cause."²²⁷

Just as inflammation is a natural defensive response to tissue damage, so too is Edwards' catalogue of spiritual harm. The aforementioned reader notes that the form of Edwards' treatment reflects the form of the spiritual injury: because the sects remain unbridled and continue to hurt the nation, Edwards' text must also expand its protective measures. As the sects proliferated, so too did *Gangreana*. As the kinds of errors multiplied—moving from doctrine to worship to satire, so too did Edwards' corrections—moving from negative confessions to testimonies to contentions, respectively, before repeating the course, as needed. *Gangreana* strikes back, blow for blow, but it does so charitably.

²²⁶Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana* (London, 1646), 131.

²²⁷*Ibid.*, 22.

III. *Presbyterians: "Antichristian, Popish, Tyrannical, prophane, bloody persecutors" or the strongest defense against those errors?*²²⁸

In *Cretensis* (1646), a response to *Gangreana*, John Goodwin accuses Thomas Edwards of "blaspheming," presumption, spying, stubbornness, being "Dragon-lik[e] of spirit," taking sick pleasure in the sins of others, having a "virulent and viperous design" to expose people to the "nakedness" of others, and of making "false, base, and putid suggestions against" saints. In short, Goodwin labels Edwards a hypocrite.²²⁹ Defending Edwards or any Presbyterian against the charge of hypocrisy is no simple task. As Goodwin's list suggests, religious polemicists used the term to denote a range of abuses. The Genevan notes to Matthew 23 tell us that "[h]ypocrites are ... most severe exactors of things, which they them selves chiefly neglect"; they are "ambitious" and "abuse the pretence of zeale to covetousnes and extortion"; they are "cruel"; and they "are carefull in trifles," such as "outwarde things" while they "neglect the greatest things of purpose," such as "the inward."²³⁰ The definitions from the Geneva notes to Mathew 23 will help us to analyze the *degree* to which Presbyterians, such as William Prynne and Thomas Edwards, played the hypocrite. I emphasize the word degree because the ideas and actions of Presbyterians existed on a spectrum with those of Episcopalians and Independents. The subtlety of the distinctions made it necessary for disputants to emphasize—and exaggerate—differences to support the premise that one is dangerous and the other is not. In the previous chapter, I argued that the groups or polities were

²²⁸Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist* (London, 1648), 5.

²²⁹John Goodwin, *Cretensis* (London, 1646), 18-19.

²³⁰"Notes 2, 3, 6, 10, 7, and 8" in "Matthew 23," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

more similar than they were different. They all valued truth; they just disagreed about the extent to which that doctrine should be determined by Scripture, debated by man, and confirmed by civil powers. They all valued order; they just disagreed about compromising other aims to ensure obedience, reverence, and uniformity. They all valued godliness; they just disagreed about how pure the ordinances and the parishioners needed to be.

Presbyterians were charged with having strict standards for others, especially Independents and Sectarians, and slack standards for themselves because they seemed to judge others' behavior and beliefs harshly while making excuses for bad behavior and will-worship in their churches. Presbyterians did not sift the wheat from the chaff; they did not exclude professing Christians, however profane, from membership in their visible churches. Yet they seemed to be sifting gathered churches by collecting errors and cautionary tales to put in their grotesque catalogues. John Goodwin makes this point in *Cretensis*. He asks how Edwards can be brazen enough to record the ostensible heresies of Independents and Sectarians when all the while Presbyterians were themselves blaspheming God. Goodwin is outraged that Edwards is pointing to heterodoxies in gathered churches when many misconceptions and misdeeds persisted in the congregations led by Edwards or his coreligionists.²³¹ The response made by Edwards in *The second part of gangreana* is simpler than it seems. In essence, Edwards responds, "We Presbyterians never claimed to be perfect or to have a pure church, and we never put our faith in our works or the godliness of our ministers!" Those are my words; here's

²³¹John Goodwin, *Cretensis: or a briefe answer to an ulcerous treatise, lately published by Mr Thomas Edwards, intituled, Gangraena* (London, 1645/6), 3.

Edwards's theological explanation: sinners could only become saints through the sacrifice of Christ imputed to them; saints would continue to sin while on earth; and the efficacy of sacraments depends on the will of God and power of the Holy Spirit, not the sanctity of the minister or recipients. Edwards never boasted about the perfection of his church, his congregants, or his coreligionists. He saw the visible Presbyterian Church as glorified by Christ's presence, not by the works of sinful, adopted children. When the visible church was an efficient cause of salvation, it was due to the Holy Spirit working through the ordinances to impute justification and sanctification to the elect.

The Independents, however, *did* seem (to Edwards) to measure the whole by the parts. They judged the righteousness of the congregation, whether it was a true church, by the piety of its particular members. They also measured the legitimacy of church order and ordinances by the purity of their structures (their adherence to apostolic precedent) and the godliness of the congregants, ruling elders, and teaching elders. Reading Henry Burton's *Protestation Protested* (1641), we find ample evidence to support this view, evidence such as this statement by Burton:

[O]f necessity there must be Liberty granted of setting up Churches, or Congregations, where *Christs* Ordinances are administred in their *purity*, and so where none are admitted members of the Congregation, but such as are approved of by the whole Assembly for their *profession* and *conversation*, as against which there is no just exception.²³²

For Burton and other Independents, the church (polity and people alike) may be corrupted by any human innovation or corruption. That correlation between the polity and people did not hold true in the Presbyterian paradigm. As Edwards explains, "the Presbyterians do not separate from the Independents out of pretences of greater holines, nor cry up

²³²Henry Burton, *Protestation protested* (London, 1641), C.

themselves in Sermons and Books as the only Saints."²³³ That argument highlights the crucial difference between separating Independents and Presbyterians: Independents have higher standards of godliness than Presbyterians, standards that would exclude many English subjects from joining one of their churches. Edwards defends his more intense and personal scrutiny of the godliness of Independents and their churches with the claim that he is judging them by their own standards. His neglect of Presbyterian profanities and errors is defensible, he argues, because Presbyterians have lower standards for admission to the church. Though Presbyterians value godliness in members, apostolic faithfulness in polity, in purity in ordinances, they concede that sanctification is a mysterious process and reformations are slow and ongoing. When sanctity becomes a prerequisite for membership and perfection becomes the measure of truth, then the actions and ideas deserve more scrutiny. Presbyterians used the Independents' own norms to be evaluate them and used Presbyterian norms to evaluate themselves.

Before moving past this debate about the connections between polity and people, we, who are seeking to understand Separatism in a more nuanced way than suited Edwards' purposes, should remember that John Robinson, a prominent Separatist, had argued against conflating polity and people, even though he and other Separatists valued purity in both. A true church, Robinson asserted, is one that is properly constituted, not one whose members are perfect. Just as apostolic churches had corruptions against which

²³³Thomas Edwards, *The second part of Gangraena: Or a fresh and further discovery of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and dangerous proceedings of the sectaries of this time* (London, 1646), 80.

they struggled, so too did Independent congregations.²³⁴ The difference between autonomous congregations of saints and national churches, says Robinson, is that Separatists strive for perfection and have the instruments with which to achieve it whereas the Church of England, from which he withdrew, and the Presbyterian Church which later sought to replace it, lacked both the motivation and the means of churches that denied entry to the unsanctified. Separate churches distinguished the elect from the damned using their clearest measures, voluntary "profession" and Godly "conversation," and then edified them using biblical ordinances.²³⁵ The purity of the ordinances mattered most to Separatists, but that purity seemed, to them, somewhat dependent on the godliness of the participants. In other words, the sanctity of the members was secondary but crucial.

Though Presbyterians tended to downplay the merits of individuals in an effort to distinguish between justification and sanctification, they did not downplay the obligations of men of faith to obey and glorify God. They believed that when God redeemed them, he equipped them to act differently: to be holy and to restore the holy places. Presbyterians wrestled with how to be rigorous without being self-righteous. On the one hand, they rejected works-based soteriologies. For Calvin, seeking justification by works was a mark of ambition and presumption.²³⁶ On the other hand, good works were marks of

²³⁴John Robinson, *A justification of separation from the Church of England. Against Mr Richard Bernard his invective intituled; "The Separatists shcism"* (Amsterdam, 1610/11 and 1639), 81-3.

²³⁵Henry Burton, *Protestation protested*, C.

justification; they were the fruits of salvation, and they were to be encouraged. They did not put their faith in personal or ecclesiastical perfection, but, in response to salvation, they sought a "perfect and thorow Reformation" of themselves and their church.²³⁷

Embracing the truth led them closer to godliness and good governance. Edwards and other Presbyterians were concerned about scandal not only because they were nervous about their own salvation but also, and I think principally, because they were worried about the salvation of others. While providential punishments for wickedness in the world were never far from their minds, especially during times of drought or plague, they more anxiously anticipated God's wrath on judgment day. They thought that they would have to give God an account of their deeds and explain those left undone, and they were not eager to admit that they had neglected their neighbors in an attempt to guard themselves. Protecting the body of believers was important, but that duty had to be balanced with the duty to cure diseased members. As we shall see in the next section, when the diseased member is an office holder in the church or the state both the precautions (for the body) and the cure (of the sick part) become even more complicated. In those cases, reformers debated whether the visible church needed to be literally or spiritually faithful to apostolic precedents for discipline; they also disputed interpretations of Romans 13 and other biblical passages concerning higher powers.

Presbyterians wanted to remove scandals, to "cast out of the way all stumbling blocks," as Thomas Edwards advises: to "[b]reak downe all Images and Crucifixes, throw

²³⁶See John Calvin, "Justification is by grace alone: sermon on Galations 2:15-16" in *John Calvin's Sermons on Galations*, Trans. Kathy Childress (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1997) <<http://www.reformedsermonarchives.com/cal3.htm>>

²³⁷Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the independent government of particular congregations*, sig. B.

downe all Altars, remove the High Places, break too peece the brazen Serpents, which have been so abused to Idolatry and superstition, put out the unpreaching and scandalous Ministers," and "set up good Pastors and Ministers in every Congregation."²³⁸

Presbyterians did not think that the efficacy of ordinances depended on their perfection or spiritual condition of the administrator; the Holy Spirit, they thought, could use imperfect vessels to communicate grace. However, offensive ceremonies and ministers were problematic because weak Christians were vulnerable to misunderstanding. If people were confused, they could fall into heresy. Without a strong faith in true doctrine, the ignorant waver. Though we tend to associate superstition with rituals and ornaments, the source of superstition is wrong belief about those acts and embellishments. Superstition arises, as Richard Hooker explained, when people desire salvation but lack right knowledge of how to obtain it. Wrong belief in fundamentals of faith may lead people down a perilous path to damnation. Because people could be scandalized not only by corruptions in worship but also by false teachings, Thomas Edwards thought Independency could be as dangerous as Roman Catholicism and Laudian Episcopacy; all of those polities permitted people to follow perilous paths that could distance them from saving doctrine.²³⁹ Presbyterians wanted to destroy "stumbling blocks"; toleration policies would empower individual churches to remove them, but it would not require

²³⁸Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent government of particular congregations: as also against the toleration of such churches to be erected in this kingdom* (London, 1641), sig. A4v.

²³⁹Richard Hooker, *A learned discourse of justification* in *The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 3 of 3 (Oxford, 1793), 457; Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent government*, *passim*.

that they do so, and it would not empower them to prevent scandals from cropping up elsewhere. The Presbyterian attack on Independency in *Gangraena* is really an attack on soul-endangering offences and the policies that protect them.

Opponents did not understand or respect the Presbyterian process: promoting godly unity by means of division. The Presbyterian notion of separation (identifying and casting out stumbling blocks) differed from that idealized by some Independents (the retreat of the elect). The temporary disruptions caused by Presbyterian polemic and their proposed polity and policy changes were nothing like the rifts that would result from toleration, the policy of Independents. Toleration, in Edwards' opinion, would destroy visible churches and threaten the invisible church:

Now the Toleration desired, to set up Churches independent, and separated from the Churches in the Kingdome, it is in it selfe a schisme, a rent, and a troubling, disturbing of the Church, so it will prove more and more (and cannot be avoided, according to their principles and practices hitherto) a daily schisme and rent in this Church, and an infinite disturbance, both to the outward peace, and to the faith and consciences of the people in this Kingdome.²⁴⁰

Independency, Edwards thought, would permanently tear the Church and nation apart. By contrast, Presbyterian reforms were designed to renew the godly commonwealth. Removing ungodly doctrines, ceremonies, officers, and institutions, the roots of heresy, superstition, and tyranny, would allow the true church to thrive.

Even moderate divines in the Church of England, like John Davenant, who valued charity over purity, conceded that reformed churches could not be associated with

²⁴⁰Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent government*, passim, esp. Epistle Dedicatory and 22-23.

churches "found guilty ... of Tyranny, Idolatry, [or] any deadly Heresie."²⁴¹ Erastian Presbyterians, however, defined unlawful dominion, false worship, and falsehood somewhat differently from moderates in the Church of England. Davenant's definitions censored immediate threats to salvation—deviations in fundamentals—but permitted some "stumbling blocks." Thus, Davenant fought Arminian doctrines but allowed "Laudian innovations" in ceremonies and canons, however much they deviated from his personal preferences.²⁴² Edwards agreed with Davenant that pastors should "feare contentions, that he may never dissent from his brethren, unlesse it be for causes greatly necessary," but he disagreed with Davenant about what causes were "greatly necessary."²⁴³ Edwards was willing to upset Episcopalians and Independents because removing stumbling blocks was more important than keeping the peace. In his own mind, he was creating a new and improved concord, one that respected what was true in both Episcopalian and Independent thought. Edwards sympathized with both the Episcopalian position that polity and liturgy were *adiaphora* and the Independents' position that Laudian practices were dangerous.²⁴⁴ In the early 1640s, when Edwards wrote *Reasons against the Independent government* (1641), he was measured in his tone, his tactics, and

²⁴¹John Davenant, *An exhortation to brotherly communion betwixt the Protestant Churches* (London, 1641), 10, 11, 18.

²⁴²Vivienne Larminie, "Davenant, John (*bap.* 1572, *d.* 1641)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford Univ. P, 2004).

²⁴³Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent government*, 54.

²⁴⁴Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia: or, a full answer to the Apologeticall Narration* (London, 1644), 15-16.

his proposal, but by 1644, when he wrote *Antapologia*, the extirpation of errors had become essential, and that entailed some acts that alienated Episcopalians and Independents alike. Removing the "ground-worke" of errors within the Church of England would be futile if new seeds of sin were planted. Both sought a reformed, unified national church where sinners could be corrected and hazards could be managed, where holiness *and* harmony coexisted. Neither Erastian nor clericalist Presbyterians wanted to sacrifice either holiness or harmony. However, they disagreed about how to pursue those ends (about who could use coercive means and how restrained they were by biblical precedents). Erastians thought the state had a role to play in discipline. They wanted godly magistrates to govern the realm of *adiaphora* so that ministers could concentrate on the essentials. Civil ordinances and punishments, Erastians reasoned, could create conditions conducive to spiritual censures by ministers, conditions in which it would be easier for ministers to move souls and conduct proper worship. Erastian Presbyterians wanted to fight scandals using two forces: the civil and the spiritual. That approach alarmed clericalists because the civil sword had historically replaced and diminished the spiritual sword. High Presbyterians conceived of magisterial discipline as a stimulus for superstition; when magistrates exercise dominion in the church, people may conform simply to please or pacify the magistrate; they may, in essence, be worshiping the state rather than God. Worshiping for the wrong reason might be as dangerous as worshiping in the wrong way. The Scottish Presbyterian divine, Samuel Rutherford, argued strongly against magisterial discipline in the visible church in *The divine right of church-government and excommunication* (1646):

This Spiritual removing of Scandals, doth only bring Christ and the Gospel in request, in the hearts of both such as are within and without the

Church; as Scandals raiseth up an evil report of *Christ* and the *Truth*. Now the Sword can never this way remove Scandals; and because Christ hath appointed Spiritual means, and Spiritual censures, to restore the Lord Jesus to his Honour.²⁴⁵

High Presbyterians, like Independents, worried that the "Christian rulers" might "incroach upon the Prerogative Royal of Jesus Christ" and in so doing potentially damn others and themselves.²⁴⁶ Thus, clericalist Presbyterians broadened the category of scandals to include the civil sword. That move was an intensification of the Erastian determination to preserve godliness while pursuing civil concord; it reminds us that high Presbyterians and Erastians differed by degrees (the degrees to which they prioritized purity and order).

²⁴⁵Samuel Rutherford, *The divine right of church-government and excommunication* (London, 1646), sig. B3.

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*, B4.

IV. "[N]ot only the firebrands may be removed but the fire extinguished": to purify offices or purge both offices and polities?²⁴⁷

Erastian and clericalist Presbyterians also differed in their responses to human ambition, a second kind of hypocrisy. Both feared and disclaimed it, but they disagreed about what *kind* of ambition is dangerous, and about who is most likely to fall prey to it. They also disputed the *kinds* and *degrees* of reforms: whether the exploitation of power by neglectful or tyrannical office holders (be they bishops or princes) could be remedied through advice and correction; whether bad officers could be removed and by what authority; and whether the problem was institutional.

This debate in the mid-seventeenth century had roots in the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s. Defenders of the established polity, such as John Whitgift, defined ambition as a vice pertaining to the personal misuse of power (the office-holder), not a problem inherent with the office itself (with the authority and role of bishops) or with the polity (Prelacy). In the *Answer to a certain libell* (1572), for instance, Archbishop John Whitgift, representing the Church of England (an Erastian church), distinguished the wrongful use of dominion from its scripturally warranted form: "Touching these places alleged in the xx. of Matthew, x. of Mark, xxii, of Luke, these words of Christ do not condemn superiority, lordship, or any such like authority but the

²⁴⁷ Adam Blair, "The charges of the Scottish commissioners against the Archbishop of Canterbury" (December 15, 1640), Braye Mss 2, ff. 93-95 and Journal of Geoffrey Palmer, December 18 1640, MS KKVI 38, Cambridge University Library, p. 123 in *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*, Ed. Maija Jansson, Vol. 1 of 7: 3 Nov.-19 Dec. 1640 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 648 and 661.

ambitious desire of the same and the tyrannical usage thereof."²⁴⁸ One of the issues in the Admonition Controversy was whether ecclesiastical officers, such as bishops, could also hold temporal offices and privileges, such as seats in Parliament: i.e. whether spiritual duties were incompatible with civil duties and honors. When that question resurfaced during the Long Parliament, it was answered in February of 1642 by 16 Car. I. c. 28: *An act for the disinabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporall jurisdiction or authorite*, which separated ecclesiastical and temporal offices by denying "persons in Holy Orders" the right to "temporal authority."²⁴⁹ An earlier act, 16. Car. I. c. 11: *An act for repeal of a branch of a statute primo Elizabeth concerning commissioners for causes ecclesiastical*," had stopped ecclesiastical persons from using civil censures in the High Commission Court or from establishing any new courts with those powers (112-13). However, it had only repealed part of the Act of Supremacy.²⁵⁰ Thus, 16 Car. I. c. 28 still maintained that the prince had "a religious care of the church and souls of his people."²⁵¹ As attested both by the debates in the Westminster Assembly of Divines and by the pamphlet wars between Independents, Erastian Presbyterians, and high Presbyterians,

²⁴⁸John Whitgift, *Answer to a certain libell* (1572) in *The Admonition Controversy*, Ed. Donald McGinn, 281.

²⁴⁹16 Car. I. c. 27, 28, "An act for disinabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporall jurisdiction or authoritie" in *The Statutes of the Realm*, Ed. John Raithby, Vol. 5: 1628-80 (London, 1819), 138.

²⁵⁰16. Car. I. c. 11, *An act for repeal of a branch of a statute primo Elizabeth concerning commissioners for causes ecclesiastical* in *The Statutes of the Realm*, Vol. 5, 112-13.

²⁵¹16 Car. I. c. 27, 28, "An act for disinabling all persons in Holy Orders to exercise any temporall jurisdiction or authoritie" in *The Statutes of the Realm*, Ed. John Raithby, Vol. 5: 1628-80 (London, 1819), 138.

reaching a consensual answer to the broader questions concerning the ecclesiastical polity, the role of the godly magistrate, and the relationship between spiritual and temporal spheres proved more challenging than reaching a consensus on removing abusive officials and limiting Prelatical authority.

By the start of the Long Parliament, discontent with ecclesiastical and temporal tyranny was mounting, and questions about Prelacy, such as whether bishops govern by temporal or divine right and whether they should use civil or ecclesiastical censures, were circulating in popular discourse. "The root and branch petition" (December 1640), for instance, suggests that one of the greatest offences of Prelatical practice "of these later times" is the tyrannical innovation that Prelacy exists *jure divino*; previously, bishops in the Church of England had "held that they have their jurisdiction or authority of human authority." Prelatical presumption seemed to be spreading:

Yea further, the pride and ambition of the prelates being boundless, unwilling to be subject either to man or laws, they claim their office and jurisdiction to be *Jure Divino*, exercise ecclesiastical authority in their own names and rights, and under their own seals, and take upon them temporal dignities, places, and offices in the Commonwealth, that they may sway both swords.²⁵²

Those grievances of the general public were echoed elsewhere. Consider the similarities between "The root and branch petition" and "The charges of the Scottish commissioners against the Archbishop of Canterbury" presented to the Lords on December 17th and to the Commons on December 18th against William Laud. In the latter, Scottish commissioners accuse Laud of "presumptuous" and "tyrannical" "Innovations in religion"

²⁵²"The root and branch petition" in *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1979), 137-144, esp. 137 and 142.

and acts that "trouble Scottish peace," such as 1) "press[ing] upon the Kirk "particular alterations in matters of religious" under his own name in "fourteen letters subscribed 'W. Canterbury'" though they were "without order, and against law"; 2) introducing a "*Book of canons and constitutions ecclesiastical*" that would "establis[h] a tyrannical power in ... prelates over the worship of God and over the consciences, liberties, and goods of the people"; 3) suggesting that "Canons [do not] come from the authority of synods, but from the power of prelates or from the King's prerogative"; 4) excommunicating objectors; 5) tolerating "popery" and planting "seeds of manifold and gross superstition and idolatry" 6) adding rituals and ornaments; 7) obscuring good doctrinal distinctions; and 8) giving prelates "tyrannical power ... over the worship and the souls and goods of men" and "overturning from the foundation the whole order of our Kirk."²⁵³ In both "The root and branch petition" and in "The charges of the Scottish commissioners," the petitioners focused on Prelatical tyranny and requested not only that the offending bishops be removed and punished but also that Episcopacy be abolished. "Root and branch" petitioners reasoned that because Prelacy had been "a main cause and occasion of many foul evils," the best way to "redress" the ecclesiastical government was to "abolish" Prelacy and follow "the government according to God's Word."²⁵⁴ The Scottish commissioners thought that Prelacy was especially susceptible to corruption, ambition, and confusion; they requested "that not only the firebrands," i.e. the bishops, "may be

²⁵³*Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*, Ed. Maija Jansson, Vol. 1 of 7: 3 Nov.-19 Dec. 1640 (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 640-648 and 660-661.

²⁵⁴"The root and branch petition" in *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, 137-38.

removed but the fire" i.e. Episcopacy, "may be provided against that there be no more recombustion after this."²⁵⁵

The Long Parliament was quick to remove "firebrands" but not to "remov[e] the fire." M.P.s seem to have taken for granted that tyrannical officials (other than the prince) should be removed; nevertheless, they were slower to acknowledge that the offices themselves were problematic and that the forms of government needed to be changed completely. The magistrates moved quickly to remove and punish "ambitious," "tyrann[ical]" officials, such as Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. On November 11, 1640, eight days after the opening of the Long Parliament, Strafford had been charged with "High Treason" and sequestered.²⁵⁶ A month later, they were taking measures to prosecute Laud as well. By December 18, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, had also been accused of "High Treason" and sequestered both from the House of Lords and from the king.²⁵⁷ They did not remove Prelacy immediately. Though they denounced Episcopacy as "evil," "burthensome," "an impediment," and "prejudicial" in November of 1642 (two years after the opening of the Long Parliament), they waited to abolish it, defending their delay on a desire to have a new form of ecclesiastical government determined by the Westminster Assembly of

²⁵⁵*Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, Vol. 1, 648 and 661.

²⁵⁶John Rushworth, "Passages in Parliament: November - December 1640," *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State*, Vol. 8: 1640-41 (1721), 1-18, *passim*; *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, 91-112.

²⁵⁷*Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament*, 638-662.

Divines at a later date.²⁵⁸ Parliament did not consider the "Bill for abolishing episcopacy" until January of 1643; even then, they sent it to a committee.²⁵⁹ In May of 1644, it had not yet been passed but was offered by the Committee of both Kingdoms and approved by the House of Commons as a "proposition ... for a safe an well-grounded Peace."²⁶⁰ "An ordinance for abolishing of archbishops and bishops ... and for settling their land, etc." did not actually pass until October 9, 1646; even then, it was not confirmed as an act of Parliament.²⁶¹

High Presbyterians in Scotland moved much faster to abolish Episcopacy. When high Presbyterians in Scotland seized power during the Bishops' Wars, they were quick to organize The Glasgow General Assembly (1638), which, as F.N. McCoy summarizes, "examine[d] all innovations and accretions to church government and doctrine made since the 1580 Confession of Faith and ... evaluate[d] their degree of conformity or nonconformity with that confession."²⁶² As the Scottish privy councilors rightly perceived, the introduction of the "Service Book, Book of Canons, and High

²⁵⁸"Answer to the declaration of the General Assembly of Scotland, about Church Government," *Journal of the House of Lords*, Vol. 5: 1642-1643 (1767-1830), 350.

²⁵⁹"A bill for abolishing Episcopacy," *Journal of the House of Lords*, Vol. 5, 572.

²⁶⁰"Propositions for peace," *Journal of the House of Commons*, Vol. 3: 1643-44 (1802), 483-84.

²⁶¹"Ordinance for abolishing of archbishops and bishops within the kingdom of England, and dominion of Wales, and for settling of their lands and possessions upon trustees, for the use of the commonwealth" (October 1646) in *Journal of the House of Lords*, Vol. 5, 515-517 and in *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, Eds. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (1911), 879-883.

²⁶²F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 56.

Commission" had been considered unlawful "'innovations of religion and discipline.'"²⁶³ Those tyrannical actions sparked a strong reaction; high Presbyterians decided to stamp out the first sparks of that fire: the alterations of the Kirk of Scotland made by James VI and I and his Prelatical Assembly at Perth (1618).²⁶⁴ The Glasgow Assembly sought to reestablish an earlier form of Scottish Presbyterianism (the form associated with Knox). That's why they repeated the first Scottish Presbyterian Confession of Faith (of 1560, 1580, and 1590) in their National Covenant (1638).²⁶⁵ In 1639, before the Short Parliament even met, Scotland (under Covenanter control) had ratified (by both assembly and parliament) "the abolition of episcopacy" and the elimination of "the clerical estate from the Parliament."²⁶⁶

Whether those changes were reforms or revolutions was (and continues to be) hotly contested. Following a logic similar to that presented in "The root and branch petition," regicides later argued that because Charles was found to be the "principal author" of the "calamities," the best way to redress the civil government was not only to

²⁶³*The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ser. #2, Vol. 7 (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1906), 8-9 quoted in F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 41.

²⁶⁴See F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 10-11.

²⁶⁵See The Church of Scotland, *The confession of faythe and doctrine beleved and professed, by the Protestantes of the realme of Scotlande* (Edinburgh and London, 1561); The Church of Scotland, *The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland, subscribed by the Kings Maiestie and his householde, in the yeare of God 1580* (Edinburgh and Amsterdam, 1638); "The Scottish National Covenant" (1638) in *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, 3rd ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979), 124-134.

²⁶⁶F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 66.

depose (and behead) the king but also to abolish monarchy.²⁶⁷ These radical institutional overhauls were justified as returns to more primitive and perfect forms of ecclesiastical and civil government. In the ecclesiastical sphere, fundamentalists (in both the Presbyterian and Independent groups) were the loudest advocates of "root and branch" reforms. In Scotland, fundamentalists ruled the kirk (in the late 1630s and throughout the 1640s), but in England, both Presbyterian and Independent fundamentalists had to appease the Erastian Presbyterians (and orthodox Episcopalians) in Parliament. Most groups agreed that they needed to pluck out the roots of superstition (associated with the Roman Catholic church) and tyranny, but they disagreed on what those were: whether they were bad men, bad laws, or bad institutions. Controversies concerning what might replace Episcopacy were intense because few in England could agree on the essential features of an ecclesiastical polity, such as whether it should be national, uniform, and/or coercive.²⁶⁸

Erastian Presbyterians, such as Thomas Edwards, thought state-mandated church uniformity was safest for everyone; Edwards has been portrayed as firebrand, but he was trying to fight, not start, fires. The governors of the national church, he argued, had a solemn responsibility to suppress both false doctrines, such as universal atonement, and practices, such as separation, and they were justified in using drastic remedies if necessary. He wanted to take measures to ensure that false doctrines could no longer spread within churches. Edwards was pragmatic. Presbyterianism might not be perfect or

²⁶⁷Charles Wood and David Lagomarisino, *The Trial of Charles I: A Documentary History* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1989), 60.

²⁶⁸See Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia* (London, 1644), *passim*.

essential to Christian faith, but it was less perilous, he thought, than Independency (with its toleration), Episcopacy (with its ambitious bishops, free will soteriology, and superstitious rituals), and Papistry (with its civil presumption, erroneous doctrines, and idolatry). Edwards' rejection of the Prelatical government previously used in the Church of England might seem to signal greater rigidity in him than in Calvin, who maintained brotherly communion with churches less reformed than his, but both ministers agreed that polity was instrumental, not fundamental. Moderate Presbyterians, including not only Thomas Edwards in England but also Robert Baillie in Scotland, were flexible about church externals (the forms of worship and discipline) but adamant about church responsibilities (promoting sanctification and removing stumbling blocks). Robert Baillie wanted to give the Assembly more power than Edwards was willing to grant, which is perhaps unsurprising given his Scottish origins, but the similarities between his assessment of Independency and that of Edwards, between Baillie's *A dissuasive for the errours of the times* (1645) and Edwards's *Gangreana* (1645) reminds us that Edwards was part of a larger Presbyterian movement, a movement to protect and unify the true church. For Edwards, as much as for Baillie, the visible church was a conduit to the invisible church. Particular forms of church government, such as Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, could come and go, they thought, but certain duties were central to the visible church and to the governors thereof.

To understand moderate Presbyterianism and the actions of our protagonists, we need to review Calvin's understanding of spiritual and ecclesiastical duties. Paul's practice of justifying his authority by referencing his proper calling and "his faithful[ness] [in] discharg[ing] the duty assigned him" seemed significant to Calvin

because it emphasized that godly authority is service-oriented.²⁶⁹ Christians gain divine authority by fulfilling Christian duties; those who neglect God's commandments, have no real spiritual authority and should be removed from ecclesiastical offices. The term bishop, Calvin suggests, is interchangeable with "elder, pastor, and minister." The original function of bishops, according to Calvin, was saving souls and suppressing scandals. In his discussion of bishops, Calvin admonishes both teaching and ruling elders to remember that doctrine, worship, and discipline are linked: "the preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, constitute the two principal parts of the pastoral office," and the "business of teaching is not confined to public discourses, but extends to private admonitions."²⁷⁰ Calvin emphasizes the common responsibility of all ecclesiastical teachers: "all those to whom the office of teaching was assigned, were denominated presbyters"; one presbyter in each city was "distinguished by the title of *bishop*," but that "bishop ... was not so superior to the rest in honour and dignity, as to have any dominion over his colleagues."²⁷¹ Spiritual discipline did not require dominion because it moved consciences, not bodies. Discipline, Calvin suggests, may be performed by "bishops" or by "elders" so long as they are "pious, grave, and holy men," who are faithful "in the correction of vices."²⁷² Moderate Presbyterians compared Episcopalian bishops to that measure and found them wanting; true bishops needed to be humble

²⁶⁹John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.10.

²⁷⁰John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.6.

²⁷¹*Ibid.*, 4.4.2.

²⁷²*Ibid.*, 4.3.8.

servants, as they were in apostolic churches, not prideful lords, as they had become in the Churches of England and Scotland. They were outraged that bishops had begun to be elevated "in honour and dignity" and had begun to wield civil powers. Ecclesiastical polity could be established by the Assembly and Parliament but only as long as it did not conflict with Scriptural injunctions and norms.²⁷³ As the moderate Scottish Presbyterian, Robert Baillie, would argue, dominion was incompatible with the proper attitude of a bishop, described in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Following the precedents set by the English Admonitioners and the Scottish Reformers of the 1570s, he and other moderates recommended that bishops be stripped of their civil function and that the office itself be reformed.

Prelacy became diseased, many Presbyterians thought, when social and spiritual duties were combined under Pope Gregory I, "Gregory the Great" (c. 590-604). Mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterianism attempted to amend that scandalous arrangement by separating the two swords and prohibiting the same person from assuming both spiritual and temporal duties. Reformers thought that bishops had been distracted from serving Christ and the congregation by their obligations to the state, so they proposed a return to spiritual work and an abandonment of political duties. According to moderate Presbyterians, such as Robert Baillie, Prelacy could be salvaged and used within true churches, even Presbyterian ones, if bishops returned to their apostolic office and abuses were abolished (and subsequently prevented). Any ecclesiastical polity that promoted decency and order could, according to moderates, be justified in a true church. Polity was indifferent and could be settled by a godly magistrate. Theoretically, the civil government

²⁷³Robert Baillie, *The letters and journals*, 2, 5, 10-11, 30, 52-54.

had the God-given right to introduce a new polity, such as Episcopacy (as the Church of England did and as James VI and I did in Scotland), so long as it preserved true doctrine and prevented scandals.

Presbyterians opposed the conflation of the civil and the spiritual because one concerned the outward man and one concerned the soul of man, but they embraced collaboration between the spheres of government because the outward and the inward were inextricably bound. Holy commonwealths were ideal because their boundaries between social and spiritual identity were porous; a holy commonwealth, with its united, symbiotic temporal and spiritual spheres, mirrored the universe, with its distinct but interactive earthly and heavenly spheres. Presbyterians sought to join civil and ecclesiastical government in an alliance rather than an amalgamation; the substance of the state and the church differed, even though its population overlapped and its interests were aligned. Civil laws and magistrates regulated men politically: "educat[ing]" them, as Calvin says, "for the duties of humanity and citizenship that must be maintained among men"; church laws and ministers regulate men spiritually: "instruct[ing]" men's "conscience ... in piety and in reverencing God."²⁷⁴ According to Calvin's theory, Christians who are well regulated spiritually should require fewer political restraints because many civil benefits, such as "charity toward men," result naturally from religious actions, such as repentance.²⁷⁵ Using this argument, Presbyterians in the mid seventeenth century, pushed Parliament to prioritize settling the national church. Religious order, they

²⁷⁴John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.19.15.

²⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 3.3.16-20.

suggested, would foster civil order, reversing the confusion precipitated by implicit toleration of the years during which the national church was unsettled.

Conceiving of God as uncreated yet creating, static yet moving, out of time and engaged temporally, Erastian Presbyterians could conceive of Christian society as fixed in fundamentals but variable in nonessentials. Both Erastian, like Thomas Edwards, and high Presbyterians, like Samuel Rutherford, wanted the church to be separate from—but partnered with—the state. However, Erastians thought that within the realm of *adiaphora*, which included ecclesiastical polity, the partnership could be negotiated as historical and cultural circumstances necessitated; by contrast, high Presbyterians practically erased *adiaphora* and more rigidly defined the boundaries between the spiritual and temporal spheres. Erastians admitted that *adiaphora* could be essential by consequence: indifferent things could promote or prevent faith in Christ. The liberty of *adiaphora* was limited by the necessity of faith in Christ. According to Calvin, God instituted government in the church to "hold believers together in one body."²⁷⁶ Ecclesiastical polity was fundamental insofar as it united believers with Christ and one another. Neither spiritual nor civil governors had the right to interfere with essential spiritual duties.²⁷⁷ Presbyterians were accepting of polities that facilitated the fundamental functions of the church: sealing the elect in the covenant of grace. Robert Baillie, for one, accepted that Episcopacy could be an acceptable polity within true churches, but he opposed the form of Episcopacy within the English Church, which he called "Canterburianism" (think Nicholas Tyacke's "Anti-Calvinists" and not Ian

²⁷⁶John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.2.

²⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 4.3.6.

MacKenzie's "Laudians"), because its teachings were heretical, its practices were profane, and its leaders were ambitious.²⁷⁸ He associated Canterburianism with the following errors: an Arminian doctrine of free will, a Lutheran understanding of the sacraments, Papist superstitions in worship, pagan attitudes about the sabbath, and tyranny by ministers or magistrates.²⁷⁹ Though he considered church government to be indifferent in form, it was fundamental in practice; Canterburianism was intolerable because it threatened to undermine many essential beliefs. Edwards has the same attitude about Independency; that is why *Gangreana* begins with doctrines. Both men were eager to distinguish between the appearance of godliness and actual godliness and between apostolic discipline and that employed by Canterburians and Independents. In the Scottish Assembly of 1638, Baillie distinguished corrupt Episcopacy in Scotland (both in 1580 and in 1638) from apostolic Episcopacy: "Episcopacy as used and taken in the Church of Scotland, I thought to be removed and abjured [in 1580]; ... but Episcopacy *simpliciter* such as was in the ancient church, and in our church during Knox's days, it was, for many reasons, to be removed, but not abjured in our Confession of Faith."²⁸⁰ Here, Baillie acknowledges that bishops could be good, but the ones in Scotland and England were bad. They were hypocrites who took the church office but neglected to

²⁷⁸Cf. Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) and Ian M. MacKenzie, *God' Order and Natural Law: The works of the Laudian Divines* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2002), 2-3.

²⁷⁹Robert Baillie, *The letters and journals of Robert Baillie* (Edinburgh, 1775), 30; Baillie, *Ladensium Autokatakrisis, the Canterburian Self-Conviction* (Glasgow and Amsterdam, 1640; London, 1641), *passim*; and Baillie, *Life of William Laud now Lord Archbishop of Canterbury examined* (London, 1643), *passim*, esp. 3-4.

²⁸⁰Robert Baillie, *The letters and journals*, 152; F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 57.

fulfill their spiritual duties. They had so corrupted the office of bishops that it too needed to be "removed." But it did not need to be "abjured." Church leaders needed to revive the ancient apostolic practice of bishops. That practice of spiritual admonitions obligated men, such as Robert Baillie and Thomas Edwards, to chastise and restrain Independency. Following spiritual injunctions, both men wrote censorious works to spiritually discipline readers.

Because church governors—be they bishops, presbyters, or godly magistrates—had a solemn responsibility of protecting the "doctrine of eternal life and salvation," they also had the task of removing stumbling blocks, be they extraneous rituals, such as making the sign of the cross, or dangerous polities, such as Independency.²⁸¹ When disorders of any kind disturbed true discipline, the consequences were serious.²⁸² Without good order, people might temporarily or permanently fall from grace. Calvin reminds his readers that God holds governors accountable for all those under them who "perish in ignorance through their negligence."²⁸³ That warning should sound familiar; it is a key predecessor to Thomas Edwards' warning that Parliament must protect the church from heresy and schism or suffer God's wrath. When Presbyterians attacked other polities, such as Episcopacy and Independency, they did so because they thought that corruption had spread, or would spread, under those ecclesiastical systems. All Presbyterians sought to abolish offices, institutions, and practices that were scandalous. The moderate Presbyterian attitude toward bishops was similar to their attitude toward civil magistrates.

²⁸¹John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.1.

²⁸²*Ibid.*, 4.3.10.

²⁸³"Ezekial 3:17-18," qtd. in John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.6.

Leaders of the church and the state were instituted by God to protect and nurture the people. Individuals who failed to fulfill those offices, deserved to be removed; however, the offices themselves remained valid. Presbyterians continued to support the concept of the godly prince long after Independents had abandoned it. Presbyterians sought to purify, not purge, the national system of ecclesiastical government and monarchy. They wanted to remove the fires of Episcopacy but not the logs beneath: the foundation. Particular Presbyterians disagreed on the scriptural basis for Prelacy and on the role of the magistrate in the church, but all agreed that the church needed leaders who could discipline heretics, schismatics, blasphemers, and degenerates.

Presbyterians worried the fires that had consumed Episcopacy had begun to burn in Independency. Independents were putting themselves on the pedestal seat previously occupied by prelates, the seat of pride and presumption. Presbyterians responded to the arrogant and harmful actions of Independents as they had previously responded to Canterburians. For instance, John Bastwick, who had spent the late 1630s combating Laudian Episcopacy, spent the mid 1640s making similar assaults on Independency.²⁸⁴ Bastwick goes so far as to suggest that Independents are worse than the convicted and beheaded traitors blamed for the civil war:

[W]hatsoever they pretend and whatsoever shews of seeming holinesse they hold out to the world, they are unsound, root and branch; and neither the godly party, nor the praying people, nor the only Saints, but the most pharisaicall brood that ever yet appeared in the world, and more injurious to Christ the King of his Church and to his royalty and to all his holy, faithfull Ministers and Servants, then ever the Pope or any of the Prelaticall party were, and more malicious and treacherous to the Saints, and truly godly and precious ones, and more opposers of all Reformation,

²⁸⁴See John Bastwick, *The letany of John Bastwick* (London, 1637) and *The utter routing ... of all the Independents & Sectaries* (London, 1646).

then ever the Cavaliers were; and many of them greater enemies to Church and State, and the welfare of both, then either Strafford or the Prelate of Canterbury.²⁸⁵

Bastwick's fear of Separatists illustrates the attitude that led Presbyterians in the late 1640s to trust the king more than the army or Independents, an attitude that even led William Prynne to retract his infamous *Histrio-mastix*, as the next chapter will discuss. The king's bad counselors had been eliminated, but the army's troublemakers had only increased in power and treachery. Independent and Episcopal polities alike gave their members occasions to sin that, according to Presbyterians—such as Edwards, Baillie, and Bastwick, the Presbyterian practice did not.

V. "[P]ersecuting" or protecting "the truth"?²⁸⁶: *Presbyterianism as a "middle way betwixt Popish tryannie and schismatizing liberty"*²⁸⁷

Presbyterians argued that national churches were not only scriptural but also expedient; a uniform confession of faith and directory for worship would promote the truth and prevent scandals. However, Independents, such as Henry Burton, accused Presbyterians of promoting hypocrisy. By granting magistrates the power to settle the church, to ratify the principles and practices of the church and to coerce conformity with civil penalties, Presbyterians were, like the Episcopalians before them, encouraging

²⁸⁵ John Bastwick, *The utter routing ... of Independents*, Bv.

²⁸⁶ Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity*, 23.

²⁸⁷ George Gillespie, *Wholesome severity reconciled with Christian liberty; or, the true resolution of a present controversie concerning liberty of conscience. Here you have the question state, the middle way betwixt popish Tyrannie and schismatizing liberty approved, and also confirmed from scripture, and the testimonie of divines, yea of whole churches* (London, 1644), 19-20, 24.

people to worship for the wrong reasons: "a religion of humane institution is hypocrisie; while pretending to worship and fear God, they fear and worship men, which is both hypocrisie and idolatry."²⁸⁸ It is dangerous, Burton thought, to govern "faith and conscience" with a polity established by human authority.²⁸⁹ Independents sought to free both the consciences and the bodies of men; they valued positive laws principally as guarantors of spiritual and secular freedoms. They disdained theories of divine right and laws imposed by higher authorities without grants from the people. According to John Goodwin, particular congregations should receive no interference from either civil governors, such as the prince or Parliament, or ecclesiastical governors, such as presbyteries, assemblies, and the High Commission. "[B]reaking of the yoke of all tyrannie and oppression, as well spirituall as corporall, from off the necks of the Saints" is a central goal of the reformation envisioned by Independents.²⁹⁰ The people, according to Goodwin, have the "liberty and power" to "gather and forme themselves into Church-bodies, and Christians incorporations"; neither Parliament nor the Assembly have the authority to limit that natural right.²⁹¹

Independents disagreed with Edwards's major premise that the Christian magistrate(s) should reform the church. Independents did not think that polity was *adiaphora*; they did not agree with the Erastian Presbyterian conceit that ministers were governing "faith and conscience" with spiritual weapons while magistrates ensured "order

²⁸⁸Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity*, 15.

²⁸⁹Henry Burton, *Protestation protested*, A4v-Br.

²⁹⁰John Goodwin, *Antapologesiates antapologias* (London, 1646), 149.

²⁹¹*Ibid.*, 109, 149.

and decency" with civil weapons. Independents scorned any polity or liturgy established by the magistrate and enforced by "governours;" any church dependent on the state was, to Burton, an object of loathing. In 1646, Burton was ready to divorce the church and the state. We can understand, then, why Independents refused to have their plans for church government scrutinized and ratified by the Parliament's Assembly of Divines or by the Parliament. Their disdain for Erastian Presbyterians like Thomas Edwards also makes sense. Far from "censur[ing] or restrain[ing] either heresie, schisme, or apostacie," as Edwards envisioned, the civil powers, in Burton's thinking, were more apt to "persecute the truth."²⁹² John Goodwin had a similarly low estimation of magistrates because they commanded things contrary to the word of God, he thought; ungodly magistrates forced Christians to choose between obeying civil authority and obeying scripture.²⁹³ For Goodwin, as for high Presbyterians, allegiance belonged first to God and then to the state.

Magisterial reformers, such as Erastian Presbyterians, protested that they too prioritized God, but they maintained that God worked through, rather than apart from, governing authorities. That tension is perhaps best evident in Romans 13, which—as I have previously argued—was central to the debates concerning the interaction of the church and the state. In their notes to Romans 13, for instance, the Genevan commentators seem to suggest that the church should not be elevated above the state,²⁹⁴ yet they also maintain that "if unlawful things be commanded us, we must answere as

²⁹²Henry Burton, *Conformities deformity*, 23.

²⁹³John Goodwin, *Antapologesiates antapologias. Or, the inexcusableness of that grand accusation of the brethren, called Antapologia* (London, 1646), 62.

²⁹⁴"Note a" for Romans 13:1, *Geneva Bible* (1587).

Peter teacheth us, It is better to obey God, then men."²⁹⁵ Presbyterians believed that positive laws were beneficial for all communities, whether temporal or spiritual, but they also believed that human laws should not contradict divine law or claim to be divine. The most profound error of Roman Catholicism, they thought, was its suggestion that the church's institutions could be salvific. Proponents of the Caroline church had made that same error when they anathematized canon-breakers. Proponents of Independent congregations, Presbyterians insisted, were also following that heretical path by conflating the visible church (particular congregations) with the invisible church (the true church) and by claiming that the people and institutions of the church needed to be perfect.

In spiritual matters, Independents recognized the lordship of Christ alone.²⁹⁶ Erastian Presbyterians and Episcopalians recognized Christ as the head of the church triumphant, but Independents held that Christ directed the church militant as well. They denied that any of Christ's powers had been delegated to the crown or the clergy. High Presbyterians agreed that Christ was the head of the visible church, and they bound church governors by the precedents of Scripture. However, they were nervous about the claims Independents made to have a direct connection with God and to have warrants from the Holy Spirit. Like their Erastian coreligionists, high Presbyterians thought that Independents doctrines and discipline were dangerous. Whereas, Independents held "[t]hat no Opinon is so dangerous or Heretical as that of compulsion in things of

²⁹⁵"Note d" for Romans 13:5, *Geneva Bible* (1587).

²⁹⁶Henry Burton, *A vindication of churches, commonly called Independent* (London, 1644), 2.

Religion,"²⁹⁷ Presbyterians of all kinds thought that there *were* more dangerous opinions than those used to defend unity and uniformity.

Erastian Presbyterians abhorred tyranny over consciences, which they defined as treating indifferent things as if they were salvifically necessary, but they also abhorred anarchy: claims that indifferent things had no connection to salvation and should not be regulated. To avoid the confusion and contention resulting from each extreme, Presbyterians strove to govern each sphere of life with uniform rules settled by just powers and measures. Both high Presbyterians, who emphasized the *ius divinum* of the church, and magisterial Presbyterians, who emphasized the *ius humanum* of the church, wanted the polity, policies, and principles of the external church to be ratified lawfully. They tended to agree that some ecclesiastical operations, such as installing a minister, required congregational consent; some, such as creating or modifying church doctrines, required Assembly approval; and some, such mandating conformity, required Parliamentary sanction.²⁹⁸ They did not, however, confuse the external government of the church militant by laws with the internal government of the elect by the Holy Spirit. Like Luther, Presbyterians believed that compelling souls to embrace the truth was the office of the Holy Spirit, not any living person or institution; however, Presbyterians were more

²⁹⁷Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana: or a fresh and further discovery of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and dangerous proceedings of the sectaries of this time* (London, 1646), 1 in *Gangreana* (Ilkley, West Yorkshire: The Scholar Press Ltd, 1977).

²⁹⁸F. N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 9-11, 27.

optimistic about benefits of restraining vice and eliminating scandals through law.²⁹⁹ In other words, they thought good external order could *promote* good internal order. They hoped that their well-governed ordinances would be a means (though not a cause) of justification and sanctification. While respecting the power of natural and positive laws to remove obstacles to justification and sanctification, Presbyterians knew that those laws could become stumbling blocks themselves. Moral and ceremonial laws are salvific under the covenant of works and may continue to benefit the outward man and his communities; however, Presbyterian theology warns that moral and ceremonial laws are not salvific under the covenant of grace and should not be urged as necessary for the inward man.

Presbyterians like John Calvin and George Gillespie, a high Scottish Presbyterian, agreed that neither "temporall [nor] spirituall coactive Jurisdiction" belonged in the church.³⁰⁰ They opposed "all laws made by men without the word of God, for the purpose, either of prescribing any method for the worship of God, or of laying the conscience under a religious obligation, as if they enjoined things necessary to salvation."³⁰¹ However, they urged the adoption of laws concerning *adiaphora*. Decorous rites, ceremonies, and polity could, they believe, stabilize the visible church and edify the people:

²⁹⁹Heinrich Bornkamm, "An Exposition of Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms" in *Reformation and Authority: The Meaning of the Peasants' Revolt*, Ed. Kyle C. Sessions, Problems in European Civilization (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1968), 42.

³⁰⁰George Gillespie, *Dispute against ceremonies*, 8; John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.10.

³⁰¹John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.10.16.

For it is impossible to attain what Paul requires, that 'all things be done decently and in order,' unless order and decorum be supported by additional regulations.... The end of *decorum* is, partly, that while ceremonies are employed to conciliate veneration to sacred things, we may be excited to piety by such aids; partly, that the modesty and gravity, which ought to be discovered in all virtuous actions, may be most of all conspicuous in the Church.³⁰²

According to Presbyterians, coercing *behavior* is permissible and expedient, especially when the "direct" or necessary consequence" of regulations pertained to salvation. As the extended title of Gillespie's pamphlet suggests, Presbyterians sought a "middle way betwixt Popish tryannie and schismatizing liberty."³⁰³ They wanted to prevent liberty of conscience from translating into liberty of practice. Thomas Edwards found this prospect so troubling that he lists the aforementioned premise concerning compulsion first in his second "Catalogue of Errours, Heresies, Etc."³⁰⁴ Both Gillespie and Edwards emphasize that Presbyterians give more power than the Independents not only to the church's governing bodies but also to the civil magistrates. Unlike Sectarians and Independents, Presbyterians wanted the church to be established and protected by the civil magistrate.³⁰⁵ A profound trust in the law—comprising divine law, natural law, and positive law—

³⁰²Ibid., 4.10.29.

³⁰³George Gillespie, *Wholesome severity reconciled with Christian liberty; or, the true resolution of a present controversie concerning liberty of conscience. Here you have the question state, the middle way betwixt popish Tyrannie and schismatizing liberty approved, and also confirmed from scripture, and the testimonie of divines, yea of whole churches* (London, 1644), 19-20, 24.

³⁰⁴Thomas Edwards, *The second part of Gangreana* (London, 1646), 1.

³⁰⁵Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 117-118; George Gillespie, *Wholesome severity reconciled with Christian liberty*, A3r-v.

distinguishes Presbyterians from their Independent counterparts and links Presbyterians to apostolic Episcopacy.

At the core of this dispute is a question of restraint: must higher powers—whether civil or ecclesiastical—enact laws to control wrongdoers and thereby protect the innocent? Goodwin thinks not, at least in the religious sphere. Granting liberty of conscience and cancelling conformity canons would, Goodwin thought, bring peace. Conflict, he argues, stems from coercion, not toleration.³⁰⁶ Yet Presbyterians considered conflict useful in certain contexts. The print contestations that Goodwin found so disturbing were encouraging to Presbyterians and other reformers, who felt that they were thereby increasing their talents and doing their duty.³⁰⁷

Thomas Edwards feared that God would charge him with doing too little to save others, so he wrote *Gangreana*. He feared that in addition to punishing him, God would punish the magistrates and the nation for being complicit in the downfall of others, so he used strong language to convey the urgency of the situation. In the first catalogue, Edwards repeatedly lists Antinomian beliefs as errors, beliefs that Christians are not held accountable for their actions, much less the actions of others.³⁰⁸ He also lists as errors the Independent tenets of two kingdom jurisdiction and toleration: 1) "That Christian Magistrates have no power at all to meddle in matters of religion, or things ecclesiasticall, but in civil only concerning the bodies and goods of men," and 2) "Whatsoever errors or

³⁰⁶John Goodwin, *Antapologesiastes antapolgias*, 148-149.

³⁰⁷John Goodwin, *Antapologesiastes antapolgias*, 114-115; Thomas Edwards, *The second part of Gangreana*, 65-66.

³⁰⁸Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 25-26.

miscarriages in Religion the church should bear withall in men, continuing them still in communion with them, as brethren, these the Magistrates should bear within men, continuing them in the Kingdom or Commonwealth in the enjoyment of the liberty of Subjects." These teachings are dangerous, Edwards thinks, because they deny Parliament the power to fight schism and heresy.³⁰⁹ Edwards admits that Independents, like the Dutch Arminians, claim to "give more [power] to the magistrate then [sic] the Presbyterians" by making the magistrate the court of last appeal in "controversies of faith," as in their desire for Parliament to establish toleration, but they balk when "the Magistrates come to suppress their errors and false Doctrines" by establishing and enforcing Presbyterianism.³¹⁰ Edwards wanted Parliament to protect people's souls by insisting on conformity and opposing toleration; by permitting spiritual discipline within the church, the Parliament could "preven[t] and remed[y]" "Heresies, Schismes, [and] Confusions" more effectively than it could on its own. By contrast, Thomas Coleman, a more intensely Erastian Presbyterian, rejected church discipline full stop. He wanted "the Magistrates [to] proceed against them [i.e., heresies, schismes, and confusion] by lawes and punishments."³¹¹ Edwards certainly attributed some the widespread religious corruption to a lack of good laws; Parliament's refusal to outlaw Episcopacy entirely and to replace it with another national church polity had allowed the fires of heresy and profanation to spread. However, Edwards conceived of the problem in spiritual as well as political terms, and he feared the spiritual dangers even more than the social ones for if

³⁰⁹Thomas Edwards, Error 148, *Gangreana*, 33, 106.

³¹⁰*Ibid.*, 47, 49.

³¹¹*Ibid.*, *Gangreana*, 114.

the corruption did not first consume the country, which was already embroiled in a civil war, then God's wrath surely would do so:

if a few yeers permission and connivance without exemplary restraint hath had such effects and fruits among us, what would one 20 yeers Toleration of all Religions and Consciences enacted by a Law do? if in this time wherein the Sectaries have been probationers upon the trial of their good behaviour under the hope of a formal Toleration, they have vented so many Errors, Heresies, &c. what will they not fall to, when they are for themselves, and in the possession of a Toleration?... Certainly, as it would be the most provoking sin against God that ever Parliament was guilty of in this Kingdome, like to that of *Jeroboam*, to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth; so it would prove the cause and fountain of all kind of damnable heresies and blasphemies, loose and ungodly practises, bitter and unnatural divisions in families and Churches.³¹²

The threat to the commonwealth and the church was growing; if ministers and magistrates did not respond swiftly, then God would, and God might decide that the British Isles were too diseased to be saved. Edwards warns Parliament "that a connivance and suffering without punishment false Doctrines and Disorders blemishes and dashes the most glorious workes, and provokes God to send judgements." As I have previously mentioned, Presbyterians believed that those judgments would fall most those to whom God had entrusted much: the higher powers established by God. Edwards alludes in addition to the more ambiguous parable of the talents to two stories about God punishing leaders for the sins of others, one story about Solomon, a model of the Christian king, and one story about Eli, a model of a powerful priest. He frames all three of the anecdotes with a stern warning, "God accounts all those errours, heresies, schismes, &c. committed in a land, but let alone, suffered without punishments by those who have authority and power, to be the sins of those who have power, and he will proceed against them as if

³¹²Ibid., 120.

they were the authours of them."³¹³ In imagining the fulfillment of God's wrath, Edwards turns those histories into typologies, prophecies of doom.

Fear was not Edwards' only motivation; love, he tells his readers, also moved him to record, publicize, and thereby oppose scandals:

I desire the good Reader not to be mistaken, or offended at my freedom in this Book, in naming so many persons, and marking some of them, or in my quicknesse and earnestnesse in the manner of speaking things, as if I did it out of bitterness and passion, or out of ill will and malice to the persons of those men; no, ..., tis out of zeal to the truth of God, and compassion to the souls of men destroyed by these errors, proceeding also from sad and serious consideration of the discharge of my duty.³¹⁴

Christian charity, he believed, compelled him to save the souls of fellow Englishmen, and he chose to do so by bringing offensive doctrines and practices into the light, helping people to recognize the danger therein, and encouraging the community to stamp out those threats as well as the toleration policies sustaining them. Unlike Independents, who thought they could absolve the church of any responsibility for the fates of reprobates and heathens, Edwards insisted that the blood of those lost souls remained on Christian hands. In support of his theory, he quotes Hieronymus Zanchius: "the scope of the civill Magistrate and his office, is that he should punish the sinner it selfe, neither doth it looke to the salvation or damnation of the offender." Because Christians could never truly know who was saved and who was damned, the church needed, according to Edwards and Zanchius, to treat all men as potential saints and to discipline them according (i.e. spiritually). According to Edwards, Independents were following the dangerous

³¹³Thomas Edwards, "The Epistle Dedicatory," *Gangreana*, a [irregular pagination]. See also Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent government*, 23.

³¹⁴Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 178.

precedent of prelates, who were accused of using civil inducements, such as horning, when they should have used spiritual ones, such as excommunication; as Zanchius says, "[S]ubstituting the Magistrates power in defect of excommunication, and giving a great deale more civill power for want of spirituall ... is to leave the proper remedies and meanes, and to take up others."³¹⁵ Christians should not, as Independents advised, separate from the company of sinners, leaving the discipline of reprobates and heathen to the civil sword; to do so was irresponsible and uncharitable.³¹⁶ Those pleading for toleration and liberty of conscience were allowing dangerous ideas and practices to proliferate, offending the weak, dividing the church, boasting of their higher holiness, and writing spitefully. Though Presbyterians were frequently accused of those same crimes, their motives and their methods acquit them, as the next section demonstrates.

VI. *"Zeal to the truth of God, and compassion to the souls of men destroyed by ... errors"*³¹⁷: the charitable severity of Thomas Edwards's *"Gangreana"*

Thomas Edwards's *Gangreana* embodies the best of Erastian Presbyterianism. The severe but charitable purpose of the text—to eradicate religious diseases (heresies, errors, blasphemies, profanations) but reform the diseased people (inviting them all to participate in the national church)—is faithful to the serious but salvific and sanctifying purpose of Presbyterianism: proclaiming and protecting true doctrine so people's souls may be saved. The Presbyterian "zeal to the truth of God" cannot be separated from their

³¹⁵Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 169.

³¹⁶Thomas Edwards, *The second part of Gangreana*, 30.

³¹⁷Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 178.

"compassion [f]or the souls of men destroyed by" sin. Respecting Jesus's teaching in Matthew 22: 36-40 that the Law demands love of God and love of neighbor, Presbyterians considered the seemingly negative—obedience, discipline, service, etc.—to be inseparable from the seemingly positive: charity, pleasure, worship, kindness, and peace. Having a relationship with God (church) entails having a relationship with other men (community), but the latter should be an expression of the former. Presbyterian doctrine, like the Law, is adamant and even ruthless, and competing ideas and recalcitrant people may be broken against it, but its purpose, like the Gospel, is both heavenly (teaching people that they need God) and hopeful (helping people to find God and salvation).

Like Presbyterianism, *Gangreana* may at times seem harsh and haphazard, but also like Presbyterianism, it had a daunting task: eliminating false doctrines, stopping scandals, disciplining delinquents, encouraging faithfulness, and preserving church unity. Though Presbyterianism may have seemed stifling to those who wanted liberty of conscience, its scripturally and constitutionally lawful national polity with strong spiritual censures by elders and thorough reforms by magistrates could, according to its advocates, "preven[t] and kee[p] out those Monsters and Disorders, or if any of them begin to arise quickly suppres[s] them, and hinde[r] their growth."³¹⁸ *Gangreana* may at times seem schizophrenic, but Edwards was trying to reach a range of readers and respond to changing circumstances. As dangers presented themselves, Edwards responded. Trying to censure sinners, censor sins, rouse ministers and magistrates, and defend Presbyterianism, Edward's generic adaptations and episodic structure may be interpreted more positively

³¹⁸Ibid., 177.

as sensitive and decorous responses to audiences, objectives, and events. Each task, target, and environment demanded its own form of kindness (i.e. its own form of zeal and compassion) and its kind of form (i.e. negative confession of faith, testimonies, examples, corollaries). Like Presbyterian discipline, which sought to use appropriate censures to move sinners toward repentance, Edwards tried to use appropriate genres to reform readers, genres which I will analyze in the next chapter on Presbyterian poetics.

Edwards judged the satirical edge of the second part of *Gangreana*, for instance, to be necessary in his dispute with John Goodwin. Edwards says, "Let no godly person be offended at my Book, if the stile of it be quick and smart, and if I speak sometimes a little sharply to Cretensis; ... there seems no way left to recover him but to deal a little roundly with him, and lay open his folly."³¹⁹ There is a difference, Edwards suggests, between Goodwin's words and his own; the "sharp[ness]" of *Cretensis* and other works by Independents hurt elect *people* while "sharp[ness]" of Edwards's style is utilized to excise readers' *sins*. Writing with "affection and zeale, yet not with bitterness and bloudinesse," Edwards's aim to heal the harmful, restraining them from subsequent wrongdoing (against God, neighbors, and themselves).³²⁰ Edwards suggests that he is following the biblical commandment to love enemies, unlike the Independents, who, Edwards maintains, treat friends as enemies (i.e. abuse Presbyterians).³²¹ Edwards was not the only Presbyterian to accuse Independents of writing malicious and salacious pamphlets. John Bastwick—one of the Presbyterian martyrs, "the *quondam* fellow-sufferers," discussed in

³¹⁹Thomas Edwards, "To the Christian reader," *The second part of gangreana*, A3r.

³²⁰Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 65.

³²¹*Ibid.*, 109.

the last chapter—criticizes the style and substance of John Goodwin's *Cretensis* and Henry Burton's *Vindication* in *The utter routing of the whole army of all the Independents and Sectaries* (1646) because they use what he calls "unsavoury expressions, as ever people writ ..., also with such elated spirits, and with so course language, as is possible for any men to vent themselves withall, they ordinarily *beginning and continuing their Pamphlets with pride, and ending them with cursing.*"³²²

Notice Bastwick's terminology, especially his reference to "elated spirits"; there is a difference, insists Edwards and Bastwick, between "elated spirits" and "zeal," a difference that lies in the motivation or function. Elated spirits are self-indulgent; Bastwick associates them with pride and cruelty, two characteristics, we should recall, associated with hypocrisy by the commentators of *The Geneva Bible* (1587). Zeal, by contrast, advances God's interests. It is associated with conscience, with the spirit of God working in and through man. Every part of *Gangreana*, including the lists of errors, collections of stories and demonstrative letters, instructional corollaries, and refutations of contentions, was written, Edwards declares, "purely out of conscience, not out of ill-will to any man, but to preserve many from falling, and to recover others before they are gone too far."³²³ Unfortunately, in the period, "elated spirits" sometimes resembled zealous ones, especially to those judging by appearances and doing so ignorantly or dismissively. Presbyterians understood that dilemma. They understood that most Englishmen and women were not equipped to measure Independency and

³²²John Bastwick, *The utter routing of ... Independents*, H3v.

³²³Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 79.

Presbyterianism using Scripture. Presbyterians also noted that many were similarly unable or unwilling to use their right reason to judge the politics and the people promoting them. The widespread failure of weak Christians to discern falsehood from truth convinced Edwards and other Presbyterians, such as William Prynne, that discovering, exposing, and removing falsehood needed to be a priority for the church and for the state. As I will discuss at more length in the next chapter, Prynne's *Histrio-mastix* (1632) dedicates 1,000 pages to arguing that the theatre and most anything connected to it must be avoided by Christians and proscribed (or at least restricted) by magistrates. Since most people could not resist temptations, Prynne and Edwards reasoned, they should not be subjected to unnecessary trials. God might choose to test Christians, and the elect might benefit from those ordeals, but godly magistrates and ministers should not create or tolerate man-made stumbling blocks in godly commonwealths or churches. Prynne's "scourge" and Edwards's heresiology differ from one another formally, but they share common short-term and long-term goals: removing scandals completely so the "eminent" spiritual and political "ruine" of England could be averted.³²⁴

Discerning truth from falsehood was hard (though not impossible) because the two were intermingled and because the two were similar. As I have previously argued, there were genuine commonalities between Independents and Presbyterians or enthusiasts and zealots. Both Presbyterians and Independents valued testifying and purifying, but Presbyterians valued the former more than the latter, and Independents valued the latter

³²⁴William Prynne, frontispiece, *A fresh discovery of some prodigious new wandering-blazing-stars, and firebrands stiling themselves new-lights ... worthy both houses, and all sober-minded Christians serious consideration, detestation, and crying for speedy exemplary justice on the libellers and libels, to prevent our churches, religions, parliaments, kingdomes eminent ruine* (London, 1645), A and *Histrio-mastix* (London 1633), *passim*.

more than the former. That minor difference was exacerbated by their divergent perceptions—and estimations—of order and decency. Both Erastian and high Presbyterians considered it edifying to have people and churches governed by external authorities in the state and in the church. They thought a national church established by law, which worshiped and disciplined uniformly, would promote godliness. Independents disagreed strongly. They trusted their consciences and their church covenants more than assemblies or parliaments. They would not permit anyone outside of their small congregation to dampen their fires or put out their firebrands. Presbyterians, by contrast, were willing to be examined and censured; if their zeal was excessive, they trusted Parliament and the Assembly (and even other disputants) to help them recognize and remedy their personal sin. Presbyterians acknowledged that internal motivations were hard to judge, but there were other ways to fulfill John's commandment to "trie the spirits whether they are of God," to distinguish between "elated spirits" and "zeal": between self-interested and civic-minded enthusiasm.³²⁵ One way was to consider whether the spirit embraced public scrutiny or, like the Gunpowder plotters, hid its plans. Another way was to consider whether the spirit sought to reform and be reformed or to castigate and cast out.

Zealous Presbyterians agreed with Edmund Spenser's statement from *The Faerie Queene* that "it is greater prayse to save, then spill, / And better to reforme, then to cut off the ill."³²⁶ Like Spenser's figure of Zeal in canto nine of book five of *The Faerie Queene*

³²⁵1 John 4:1, *Geneva Bible* (1587).

³²⁶Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1596), 5.10.2, Ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 837.

(1596), Edwards served as a prosecutor before a higher judge (God). However, unlike Spenser's *Zeal*, zealous Presbyterians did not seek the "punishment" of offenders or invite the audience to "abhorre and loathe" them.³²⁷ Presbyterians tried to be more like Mercilla: tempering vengeance with pity. Edwards felt obliged to play the role of a prosecutor, like *Zeal*, but in so doing, he sought to emulate Mercilla.³²⁸ As Mercilla gives a just sentence against Duessa "without grieve or gall" but with "more than needfull naturall remorse," Edwards similarly wanted to evoke a just sentence (from God, Parliament, and ordinary people) against toleration and those either advocating or exploiting it. He endeavored to balance "zeal" with "compassion" in *Gangreana*. In his just but kind response, he was mirroring the behavior that he desired from Parliament. He hoped to procure from them an equitable response to the wayward, one that is neither too permissive (like toleration) nor too severe (like separation).³²⁹

Like John Foxe, whose history of holiness, *The actes and monuments* (1563), attempted, in Damian Nussbaum's words, "to help and to heal," Edwards wanted to cure England, but he decided that the best way to do so was to hinder and to hurt: to stop toleration and to remove heresies and other scandals.³³⁰ Edwards could have catalogued martyrs, producing a cult of new saints, as John Foxe did, but he chose to produce an anti-cult of sinners because it was safer. Because the Roman Catholic Church had

³²⁷Ibid., 5.9.39-50, 824-836.

³²⁸Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 178.

³²⁹Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 5.9. 36-5.10.4, 833-838, see esp. 5.10.4, 838.

³³⁰Damian Nussbaum, "Reviling the saints or reforming the calendar? John Foxe and his 'kalendar' of martyrs" in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England: A Tribute to Patrick Collinson by his Students*, Ed. Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1998), 119.

encouraged people to venerate martyred saints, martyrologies and hagiographies cultivated superstition and idolatry; the models of godliness had become *objects* of devotion rather than *exemplars* of devotion to God.³³¹ Since Presbyterians were trying to purge Protestantism of false worship, Thomas Edwards's refusal to give positive exemplars makes sense. He wanted to eliminate stumbling blocks, not create new ones. Though heresiographers were accused of being uncharitable, not only by their contemporaries but also by scholars today who seemed scandalized that these "persecutors" were "attacking old acquaintances," Edwards leads us to believe that his motivations were merciful.³³² He was being rigorous but not malicious, unwilling to tolerate but not intolerant.

In moderation, Edwards's zeal rivals that which Calvin attributes to the best martyrs; it is "a firm and constant, yet sober godly zeal." It is not like the fickle, "fanatical enthusiasm" of "erring spirits," but it is also not lukewarm. Edwards blames the contagion of heresies and vice in England on the failure of the godly to "sp[eak] out" against "sects and schisms": "I am ready to think that all zeal and love of truth, hath left the earth, and that there's none valiant for the truth; well, this neutrality and indifferency are detestable and against the Covenant....*Be zealous therefore and repent, least because they are lukewarm, God spue them out of his mouth.*"³³³ Edwards identifies with Luther's defense that it is better to be too zealous than neglectful, but according to Edwards and Calvin, Christian "equanimity and moderation," do not preclude civil justice. Christians

³³¹Ibid., 113-136, esp. 120.

³³²Ann Hughes, *Gangreana and the Struggle for the English Revolution*, 77-81.

³³³John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.8.13; Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 142.

may, "bring a pestilent offender to justice, though they know that he can only be punished with death."³³⁴ However, *Gangreana* does not seem interested in prosecuting anyone for being a heretic. When Edwards singles out individuals, he does so as a public service: to prevent people from trusting those who have singled themselves out as truth-tellers when they are really false prophets. Edwards uses *ad hominem* attacks, he tells his readers, to discredit heretics so that weak Christians will not be misled by them; he is doing God's work, not fulfilling a personal vendetta:

I desire the good Reader not to be mistaken, or offended at my freedom in this Book, in naming so many persons, and marking some of them, or in my quicknesse and earnestnesse in the manner of speaking things, as if I did it out of bitterness and passion, or out of ill will and malice to the persons of those men; no, I can say it truly in the presence of God, tis out of zeal to the truth of God, and compassion to the souls of men destroyed by these errours, proceeding also from sad and serious consideration of the discharge of my duty: and I can say it truly of all those men whom I principally lay open, and give the people warning of, that I have had nothing to do with them, and they have not wronged me at all, but as they have wronged the truth, and the glory of God.....I will make use of the words of ... Calvin, written upon the same occasion....I 'am not ignorant, that it will not be well taken by all, that I name these men, But what should I do when as I see three or four seducers, who do lead into destruction many thousands of men, making it their dayly work to overthrow the truth of God, to scatter the poor Church, to spread abominable blasphemies, and to disturb the world with confusion; ought I to be silent or dissemble? O how cruel I should be for the sparing or pleasing of some, to suffer all things to be destroyed and wasted, and not to warn men to take heed.³³⁵

Edwards's rhetoric and his recommendations embody the kind of zeal that Calvin classifies as "zeal for the public good," a zeal that mingles severity with charity but that is uncompromising in advancing the truth (even to the social detriment of individuals) for

³³⁴Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 66; John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.20.

³³⁵Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 178-9.

the spiritual wellbeing of the community. Edwards may have been influenced, as Spenser was, by notions of temperance derived from Aristotle, Aquinas, and Plato, but *Gangreana's* temperance reflects Reformation influences above all.³³⁶

Edwards' zeal was not a ploy for persecution; it was an aid to charitable correction. *Gangreana* is not a *damnatio memoriae*; it neither destroyed reputations nor glorified them, as in the *Book of Martyrs*. Exposing the hypocrisy of Independents and Sectarians did shame them, but that was only one step in the process of regeneration. Because the spiritual threats to England and Scotland were broader than one person, practice, or party, *Gangreana* deviates from typical heresiographies, which analyze "errors on a systematic sect-by-sect basis."³³⁷ Preventing public scandal was good, but promoting scriptural doctrines was better. Like other heresiographers, Edwards was "convinced of the links between erroneous doctrine and immoral life"; he believed that the former often led to the latter.³³⁸ Yet people paid more attention to the latter than the former, so he was content to work backwards: from action to belief, just as he was content to wring truth from falsehood.

In *The Schoolhouse of Abuse*, which I will analyze in the next chapter, Stephen Gosson had cautioned that "where hony and gall are mixed, it will be hard to sever the one from the other"; Edwards heeded Gosson's warning by omitting pleasure from his

³³⁶Ronald A. Horton, "Aristotle and his commentators," *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 59; see also Joel B. Altman, "justice and equity," *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, 415.

³³⁷Ann Hughes, *Gangreana and the Struggle for the English Revolution*, 84.

³³⁸*Ibid.*, 89.

text. Without "hony," the "gall" was easy to recognize. The threat of faulty discrimination remained, however. Without tangible and vivid descriptions of the abominations, readers might fail to perceive the immediacy and severity of the threats. But Edwards' recourse—listing bad doctrines, naming vicious men, reproaching their actions, and prophesying doom for all who failed to heed his admonitions—offended many. For example, it led Goodwin to accuse Edwards and his coreligionists of having "carnall ends": "desires" for revenge and power.³³⁹ His disgust with Edwards's seemingly sick pleasure in exposing the alleged sins of others echoes the calumnious response of John Robinson in *A justification of separation* (1611 and 1639) to Richard Bernard's *The separatists schism*.³⁴⁰ Robinson remarks that Bernard's text is full of the "gall of bitterness"; Robinson accused the moderate reformer of lying when he claims "not [to] oppose us [out] of hatred or mallice, nor of purpose to vex us, or to encrease our afflictions."³⁴¹ John Goodwin, who presents Edwards and *Gangreana* as a much bigger threat to Englishmen than separation and toleration, recycles Robinson's claim that zealous polemics, such as those by Bernard and the later one by Edwards, are dangerous because they are excessive and spiteful.³⁴² Goodwin argues that the Presbyterian habit of being "contentious" and

³³⁹John Goodwin, *Cretensis*, 17.

³⁴⁰John Goodwin, *Cretensis*, 19. According to Richard L. Greaves, "Bernard, Richard," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn. (Oct. 2009), para. 3, Bernard's *The separatists schism* is not extant, but it was written before 1608 when Henry Ainsworth's reply to it, *Counterpoyson*, was published.

³⁴¹John Robinson, *A justification of separation* (London, 1611 and 1639), 70-71.

³⁴²John Goodwin, *Antapologesiates antapologias*, 18-19; John Robinson, *A justification of separation*, 3-4.

"mischievous" with tender consciences is more divisive than separatism.³⁴³ These negative responses to *Gangreana* and similar Presbyterian polemics are a microcosm of the frequent misperception and rejection of Presbyterianism in mid-seventeenth century Britain.

The downfall of Presbyterianism was its inability to convince the nation that their harsh measures, whether ecclesiastical or literary, were remedies. If they had softened their message, then they may have attracted allies rather than enemies. As I will discuss in the next chapter, they could have followed Lucretius's method of producing "profitable pleasure," which he compared to sweetening the rim of a glass containing "the bitter juice of the wormwood."³⁴⁴ Revisionist historians tell us that the common people probably embraced the Sunday recreations and ceremonial practices associated with Laudianism because they were familiar, pleasurable, communal, and comforting.³⁴⁵ Though Presbyterian sought to create a sense of community and charity, it stressed the dangers of not doing so more than the benefits of so doing. Their "zeal for the truth" led Presbyterians to discourage any perception and any practice that might be superstitious. Obeying God out of fear was safer, they thought, than obeying God (or man!) with the

³⁴³John Robinson, *Antapologesitates antapologias*, 114-115.

³⁴⁴Qtd. in Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric and poetry in renaissance: a study of rhetorical terms in English renaissance literary criticism*, Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, Vol. 41 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), 114.

³⁴⁵Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 355, 387; Kenneth Fincham, *The Early Stuart Church: 1603-1642* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) especially the following articles: Judith Maltby, "By this Book': Parishioners, the Prayer Book and the Established Church," 115-138, esp. 122-127 and Peter Lake, "The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity, and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s," 161-186, *passim*.

expectation of reward. As the next chapter will demonstrate, Edwards tried to protect the readers of *Gangreana* by restraining his modes of persuasion; he avoided pleasurable forms and tempting tactics— such as intoxicating eloquence, scholastic vanity, and fiction—that could lead to sin. The severity of his form, however, made him vulnerable to charges of malice and immoderation. Presbyterian admonitions, such as *Gangreana*, seemed to some, to be "grapes of gall" and "poyson of Dragons"—uncharitable displays of vainglory, legalism, and cruelty—though they were intended to be a "soveraigne Antidote to cure and expell poysons, by correcting, qualifying, binding them, & laying open the Errours, Heresies, &c. their evill, danger."³⁴⁶ However, Presbyterians, such as Edwards, followed Luther in conceiving of "reproaches and blasphemies" as joyful signs that they were pleasing God rather than "the devil": "I am certain, saith Luther, that the truth of God cannot be rightly handled and maintained without envy and danger, and this is the only signe that it hath been rightly handled, if it offend."³⁴⁷ To be a successful Presbyterian, insists Edwards, he had to "offend."

³⁴⁶Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 130-131.

³⁴⁷Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, sig. B3r-v.

CHAPTER 4: Parabolic Polemic: Presbyterian Rhetoric and Poetics

I. Overview

Presbyterian polemicists used methods that were prone to abuse, recuperating rhetoric and poesy for moral ends. Though they feared that they would be unsuccessful in curbing corruption with corrupt instruments, they feared neglecting their Christian duty more than failing in persuasive or poetic pursuits. Certain that evil would continue to spread and that God would punish those who permitted it to happen, Presbyterians took risks in their written and spoken performances, risks that made them seem hypocritical when they were trying to be faithful. This chapter will consider how Thomas Edwards and William Prynne, among others, used rhetoric and poesy to persuade and coerce so that audiences would embrace true doctrine and flee error. Unlike the philosophers, orators, and poets, who use one method—presenting the truth in boring precepts, "affirm[ing]" [it] with an argument," or "embod[ying] it with a fiction," respectively—Presbyterians combined precepts, proofs, and parables to communicate the truth; they use each to improve and contain the other.³⁴⁸

Moralists who attempt to combine philosophical, rhetorical, and poetic methods are sometimes daunted by the challenge of controlling audience's affections, fancy, and misconceptions. Normative writers needed to reach people's emotions as well as minds without encouraging vice rather than virtue and opinion rather than right reason. An even

³⁴⁸Michael Mack, *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America P, 2004), 39-40.

more vexing challenge for Presbyterians polemicists was their further aim to encourage *human* virtue rather than *godly* virtue. Forms that stimulated feelings and thought, inviting the audience to engage and respond, were ideal for instructing, but they were also volatile. They could have unintended consequences when either audiences or authors ceased to be constrained by their consciences or, in the case of Presbyterian polemic, governed by devotion to God and the public good.

Presbyterian moderation is characterized by ambivalence, ambivalence about rhetorical strategies as well as strategies for interpreting Scripture, purifying ordinances, governing the visible church, and censuring reprobates. The Presbyterian approach to polemic was similar to the Presbyterian approach to preaching, worship, polity, and discipline: the form varied, but the function did not. Each kind was measured by its decorum and its consequences. Presbyterians embraced many genres but rejected the malicious and lascivious use of them. Because Presbyterians prioritized doctrine, they were zealous about truth-telling; as this chapter will discuss, that tendency led them to privilege real life accounts over fictions, but Presbyterians acknowledged that imaginative stories could convey truths as well. They rejected allegorical interpretations of Scripture, but Presbyterians were willing to use instructive parables, examples, figures, and types when necessity dictated. Always mindful of the perils not only of poesy but also of rhetoric and logic, Presbyterians used them purposefully and prudently.

As you may recall, Presbyterians shared values—but not priorities—with Episcopalians and Independents; similarly, they shared instruments and objectives—but not priorities or perspectives—with philosophers, poets, and orators. Without rejecting either reason or imagination, Presbyterians acknowledged the limitations of both (in

teaching true doctrine and rightly administering discipline). Polemical arguments were especially problematic as instruments of spiritual conversion and correction because they tended to be probable, not absolute; they retained a certain amount of subjective bias. The success of rhetorical arguments (enthymemes) depended on shared assumptions, and Presbyterians, for instance, did not expect the general public to share their spiritual assumptions. The disavowal of true doctrine and safe religious practice in England was so widespread in 1645 that many men (not just Thomas Edwards) dedicated themselves to compiling and circulating heresiologies. Among the heresiologies of the moment, however, *Gangreana* is unique. It combines observation and persuasion in especially provocative but spiritually permissible ways.

Presbyterians recognized that passionate appeals were essential to moving God (to have mercy) and heretics (to embrace truth and reject falsehood). Knowing the truth (and discerning it from falsehood) was only the first step; embracing it was the next; and being faithful to the truth was a never-ending journey. Arguments founded upon logic and appealing to right reason might persuade some people, but knowledge alone could not justify or sanctify people. Presbyterians agreed with Sir Philip Sidney's statement in *A Defence of Poetry*, "[O]ur erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it."³⁴⁹ Without rejecting right reason, Sir Philip Sidney acknowledged its limitations in moving men. He thought man's divine power to create art was more theologically useful than the book of nature; the poet could, Sidney suggests, accommodate God to man, compensating for humans' "infected will."

³⁴⁹Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry* (written 1579 and published 1595), Ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 25.

Francis Bacon also saw the imagination as a spiritual aid: "'in matters of faith and religion our imagination raises itself above our reason' since 'divine grace uses the motions of the imagination as an instrument of illumination, just as it uses the motions of the will as an instrument of virtue; which is the reason why religion ever sought access to the mind by similitudes, types, parables, visions, dreams.'" ³⁵⁰ Participating in the biblical storytelling tradition, Presbyterians, like apologists for fiction, such as Philip Sidney, recognized that parables effectively promote "the amendment of life." Presbyterians worried, however, that people might not interpret parables correctly or amend their lives appropriately: in the right way and for the right reasons. The story in Scripture of the prophet Nathan using an allegory to instruct King David, a story that Sir Philip Sidney recalls in the *A Defence of Poetry*, reminds us that parables must be tied to precepts (either implicitly or explicitly). ³⁵¹ Nathan was only successful in using allegory to discipline David both because David's interpretation of the allegory aligned with Nathan's and because Nathan framed the story with a moral. Nathan helped David to recognize the lesson. Scripture tends to pair stories with teachings, and Presbyterian polemic does so as well.

Presbyterians did not reject philosophy, rhetoric, or art; they judged them by their ability to inculcate faith in—and obedience to—God. In the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Calvin authorizes the use of "histories and events" "in teaching and admonishing," but he remains wary of "images and bodies." Like Calvin, William Prynne thought art without clear referents and morals would bring pleasure rather than

³⁵⁰Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 5.1, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols, ed. James Spedding (London: Longman, 1868), 4.405-6, qtd. in Mack, *Sidney's Poetics*, 62.

³⁵¹Michael Mack, *Sidney's Poetics*, 39; Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, 42.

edification, and both thought that the passions more frequently led to sin than to sanctification.³⁵² In the last chapter, I argued that Edwards justified his zealous rhetoric in *Gangreana* as necessary and godly. He tried to turn error into truth by making error seem as scary as it really is. But fear and zeal, for Edwards, were instruments, not objectives. To protect himself and his readers from the dangers of rhetoric, Edwards used many different strategies in *Gangreana*, strategies that complemented and constrained one another. The challenge of Presbyterian polemicists was to harness the power of passion and imagination without losing control of themselves or their readers.

II. "A bravely contending love": the rhetoric of "*Gangreana*"³⁵³

Unlike Scholastics, who, according to Petrarch, lost touch with their original aim—to *reveal* the truth, in *Gangreana*, Edwards remains focused on his purpose: to move people to embrace readers the truth and act on it.³⁵⁴ Though Edwards never lost sight of the truth, his project was to convey the truth, not find it. Edwards's content may have been philosophical (i.e. the truth), but his aim was rhetorical: persuasion. Ramus suggested that although rhetoric was itself incapable of *developing* moral content, it was capable of *delivering* the truth effectively, ensuring that the truth would be not only

³⁵²John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.11-12.

³⁵³Martin Luther, *Select works of Martin Luther*, Trans. Rev. Henry Cole, Vol. 3 of 3 (London, 1826), 521, 523.

³⁵⁴Francis Petrarch, "To Tomasso da Messina," *Familiar Letters*, Ed. and trans. James Harvey Robinson (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1898), 218; this work is reproduced in the Hanover Historical Texts Project <<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/petrarch/pet08.htm>>

delivered but also embraced.³⁵⁵ The danger with rhetoric, however, was that it could also undermine the truth; it could convey falsehood in the guise of truth, mingle falsehood and truth, or lead people to value the ornament over the argument.

That popular conceit of rhetoric as ornament, however, is one that conflates rhetoric with the poetic; it is one that reduces Cicero's optimistic theory that rhetoric can teach delight and move—*docere, delectare, et moveo*—to a pessimistic view that rhetoric brings pleasure and passion but not edification. The fear that rhetoric yields pleasure rather than belief in the truth led some sixteenth-century theorists not only to separate rhetoric and dialectic but also to strip rhetoric of its ties to reason.³⁵⁶ This reduction of rhetoric to style and delivery followed the medieval tradition of equating the "honeyed speech" of the poetic with rhetoric, a tradition that led some to map their anxieties about the poetic onto rhetoric. Fear that oratorical ornaments, such as fictions, may deceive led Rodolphus Agricola and Peter Ramus, among others, to advocate that arguments should not be sweetened with pleasing sounds and fanciful comparisons.³⁵⁷ That tendency, which divorced instruments of *inventio*, such as *exemplum*, from instruments of *elocutio*, such as metaphor, may help to explain why certain writers, such as Thomas Edwards, amplified their lessons with historical stories and not with imaginative allegories. It may,

³⁵⁵Water J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: from the arts of discourse to the art of reason* (1958) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), *passim*, especially 242, 284.

³⁵⁶Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric and poetry in the renaissance: a study of rhetorical terms in English renaissance literary criticism*, Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature, Vol. 41 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), 50-51.

³⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 51, 57.

for instance, explain why Edwards insists on proving that his anecdotes in *Gangreana* retell actual events instead of calling to mind possible scenarios as might a play, picture, or poem.

Yet *Gangreana* is not written in a Ramist plain style, either. The Ramist method may leave traces in Edwards' use of numbers to structure his material and in his obsession with ocular proof, but no one would label the unwieldy *Gangreana* as clear and concise. Edwards certainly sought to distance himself from empty or vain rhetoric, and he may have been nervous about rhetoric's amorality (its utility for false as well as true ends). Though Edwards protests that he is using plain speaking rather than rhetoric, what he really means is that he is not using those stylistic ornaments to which Ramus had reduced rhetoric.³⁵⁸ For instance, he contrasts what he considers to be John Goodwin's shameful and self-indulgent habit of "stuffing [his] pages with great swelling words, and filling whose leavs with nothing but jeers and multitude of six footed words instead of Reasons and Arguments" with his loving and restrained response that puts aside "reproaching and scoffing" to summarize "all the Errours and strange wayes *Crestensis* holds and hath walked in" under one "head": "that *Cretensis* hath an hereticall wit, and holds many wicked opinions" that he could only "safely enjoy" as an Independent because "the Presbyterian way" would seek to reform his "strange opinions" and prevent their propagation. For Edwards, both Christian charity and brevity demanded that he avoid satire and include only remarks that would spark repentance in Goodwin and enabled

³⁵⁸ Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 53, 55.

"godly weak Christians" to "know him [Goodwin] as a dangerous erroneous man, and avoid him."³⁵⁹

Edwards appreciated classical rhetoric's powers of persuasion. Like those who sought both to redeem and restrain poetry by allegorizing it, Edwards sought both to redeem and to restrain rhetoric by inverting it. He turned positive teachings into confessions of heresy, dialogic letter writing into depositions, testimonial examples into cautionary tales, and deductive reasoning into dialogue. *Gangreana* is more interested in convincing readers to distrust Separatists, detest Independency, and trust Presbyterians than in conveying theology (although he was doing that implicitly as well). The work of *Gangreana* is *disciplina*, not *doctrina*. Edwards persuades people to act while cautioning them not to attribute their salvation to those actions. Harnessing rhetoric, Edwards hoped to convince readers to repent, convince leaders to settle Presbyterian polity immediately, and convince God to spare him and Britain while externalizing the truth so that people would credit God, rather than man, with their salvation.

Presbyterians conceived of fear as a necessary antidote to pride and a useful stimulant of sanctification, encouraging people to turn away from their sins and turn toward God. Thomas Edwards uses fear to foster repentance in his readers, but he does not espouse a works-based theology in which personal repentance or atonement are salvific. Presbyterians conceived of sorrow for sins and eagerness for reconciliation as signs of "newness of life," as inevitable responses to salvation, which is merited solely by the atonement of Christ. In his chapter on repentance in *The Institutes of Christian*

³⁵⁹Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 31-32.

Religion, Calvin emphasizes that faith must precede repentance, but faith, without repentance is dead:

The substance of the Gospel is, not without reason, said to be comprised in 'repentance and remission of sins.' ... [B]oth are conferred on us by Christ, and we obtain both by faith, that is, newness of life and gratuitous reconciliation. ... But our immediate transition will be from faith to repentance; because, ... man is justified by faith alone and mere pardon, and yet that real sanctity of life (so to speak) is not separate from the gratuitous imputation of righteousness. Now it ought not to be doubted that repentance not only immediately follows faith, but is produced by it. For since pardon, or remission, is offered by the preaching of the Gospel, in order that the sinner, liberated from the tyranny of Satan, from the yoke of sin, and the miserable servitude of his vices, may remove into the kingdom of God; no one can embrace the grace of the Gospel, but he must depart from the errors of his former life, enter into the right way, and devote all of his attention to the exercise of repentance. Those who imagine that repentance rather precedes faith, than is produced by it, as fruit by a tree, has never been acquainted with its power.³⁶⁰

Calvin's discussion of repentance is worth quoting at length because it stresses the true sequence of salvation—that faith is a gift of grace that precedes repentance—without undermining the necessity of repentance: that saints "*must depart from the errors of [their] former life.*"³⁶¹ That connection between justification and sanctification helps us understand why Presbyterians, who were in my estimation more concerned with the former than the latter, were still eager to promote the latter: because the two were for all intents and purposes inseparable. Though the principal work of saving souls, justification, had already been accomplished by Christ and Christ alone, God chose to use people to impute Christ's righteousness to people and to encourage them to "embrace the Gospel": to "depart from the errors of [their] former life, enter into the right way, and devote all of

³⁶⁰John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1, 64-65

³⁶¹*Ibid.*, emphasis mine.

their attention to the exercise of repentance."³⁶² Even though Edwards believed himself to be already justified (i.e. saved), when he gained "newness of life," he also gained the obligation to help others gain it as well; he had a duty to scare Christians, if needed, so that their trees (faith) would yield fruit (works), not succumb to draught or pestilence.

Presbyterians judged emotional and aesthetic appeals to be unwieldy instruments warranting not only testing and caution but also use. Richard Hooker's warnings concerning zeal and fear are applicable here:

Zeal, unless it be rightly guided, when it endeavoreth most busily to please God, forceth upon him those unseasonable offices which please him not.... Fear, on the other side, if it have not the light of true understanding concerning God, wherewith to be moderated, breedeth likewise Superstition.... Superstition is, when things are either abhorred or observed with a zealous or fearful, but erroneous relation to God.³⁶³

Note Hooker's caveats: that zeal may be "rightly guided" and fear may "be moderated."

Although Hooker's aim was to discourage zeal and fear because they were motivating high Presbyterians, such as Walter Travers and Thomas Cartwright, to disturb the church and the state, Hooker admits that affections are only superstitious when they are "erroneous[ly] relat[ed] to God," when they are scandalous and support opinion rather than truth. Thomas Edwards used that same measure—how something is related to God—to judge not only human affections, such as the enthusiasm or trepidation that he or his readers may experience, but also the literary techniques used in *Gangreana*, such as the negative lists, illustrative narrations, evidentiary letters, and emphatic corollaries.

³⁶²Ibid.

³⁶³Richard Hooker, *The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr. Richard Hooker, containing eight books of the laws of ecclesiastical polity*, Book 5, Vol. 2 of 3 (Oxford, 1793), 17, 18.

As long as those forms were edifying, they were allowable. The Presbyterian contempt for ceremonies and church ornaments, which many Carolinians found edifying, was predicated upon the perceived corruption of those forms: that they had (or would) breed superstition. In *Gangreana*, Edwards is careful to omit sources of superstition, such as positive parables. Edwards avoided the hazards of hagiography and martyrology by recounting tales of heretics rather than saints and by using examples to move the mind as well as inspire the imagination. Even though John Foxe's *Book of martyrs* had successfully converted a Catholic tradition to Protestant ends, it—like the ceremonies retained within the Church of England—retained a superstitious potential. To gain religious inspiration from martyrs' lives, readers either had to allegorize the histories, associating the miraculous fortitude of the martyrs with God's power, or they had to imitate them, thereby following habit rather than reason. If readers did not imagine the martyrs to be mirrors of God, then they might worship the martyrs themselves rather than the divine; readers might attribute more to human agency than Calvinist theology was willing to concede. Like St. Augustine, Edwards wanted readers to be cautious and critical, so he followed Augustine's advice and avoided panegyric (not only to protect himself from ambition but also to protect his audience from idolatry). Edwards also tried to prevent the kind of identification and sympathy that readers commonly feel as they comprehend narratives. He understood that stories naturally entertain humans because we enjoy living vicariously through the protagonists, but Edwards does not allow that to happen. He avoids direct discourse and keeps the accounts short enough that readers cannot lose their connection to reason and reality. Including cautionary examples rather

than exemplary ones and historical accounts rather than fictions, *Gangreana* discourages idolatry, imitation, opinion, and presumption.

However, the intellect could be as dangerous as the imagination. Even theologians who esteemed reason, such as Richard Hooker or Theodore B  za, acknowledged the limits of natural law and man's will. They were as resigned as fundamentalists to humans' weak capacity to comprehend God, and they also took repressive measures to protect weak Christians. The Church of England, for example, prohibited homilies on, and disputes of, contentious theological points. That restriction was designed, I think, to protect not only the settled religion and the state but also the souls of those who might be scandalized by doctrines they could not understand. Defending his "Directions concerning preachers" (1622), Archbishop Abbot blames the "defection from our religion, both to popery and anabaptism, or other points of separation," on ambitious and satirical sermons:

[S]oaring up in points of divinity, too deep for the capacity of the people, or a mustering up of much reading, or a displaying of their own wit, or an ignorant meddling with civil matters, ... or a venting of their own distastes, or a smoothing up of those idle fancies which in this blessed time of a long peace do boil in the brains of unadvised people; or lastly, a rude or undecent railing ... against the persons of papists and puritans.³⁶⁴

As Edward Cardwell's note to this passage suggests, Francis Bacon also believed that exposing simple people to "controversies and all kinds of doctrine" is a "great inconvenience and peril." Bacon rebukes zealous reformers for seeking to introduce scandals through rigorous sermons and controversies, "They say no part of the counsel of God is to be suppressed, nor the people defrauded; so as the difference which the apostle

³⁶⁴Edward Cardwell, *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England*, Vol. 2 of 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1839), 152-153.

makes between milk and strong meat is confounded; and his precept that the weak be not admitted unto questions and controversies, taketh no place."³⁶⁵ Thomas Edwards and other Presbyterians shared Abbot and Bacon's fear of scandal; they, too, sought to limit the doctrines to which ordinary people were exposed. They, too, sought to avoid contentions. Part one of *Gangreana* does not include long-winded refutations of Independent or Sectarian premises or pamphlets. When Presbyterians were forced into a contention, however, they fought bravely, not only to protect themselves but also to protect Presbyterianism and England. The second part of *Gangreana*, for instance, includes a long refutation of John Goodwin's *Cretensis*; Goodwin had made the first swing, but Edwards fought back. Nevertheless, the contention was contained. Edwards did not change the essential structure of *Gangreana*. Edwards continued to use—but not abuse—emotion, imagination, and argument.

Paradoxically, to convince Parliament and the people that England needed to be shielded from scandalous doctrines and deeds, Presbyterians sometimes needed to mention the scandals. *Gangreana* reproduces the heresies, errors, blasphemies, and profanations so that readers will identify them as evil, connect wrong thinking with wrongdoing, recognize the hypocrisy of Independents and Sectarians who claim greater piety, realize why toleration is dangerous, and return "to the communion of the Reformed Churches," if they have separated from them.³⁶⁶ Edwards wanted to shield people from false doctrines, not true ones, but he needed to expose the sin before he could encourage

³⁶⁵Francis Bacon, *Works*, Vol. 2, 521 qtd. in Edward Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, Vol. 2, 152-153.

³⁶⁶Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 76.

sanctification. Edwards sympathized with the appeal for clarity made by Dr. Reynolds and the other reformers at the Hampton Court Conference, who asked King James "that the Booke of Articles of Religion, concluded in 1562 might bee explained in places obscure; and enlarged where some things were defective."³⁶⁷

Presbyterians sought a middle ground between the Church of England's tendency to think for the people and the Independent congregations' tendency to let people's minds range widely. Presbyterians wanted to settle a national church in which true doctrine was explained fully and embraced knowingly and false doctrine was both rejected strongly and removed completely from circulation. To extend Bacon's metaphor, bad teachers in the 1640s were being allowed to feed racid "meat" to the people; Edwards and other Presbyterians wanted to gather it up (using *Gangreana*'s catalogues and other heresiologies), to show (through *Gangreana*'s stories) that it was indeed unsafe to eat, and to provide antidotes (through *Gangeana*'s corollaries) to heal them. Edwards thought that the best defense was a strong offense, so he "discover[ed]" scandals and discussed them. That approach followed the precedents not only of classical heresiologies but also of more contemporary scourges, such as William Prynne's *Histrion-mastix* (1633), which I will discuss briefly later.

Instruments of repentance or "new life," as Calvin phrases it, including moderate fear and zeal "rightly guided," to borrow Hooker's language, may cause some pain, but they may also prevent pain that is exceedingly worse.³⁶⁸ Like the Nehushtan, the bronze snake used to cure the Israelites of snakebites, Edwards' cure in *Gangreana* resembles the

³⁶⁷William Barlow, *The summe and substance of the conference* (London, 1604), 24.

³⁶⁸John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.15.

source of the disease. *Gangreana* lists the bad doctrines in simple, declarative statements, without immediate explanations or refutations; it uses examples (rhetoric) instead of syllogisms (logic); and it targets particular people with a sharpness associated with satire and considered by many (both then and now) to be uncharitable.³⁶⁹ However, like the *Nehushtan*, *Gangreana* was intended for a particular time only: when "the evil of th[e] times" requires immediate action and the use of unusual methods in curbing God's wrath. Edwards likens his moment of crisis to those recorded in Jeremiah 3:8 and 36:2, Ezekial 2:9-10, Daniel 5:5, and Zechariah 5:2-3, when God was ready to punish his people severely so that they would repent. The latter part of that statement is critical for defending *Gangreana* and Presbyterian polemic more broadly. As "sharp" as *Gangraeana* seems to Goodwin and to critics today, its severity is gentler, Edwards protests, than God's punishments. Following Calvin's distinction between "immoderate severity" whose "zeal for righteousness" destroys edification and the moderate severity that characterizes the zeal with which Christians both spur themselves to repentance and remove scandals, Edwards claims that his "Zeale to the Glory of God" and "earnest[ness] for the preservation of purity of doctrine, holinesse of life and peace," which are for "the good" and unity "of the Church," should not be mistaken for "violence of Spirit, cruelty, or ill will to the men" whom he reproves out of "love and respect."³⁷⁰ Separatists, who were reviving the "zeal for righteousness" of the Arians and Donatists, were, according to

³⁶⁹See Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 130-131.

³⁷⁰John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.13; Albert Rilliet, *Calvin and Servetus: the reformer's share in the trial of Michael Servetus* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1846), 196; Thomas Edwards, *Reasons against independent government of particular congregations*, 53-54.

Edwards, the true hypocrites. Their toleration, *Gangreana* suggests, is the true threat to Christian charity.

Thomas Edwards's use of rhetoric is as complicated as his use of affections. Like the Elizabethan humanist, Lodowick Bryskett, he judged rhetoric to be inferior to logic in discerning truth from falsehood but recognized that appeals to experience could be more equitable, edifying, and encouraging than rational proofs of theological claims. Emotions and rhetoric, they thought, can be more "profitable" in a "particular situation" than knowledge and logic.³⁷¹ Edwards uses his own "stories" (i.e. his examples) to supplement his rational appeals, such as the opening catalogues of errors that function like negative confessions of faith and his corollaries that make deductive arguments. He sought to exploit the persuasiveness of stories with popular audiences; he learned from the success of Independents and Sectarians in circulating stories about their piety and about Presbyterian impiety, and he adapted (or reformed) their approach. The success of Independent rhetoric taught Edwards that "[s]uch discoveries ... are a more sensible practicall way of confutation of the Sectaries to the body of the people of the Kingdome, then so many Syllogismes and arguments" because "they can understand these when they cannot perceive an argument."³⁷² Edwards modeled his own person on Luther, and Edwards is echoing Luther when he remarks on the futility of disputes in correcting the wayward. In his commentary on Psalm 10, Luther says, "we are not to act at random with

³⁷¹Edward Armstrong, *A Ciceronian sunburn: a Tudor dialogue on humanistic rhetoric and civic poetics* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 20-21.

³⁷²Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, "To the Christian Reader," sig. Av-A2r, 79-80.

the ungodly and with heretics, after the manner of philosophical disputers; they are not to be overcome with the force of arguments, nor to be persuaded by arguments, nor to be taken by quoted authorities"; he goes on to say that even "eloquence" is useless with unreceptive audiences. That does not mean, however, that the godly should despair and cease fighting to reform the elect and to restrain the ungodly. Rather, God's servants should seek to "overcome" the recalcitrant and endure personal suffering with "a bravely contending love."³⁷³

Luther's union of opposites—of courage and surrender, of ostentation and humility, of combating and caring—appealed to Edwards, who also believed that cruelty and compassion are inseparable in the struggle between the wicked and the righteous. That the holy both resist and invite the unholy is no surprise; warring impulses perpetually battle within each reformed person as well. In an explanatory analogue, Luther suggests that the body impatiently laments while the spirit patiently "endures and waits."³⁷⁴ As always, Luther emphasizes that all power to save the lost and comfort the persecuted must come from God; without grace, man's works are worse than futile: they are scandalous. This *sola fide* philosophy did not, as some wrongly assume, preclude action; it did, however, change the nature and the object of the action. Since only God could pull down error and lift up truth, the godly were compelled to appeal to God as David does in Psalm 10, saying: "Arise, O Lorde God: lift vp thine hande: forget not the poore. Wherefore doeth the wicked contemne God? he saith in his heart, Thou wilt not

³⁷³Martin Luther, *Select works of Martin Luther*, Trans. Rev. Henry Cole, Vol. 3 of 3 (London, 1826), 521, 523.

³⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 523.

regard."³⁷⁵ "Humble crying" can sway both God and man, Luther tells us. Though Luther tried to remind his readers that God is the only true actor in the drama of salvation, he nevertheless invited his readers to take the stage with God, interceding with God on behalf of man and interceding with man on behalf of God.³⁷⁶ When Edwards cites this Lutheran passage, then, he is not merely defending his style; he is also suggesting that *Gangreana* is directed toward God and man. *Gangreana* is an appeal to God as well as men; modeling repentance, it serves as a pattern of behavior as well as a collection of lessons. *Gangreana* is a spiritual act as well as a lesson in how to act; it is both a supernatural and a social intervention. It is *prex* or *oratio* (prayer or speech) as well as *sermo* or *disputatio* (conversation or dispute). It seeks to sway God and man as well as convey the truth.

The mixture of forms within *Gangreana*, much like the generic variety of *The faerie queene*, demonstrates Edwards's desire to be moderate without being neutral. Rather than adhering to the conventions associated with literary kinds, Edwards distills what he deems most useful from each genre and then joins it with other forms so that each can reinforce and temper the other; the entire product is thus stronger and safer than any individual part. First, he provides a list of false doctrines; instead of following the conventions of heresiologies, such as chronicling sects and differentiating them from one another and from the truth, *Gangreana*'s catalogue is general and proscriptive. Rather than combating error with truth, which could confuse less discerning readers or lead to an impasse between competing confessional identities, Edwards seeks to eliminate the

³⁷⁵"Psalm 10: 12-13" in *Geneva Bible*.

³⁷⁶Martin Luther, *Select works of Martin Luther*, Vol. 3, 523; Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 176.

enemy *before* introducing the new alliance. To use a different figure of speech, *Gangreana* tills the spiritual soil in England so that the new religious settlement can thrive once it is planted. Edwards uses three different figures to explain his "offense is defense" strategy, and the variety of figures is itself revealing. The first he borrows from Luther. As a mighty fortress "must" be "not only buil[t] up, but also defend[ed]," ministers like him must protect the truth as well as promote it. *Gangreana* seeks to protect the church and all English souls from the assaults of heretical ideas and misleading examples. The second figure is commonplace: Edwards compares his duty (and that of other ministers) to a parent's. Just as a good parent provides nourishing food to strengthen her children, Edwards says, that parent will prevent poisons from killing them. *Gangreana* is full of antivenin intended both to counteract the toxins and inoculate the weak. In the third figure, Edwards declares the removal of "poysonous errors" to be as noble a calling as "teach[ing] to live piously and innocently." With this aphorism, Edwards protects his own reputation; his disciplinary work is as important as the educational work of others. This borrowing from Origin is telling. Origin was infamous for allegorizing scripture; some of *Gangreana's* heretics were following Origin's precedent. When Edwards uses Origin's aphorism to oppose Origin's imitators, he is truly turning his enemy's weapons against them. There are at least two reasons why Edwards may use three different figures to illustrate one argument. He may be following the orator's impulse to find as many means of persuasion as possible. He may also have selected those three references (to a fortress, to a parent, and to a minister's office) to signify three spheres of society: government, family, and church. In so doing, he may be reinforcing his argument that a threat in one sphere is a threat to all spheres. Toleration

fosters the chaos in which rebellion, death, and damnation reign. Conversely, eliminating false doctrine protects the weak socially, physically, and spiritually. Believing that "all Reformation is in vain" when "wicked opinions" run loose, Edwards may be suggesting that years of struggle and bloodshed will be wasted if Parliament does not heed his warning. He wants his readers to understand that the stakes are high.³⁷⁷

Edwards' tendency in *Gangreana* to emphasize connections between spheres may confuse readers who do not understand Edwards' nuanced theories of doctrine, church government, civil authority, and domestic power. In *Antapologia*, Edwards distinguishes between the power of church leaders, which is contingent, and the power of heads of state and family, which is not: "parents and sheapheards, are absolutely parents and shepheardes, be they good or evil; but spirituall parents are no longer so then they doe accordingly behave themselves."³⁷⁸ Thus, Edwards can justify a zero-tolerance policy for ministers but a polity of compromise in the Parliament and with the prince. If we do not understand Edwards' arguments and aims, we will misjudge his methods. The unyielding, unlikable qualities of Edwards' forms are defensible because he thinks more pliable, pleasant ones are also more dangerous. Edwards' methods appear reasonable when they are situated historically and theoretically and when they are seen as working in conjunction with one another. To adapt and extend Jonson's figure of the broken compass, Edwards picked up his compass and drew overlapping circles; by transforming and uniting genres, Edwards lessened the likelihood that his instrument would fail.

³⁷⁷Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 154.

³⁷⁸Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 122.

Let's briefly review the textual evidence that Edwards did, as I suggest, transform and unite the genres in *Gangreana*. This discussion is intended to supplement the magisterial study, *Gangreana and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (2004) by Ann Hughes. In her chapter on *Gangreana* literary kinds, Hughes focuses on its participation in—and deviation from— formal traditions, such as classical heresiology, as well as emerging forms, such as heresiographies by Ephraim Pagitt [also spelled Pagit and Pagett] and William Prynne, sermons against Sectarians, "newsbooks," and "other cheap forms," including "the semi-fictional denunciations of sectarianism." Those interested in how *Gangreana* participated in the evolution of genres should examine Hughes's findings.³⁷⁹ This analysis will instead speculate on Edwards's potential reasons for deviating from conventional and popular forms. At times I will reference literary traditions indentified by Hughes as well as some that she neglected, but I am more interested in the intended effects of *Gangreana*'s rhetorical choices than in the generic contexts.

In the catalogue, he purposefully omits distinctions between the various sources of danger, distinctions found in other heresiologies, such as Ephraim Pagitt's *Heresiography* (1645), Robert Baillie's *A dissuasive from the errours of the time* (1645), and the later text, Samuel Rutherford's *A survey of the spirituall antichrist* (1648).³⁸⁰ Edwards lists the bad doctrines without classifying them, without recounting their

³⁷⁹ Ann Hughes, "Gangreana as Heresiography" in *Gangreana and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 55-129, esp. 55-56.

³⁸⁰ Robert Baillie, *A dissuasive from the errours of the time* (London, 1645); Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography: or a description of the heretickes and sectaries of these latter times* (London, 1645); Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist* (1648).

histories, without quoting at length from sources, and without arguing about them. According to Edwards, the heresiologies by Gataker and Baillie were too narrowly focused and the heresiologies by Pagitt and Weld were too concerned with the past and with other countries; *Gangreana*, by contrast was inclusive, current, and local: it "discovers more, then any one book hath, of the errors" "vented and broached within these four years last past, yea most of them within these two last years, and lesse" in England.³⁸¹

The benefits of *Gangreana*'s broad but bald approach are more extensive than most readers would imagine. First, grouping together all the doctrines and deeds under the general but serious category of sins and scandals or, to borrow Edwards's phrasing, "monsters and rocks," visually demonstrated that all errors are dangerous. They all have more in common with one another than with anything else, and one can easily lead to another. None of them should be tolerated. Deconstructing the theology of particular groups might help readers to understand that group, but it would not help them to appreciate the overarching problem: that England will not be safe so long as a single heresy, superstition, schism, or profanity is endured.

Secondly, listing the errors helps readers to see the enormity of the problem. Counting the dangers one by one, readers may begin to feel threatened. They may sense or begin to imagine what Edwards is trying to communicate: that scandals are

³⁸¹Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 1, 3. Cf. Robert Baillie, *A dissuasive from the errors of the time* (London, 1645); Thomas Gataker, *Gods eye on his Israel* (London, 1645); Ephraim Pagitt, *Heresiography: or a description of the heretickes and sectaries of these latter times* (London, 1645); William Prynne, *A fresh discovery of some prodigious new wandring-blazing-stars, and firebrands stiling themselves new-lights* (London, 1645); Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist* (1648); and Thomas Weld, *Antinomians and Familists condemned* (London, 1644).

proliferating and the contagion of heresy and vice must be stopped before the nation and its people are destroyed, an idea elaborated upon in a later corollary:

This Land is become already in many places a *Chaos*, a *Babel*, another *Amsterdam*, yea, worse; we are beyond that, and in the highway to *Munster* (if God prevent it not) but if a general Toleration should be granted so much written and stood for, *England* would quickly become a *Sodom*, an *Egypt*, *Babylon*, yea, worse then all these: Certainly, as it would be the most provoking sin against God that ever Parliament was guilty of in this Kingdome, like to that of *Jeroboam*, to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth; so it would prove the cause and fountain of all kind of damnable heresies and blasphemies, loose and ungodly practises, bitter and unnatural divisions in families and Churches; it would destroy all Religion and as *Polutheisme* among the Heathen brought in Atheisme, so would many Religions bring in none among us; let but the Reader well review and consider of all the Heresies, blasphemies, practises laid down in this Book, all broached and acted in *England* within these four last yeeres, yea more especially within this last year; and if one man hath observed and gathered so much what Armies of blasphemies and monstrous heresies are there thinke we, if all that have been vented were drawne into one *Synopsis*?³⁸²

Though incomprehensive, as Edwards reminds readers, the "synops[e]s of sectarianisme" in *Gangreana* help readers to appreciate comprehend the situation without getting overwhelmed or confused; *Gangreana* shows readers the forest but prevents them from getting lost therein.³⁸³

Thirdly, the lists function as a negative confession of faith that specifies doctrines without promoting them. Unlike some parts of the *39 Articles of Faith*, which were purposefully but (to Presbyterian thinking) problematically ambiguous, *Gangreana* is

³⁸²Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 120-121.

³⁸³*Ibid.*, 4, 6.

precise.³⁸⁴ It does not list truth alongside falsehood, but it does make the falsehoods clear. Consider the first item in the first catalogue: "That the Scripture cannot be said to be word of God; there is no Word but Christ, the Scriptures are a dead letter, and no more to be credited then the writings of men, not divine, but human invention." Even readers unfamiliar with the debates concerning inspiration and the sufficiency of Scripture could understand this doctrinal statement. If, somehow, the repetitions with slight variation within this item were insufficient to communicate the premise, then the restatements of the idea in the next two items would help the reader to make sense of the issue.³⁸⁵ But Edwards does not belabor the point. He tries to cover the topic fully but not tediously. The catalogues have a sense of momentum. The errors concerning the divinity and sufficiency of Scripture lead to errors concerning biblical interpretation.³⁸⁶

Fourthly, the lists neutralize the errors by treating them sufficiently but not tediously, logically but not litigiously, fairly but unsympathetically. Edwards needed to cover doctrinal errors because he, like other Presbyterians, thought that wrong beliefs were more dangerous than vicious actions, but Edwards did not want to get into a full doctrinal disputation, especially one that would be, to borrow Richard Hooker's phrasing, a "concourse of divided minds" and thus contentious instead of profitable.³⁸⁷ Edwards

³⁸⁴See William Barlow, *The summe and substance of the conference*, 24-25; Oliver O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1986), 85-88.

³⁸⁵Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 18.

³⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 18-19.

³⁸⁷Richard Hooker, Preface, *The laws of ecclesiastical polity in The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, Vol. 1 of 3, 159.

does put together a case against tolerating Independency and error, but he does not prosecute the defendants in the way that Zeal might in Mercilla's court or that Prynne does in *Histrion-mastix*.³⁸⁸ He allows Independents and Sectarians to speak for themselves; he makes the points briefly; and he moves on quickly. *Gangeana* does not set up straw men to strike down, but it also does not allow opponents to make full cases for wrongdoing. The catalogues move readers' minds and affections to perceive and reject the flawed creed, not digest it. The seriality within the catalogues and within the text at large, which moves from one form to another, helps Edwards to balance pathetic, ethical, and logical appeals, a balance that protects him from charges of hypocrisy.

If *Gangreana*'s catalogues activate basic cognitive processes and right reason but do not demand much critical thinking on the part of the reader, then the letters and narrations that follow make even more modest intellectual demands. The narrations and letters often invite the reader to picture a scene in his or her imagination, but they prevent the potentially weak mind from drawing its own conclusions based on sense experience. Instead of ascribing to the new scene the meaning associated with personal memories, Edwards invites the reader to adopt the discursive meaning of *Gangreana*'s narrative. For example, readers could draw upon their own experiences with uneducated preachers, scoundrels, bereaved fathers, nudity, modest women, and baptism to picture the story of the opportunistic and lascivious re-baptizer: the illiterate, self-ordained preacher who not only "drew away a mans five Daughters, and in a short time Re-baptized them all, making choyce of which he best liked, and Married her marr[ying] her without her Parents consent" but also instructed another woman who was naked for her re-baptism

³⁸⁸See Edmund Spenser, *The faerie queene* (1596), 5.9.36-5.10.4, Ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 824-838; William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, *passim*.

that it was "unseemly" for her to "cove[r] her secret parts" during the prayer because "it being an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, her hands with her heart should be lifted upward toward heaven."³⁸⁹ Instead of drawing a personal conclusion about the story based on biased feelings and opinions, Edwards asks his readers to judge the scene in the way that the narrator does. Yet *Gangreana* does not need to state its judgments explicitly every time a negative doctrine or example is offered. The narrator of the letter about the lewd baptizer does not have to argue that this Dipping episode is blameworthy because Edwards has adjusted people's expectations using his discursive frames: readers expect scandalous stories to follow the lists of scandals. The judgment of the author is also evident in the description itself. Instead of saying that the narrator "saved" a man's five Daughters, he says that the man "drew" them "away" from their Father. Immediately, both the daughters and the father appear to be victims, victims of civil wrongdoing as well as moral and spiritual harm. That judgment is reinforced by the story presented immediately about the lewd mechanic preacher who manipulates the abashed woman into an act of public indecency (as well as sacrilege). Both of those parables are situated within a longer letter about Separatist errors, and that letter is situated within a larger section containing other copied "Letters with ... Narration[s] of Stories and Remarkable Passages concerning the Sectaries."³⁹⁰ That contextualization is itself instructive. Edwards does not need to make logical arguments explicitly because the premises may be inferred from the descriptions and the narrative frames.

³⁸⁹Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 55.

³⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 76.

That rhetorical, as opposed to logical, method of argumentation was decorous; Edwards deduced that his most vulnerable readers tended to be swayed by image and opinion more than reason. Independents had been using ethical and emotional appeals in their sermons and pamphlets successfully, so Presbyterians need to do the same, as Edwards contends:

Object. But it may be it will be said, What are the practices of some men, and matters of fact, to a way, 'tis arguments must convince men, and not Practices? *Answ.* Much every way in this, because both in printed books, Pulpits and discourses the Practices of the Sectaries are brought to persuade people to forsake our Churches and to come to them; as the great holinesse, sanctity, self-deniall, humility, innocency of that party, with their painfull preaching without great livings, or expecting Tithes; and on the other hand, the Presbyterians are branded as men of no great piety, holinesse, charity, and if it were not for livings of two or three Hundred pounds a year, they would turne Independents, adn many people are drawn more by these things then by all their Arguments: Now therefore the discovering to the people nakedly and truly their practices, may undeceive them, and be as good a means to bring them back to the communion of the Reformed Churches, as ever the false representation of them was to mislead them.³⁹¹

To those who objected that examples do not prove a point and thus have no weight in a logical argument, Edwards replied that he is not trying to be logical; he is trying to be persuasive. Edwards could not afford to abide by the rules of disputation (making logical arguments) because his opponents had not done so and because his audience would not respond to logical arguments.

With less educated minds, he needed to utilize the path from imagination to reason, allowing his cure to follow the route and imitate the progression of the disease. Edwards did not, however, want an individual fancy or intellect to wander or stumble on her quest for recovery, a grim prospect that was all too likely. When everyday

³⁹¹Ibid.

Englishmen used their intellects to make sense of what they were witnessing, their conclusions were often wrong; for instance, some assumed that the efficacy of a ceremony was dependent on the ornateness of the instruments or rituals; others assumed that the efficacy of the ceremony was dependent on the simplicity of the instruments or rituals. Both deductions were wrong. Though Presbyterians were principally concerned with wrong belief, as suggested by the placement of the catalogue at the beginning of each part, they had to concern themselves with wrong actions to counter the claims predicated upon them. According to Edward Armstrong, humanists thought that sense experiences and the "imaginative universals of the fantasy" gained meaning when the rational faculty "imposed form on the sensed matter"; *Gangreana's* discourse and the structure "impose form" on readers' "sensed matter."³⁹²

Edwards appreciated the power of the imagination and the power of discourse; that is why he sought to restrain sinful fancy and language: preventing heretics, Separatists, and the dissolute from influencing weak Christians. Whereas humanists, such as Bryskett, thought man could, in the tradition of Plato, use human faculties—sense perception, imagination, and reason—to grasp and know God, Presbyterians like Edwards thought that the inverse: that God must condescend to man, revealing Himself to man through Word and through Spirit. With those higher powers, man was to examine and reform himself and others. More of a Ramist than a humanist, Edwards concurred with the view that "rhetoric and poetry" are "second-class arts designed to transmit and

³⁹²Edward Armstrong: *A Ciceronian Sunburn: a Tudor dialogue on humanist rhetoric and civic poetics*, 26-27.

ornament, preconceived, rational truths."³⁹³ Like Ramists, he separated rhetoric and logic because he did not trust the former to produce unmitigated truth. Also like Ramists, he valued visual argumentation.³⁹⁴ However, Edwards was not a pure Ramist. If he had been a Ramist, then he would not have erased the conventional categories of heresies in his catalogue. Humanism also influenced Edwards; *Gangreana*, for instance, attempts to inspire both right knowing and right doing: right doctrine and right discipline. Edwards' Presbyterian habit of using God's discourse (Scripture) to make meaning of sense experience (to judge sinful conceits and actions) did not preclude the use of Humanist methods as well. *Gangreana*'s use of letters may also be a nod to Humanism and Ciceronian rhetoric. All coteries, whether intellectual or spiritual, relied heavily upon epistolary exchanges because letters facilitated dialogue not only at a distance but also in Platonic and Ciceronian styles. They encouraged a communal search for truth, assisted charitable counsels, and challenged the writer to fashion his persona and his prose carefully. Edwards seems to have trusted the epistolary form; *Gangreana* reproduces the letters of faithful witnesses without amendment. However, the epistolary portions of *Gangreana* are not dialogues or disputations; they are depositions. *Gangreana* presents the letters as evidence supporting his claim of truth-telling (that the catalogues and calumnies are factual, not fictional).

Gangreana's lists, stories, and corollaries are collaborative; they reinforce one another, reforming readers using a variety of tactics. Like a good orator, Edwards tried to use all available means to convince his readers. His philosophy—that defensive forms

³⁹³Ibid., 19.

³⁹⁴See Water J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, *passim*.

can imitate offensive forms—corresponds to theories of natural law and private law, which justify resisting "force with force": "*vim vi repellere licet*."³⁹⁵ Necessity authorizes actions that would otherwise be immoral or unlawful. Under normal circumstances, certain kinds of discourse would be inadvisable, or even immoral, because they might do more harm than good, but when circumstances permit the benefits to outweigh the risks, then their usage is justified. The terror of toleration seems to have convinced Edwards that examples were warranted, though allegories were not. Had his opponents used allegories, he might have done so as well (as a counter measure). Instead, his opponents were promoting their own piety with examples, which made use of Presbyterian impiety as a point of contrast. In turn, Edwards persuaded people of Independent and Sectarian impiety using his own set of factual examples (presented in the lists, letters, and extra-epistolary narratives).

Edwards would have us believe that he employed only those instruments best suited for his audience and his purpose. When he borrowed tools from rhetoric and poetry, he did so to help his readers learn. Unlike Scholastic disputations, which served an academic rather than a social function, Edwards's debates with his opponents and retractors were meant to change people's conviction and behaviors. Since his audience was too blind, in his estimation, to see reason, he had to use other modes of learning or *disciplina*. Dialectic, rhetoric, and poetics were all permissible when indispensable so long as they were used for moral rather than carnal ends, for the public good rather than private gain.

³⁹⁵Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Vol. 2: *The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. P, 1978), 125-126.

Confining his range of *exempla* to history, Edwards protected his text from the objections leveled at poesy: that it is not the most effective means of moving readers, that it lies, that it promotes vice, and that it nurtures affections, such as "pleasure and pain," rather than reason.³⁹⁶ In this respect, *Gangreana* might prove more cautious than Scripture, which includes not only historical parables but also fictional ones. Allegories were frequently associated with Scholasticism and poetry; thus, they carried the stain of vanity and deception. Ramus associated allegories with *elocutio* or style, an oratorical ornament, but examples, by contrast, were categorized as part of *inventio*, a dialectical (and thus profitable) activity. Though Edwards cites Scripture as a literary model for *Gangreana*, his insistence that the stories included therein are factual records may betray a Ramist anxiety about fancy. Edwards would have had no trouble finding justifications for using examples. In *The institutes of Christian religion*, Calvin associates examples with at least seven kinds of learning in book four alone: examples prove arguments of fact or definition; set precedents; confirm natural law; illustrate general principles; clarify ideas; and inspire readers both to regard God appropriately and to imitate His qualities and actions.³⁹⁷

Combining the negative examples with cautionary precepts, Edwards was clearly trying to profit readers, not please them. *Gangreana* invites readers to use their

³⁹⁶ Philip Sidney, *A defence of poetry*, 51-61; Plato, *Republic*, Oxford World Classics, Trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), xxix-xxiii, 70-114, 344-362, esp. sections 378e, 380b, 387b, 388e, 389e-390a, 393-398, 402e, 411b, 595b, and 606-607a.

³⁹⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Vol. 3 of 3, *passim*, such as: 4.1.18, 4.2.2, 4.2.6, 4.2.8-9, 4.3.6, 4.3.15, 4.4.15, 4.4.8, 4.7.28, 4.9.7, 4.10.4, 4.10.17, 4.10.19, 4.19.22, 4.10.25, 4.10.30, 4.11.3.

imaginations to deduce the danger but it does not leave readers to rely on their own opinions and experiences alone. In addition to the discursive frames discussed above, Edwards also adds corollaries to ensure that the proper inferences are drawn.

Though Edwards' office of censuring others could, like satire, be insulting, he tried to avoid that outcome by casting aside most offensive weapons of satire, such as "name-calling and mud-slinging."³⁹⁸ Though he did use *ad hominem* attacks, he claims that he lacks "ill-will [for] any man"; unlike satirists, he avoids "railing." His rebukes may be "sharp," but they lack "malice."³⁹⁹ The offenders identified by name are those who have already damaged their reputations by sinning publicly; their vices are public, so exposing them is no violation of privacy. Rather, it is essential both for their own reformation and for the protection of those who might otherwise trust and follow them. When people can recognize wrongdoers and avoid them, they can save themselves from future "hurt and mischief"; when people know the "name[s] and places of abode" of those with dangerous "opinions and wayes," they will will "shun and be afraid of them."⁴⁰⁰ He "name[s]" sectaries, he says, "not to upbraid them with, but to shew them their own folly"; in addition to protecting those easily misled, he wants to recover the wayward.⁴⁰¹ Edwards' satiric weapon is blunt; he aims to protect and correct, not kill; he

³⁹⁸See Erin Ashworth-King's Ph.D. dissertation, *The ethics of satire in early modern English literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), 9.

³⁹⁹"Titus 1," *Geneva Bible* (1587), especially verses 9 and 13; Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, sig. A3 and *Gangreana*, 154-55.

⁴⁰⁰Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 46.

⁴⁰¹*Ibid.*, sig. A3, 44-6, 70, 106, 203-204.

considers *Gangreana* charitable, not spiteful. One way that Edwards weakens his *ad hominem* attacks is to limit his accounts to facts.

Because critics accused Edwards of lying and railing, *Gangreana* addresses their objections directly. His audience for this defense, however, is not his critics. Before he replies to "particular exceptions" posed by Goodwin, he enters into a brief dialogue with his readers. He poses the question that would prevent readers of *Gangreana* from trusting the text and its author:

Quest, But it may be demanded by some, what's the matter, and what are the Causes that such venomous rancorous Books as Mr. *Goodwins Cretensis*, &c. are printed, and so many hard speeches in City and Country daily uttered against Master *Edwards*, and his late Book entitled *Gangreana*, is it not a Book full of lies, nothing but lies, is it not full of venom and malice against the Saints, and faithfull servants of God, calling for fire and sword against the Saints?⁴⁰²

Edwards's answer directly denies those charges by reminding his readers that he, unlike his adversaries, who "to gain credit with the people, have invented many lyes and stories" that discredit Presbyterians, does not create useful fictions about Independents nor "rail" or "spea[k] evill of the Saints."⁴⁰³ Though Edwards' meager use of deductive reasoning could suggest that he was following the poets, who allowed examples to speak for themselves, rather than orators and philosophers, who joined examples with arguments, Edwards' use of pure narrative (third-person, omniscient) rather than representational narrative (first-person, limited) and his efforts to connect wrongdoing with wrong thinking remind us that Edwards borrowed from poesy, rhetoric, and logic without being enslaved by any of them. Following Plato's advice, Edwards used direct speech, such as

⁴⁰²Ibid., 44.

⁴⁰³Ibid., 44-45.

the letters, when the speakers were good and their statements were edifying. Following Cicero's advice, he used classical rhetoric devices, such as examples as figures, to move his readers to action. Following Scholastic precedent, he debated detractors and persuaded his audience using logic.

In *Gangreana*, Edwards reworks many traditional binaries: doctrine and discipline, truth and fancy, particular and universal, human and divine, perception and revelation, Ramism and Humanism, and classical dialogue and Scholastic debate. He erases some distinctions but not all. By blaming rather than praising, Edwards helps his readers and himself alike avoid the snare of idolatry. Just as readers must worship God rather than man, authors must praise God rather than man. Like Ben Jonson, Edwards recognized that each genre could be a liability as well as an asset to what Reid Barbour aptly names the "normative poet." Using panegyric, for instance, poets risked flattering rather than advising their benefactors; using satire, by contrast, poets risked alienating rather than reforming their subjects.⁴⁰⁴ If *Gangreana* errs, it does so on the side of satire, but Edwards was convinced that he had demonstrated neither ambition nor malice. Edwards was passionate but not "elated," sharp but not cruel, offensive but not odious, polemical but not contentious. *Gangreana*'s forms and affections neutralize one another without becoming treacherously neutral.

⁴⁰⁴See Reid Barbour, *John Selden: Measures of the Holy Commonwealth in Seventeenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 18, where Ben Jonson's anxieties about normative poetry are discussed. Sharing Jonson's concerns, Edwards took the precaution of adapting and uniting genres.

III. A mirror of misdirection: Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair"

*"The fact is that there were two sides, both given to the language of moderation and consensus, both deeply dyed in the mentality of divisive faction."*⁴⁰⁵

Ben Jonson's satirical play, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), is a particularly powerful site in which to explore the paradoxical connections between Presbyterians and their counterparts not only in theological, political, and liturgical controversies but also in literary ones. Like Edwards's *Gangreana* and Prynne's *Histrion-mastix*, Jonson's moral drama is passionate, critical, and complex. Though Jonson may seek to undermine Presbyterian messages and methods, including those later embodied in *Gangreana* and *Histrion-mastix*, Jonson's normative poetry is eerily similar to Presbyterians' normative polemics. Both assume that audiences are insufficient and dense (difficult to persuade and move). Both worry about their modes (that blame or praise may go too far) and about their personal investment in using them (that they may prosecute personal vendettas or allow ambition to compromise the content and central aims). Both struggle to reconcile the conflicts between truth, unity, order, responsibility, and reform—values that they both cherish.⁴⁰⁶ Jonson's drama embodies the parabolic flexibility and ambiguity replayed in another key in Edwards's *Gangreana* and Prynne's *Histrion-mastix*. The origins of this unlikely correspondence may be their shared occupation: teaching, shared pedagogy: telling stories, or shared objective: improving but stabilizing society.

⁴⁰⁵Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 98.

⁴⁰⁶Reid Barbour, *John Selden*, 18.

The idea that zealous Christians are frauds is embodied by Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, the seemingly inconsistent iconoclast, and Dame Purecraft, the pretend puritan, in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. Because Busy partakes in worldly pleasures (pig and pints) at a profane place (Ursula's tent) while also denouncing others' vices at the fair, he appears hypocritical. He justifies his double standard by claiming that sin results not from the actions themselves but from the character and manner of the actor. "We may," he informs Dame Purecraft, "be religious in midst of the profane, so it [pig] be eaten with a reformed mouth, with sobriety, and humbleness; not gorged in with gluttony, or greediness" or with "pride in the place, or delight in the unclean dressing, to feed the vanity of the eye, or the lust of the palate."⁴⁰⁷ Busy is advocating moderation, the norm that Aristotle associates with reason: "Again, the incontinent person acts with appetite, but not with choice; while the continent man on the contrary, acts with choice but not with appetite."⁴⁰⁸ By this measure, Busy is virtuous if he eats without regard to pleasure (or pain).

By Calvinist standards, Busy also seems to be charitable. He chooses to enter the fair so that Win can avoid pregnancy-related sickness by eating without worrying that she is sinning. When he says, "In the way of comfort to the weak, I will go and eat,"⁴⁰⁹ Busy is following the Pauline and Calvinist injunction to withhold judgment and reform slowly, since the matter is indifferent to salvation. The Geneva gloss on Romans 14:1

⁴⁰⁷Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, ed. G.R. Hibbard, New Mermaid edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), 41.

⁴⁰⁸Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, Ed. Harold Joachim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1111b, 53.

⁴⁰⁹Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 41.

states this idea clearly, "Now he sheweth how we ought to behave our selves toward our brethren in matters and things indifferent And thus he teacheth that they are to be instructed gently and patiently, and so that we applie our selves to their ignorance in such matters, according to the rule of charitie."⁴¹⁰ The notes to verse 13 advise the mean between censure and permissiveness: "they [malicious judgers of others] should rather bestowe their wits upon this, that they doe not with their disdainefulnes either cast their brethren cleane downe, or give them some offence."⁴¹¹

By the standards of the Church of England, Busy qualifies as orthodox when he tolerates state-sanctioned practices for recreation. Busy justifies his gluttony as a sign of moderation, conceiving of "the public eating of swine's flesh" as an opportunity "to profess our hate and loathing of Judaism, whereof the brethren stand taxed."⁴¹² Busy may be "affect[ing] the violence of singularity," as Quarlous claims, or he may be trying, however foolishly, to defend himself from charges of singularity by finding common ground with the Church of England. Strict sabbatarians were associated with Judaism; by repudiating Judaism, Busy repudiates sabbatarianism. Busy seems to advocate the orthodox position on Jewish, pagan, and papist rites: that ceremonial laws are inessential to the covenant of grace and thus do not bind the conscience; that high places and rituals formerly associated with idolatry could be reformed, not abolished; that indifferent

⁴¹⁰"Side note 1" in "Romans 14:1," *Geneva Bible*.

⁴¹¹"Side note m" in "Romans 14:13," *Geneva Bible*. See also "side note 12" in the same verse.

⁴¹²Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 42.

practices could vary by time and place; and that secular recreations, such as Sunday sports, could be tolerated, perhaps even promoted, by Christians.⁴¹³

Yet Zeal-of-the-land Busy strays from conformity with the Church of England through his pride and zeal. Transforming excessive eating of pig into an object lesson in charity, Busy acts foolishly and presumptuously. The fair is not the proper place for instruction, and eating "excessively" is not useful or rationally defensible. Using Prynne's definition of Independent presumption as "*to forestall, to conceive before hand, to usurpe or take that upon him which belongs not to him; to doe a thing before a man bee lawfully called to it, which belongs not properly to him, or to doe a thing boldly, confidently, or rashly without good grounds, or against Authority, or Lawes, or upon hopes of impunity,*" Busy appears guilty on multiple counts.⁴¹⁴ Conflating his character sketch of Busy with that of a hypocrite, Quarlous emphasizes that the Banbury elder purposefully "renders [him]self conspicuous":⁴¹⁵

A notable hypocritical vermin it is; I know him. One that stands upon his face more than his faith, at all times; ever in seditious motion, and reproving for vain-glory; of a most lunatic conscience and spleen, and affects the violence of singularity in all he does.... as arrant a zeal as he. —

⁴¹³See "Injunction 20," "Injunctions of 1559" in *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York, 1896), 417-42 in Hanover Historical Texts Project <<http://history.hanover.edu/project.html>>, which warns against people "superstitiously abstaining from work" on the sabbath" (427); See Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 41-42, 44; See Peter Lake, "The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 162-183; See Kevin Sharpe, "The Book of Sports" in *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 351-359.

⁴¹⁴William Prynne, *Truth triumphing over falshood* (London, 1644), 109.

⁴¹⁵"Singularity," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, online version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7a.

By his profession, he will ever be i' the state of innocence, though, and childhood; derides all antiquity; defies any other learning than inspiration; and what discretion soever years should afford him, it is prevented in his original ignorance. Ha' not to do with him, for he is a fellow of a most arrogant and invincible dullness, I assure you.⁴¹⁶

Busy is hypocritical when he fails to reform himself before reforming others. He recommends that his party show humility at the fair, though he is not humble. He pursues a rigorous justice for others but an equitable one for himself. He seeks honor without meriting it. Busy overestimates *his* place and misreads the *place*. He is not a normative figure; he lacks ecclesiastical, natural, or moral authority. He lacks the authority of a bishop, the perfection of Christ, and the virtue of Aristotle's "proud" or great-souled man.⁴¹⁷

Busy's office of correction, his position as an elder, subverts the established ecclesiastical and civil government. Idolatry was supposed to be remedied by magistrates, bishops, churchwarden, questmen, or assistants. The Act of Supremacy states that the power of "reformation, order, and correction ... of all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities" are "united and annexed to the imperial crown," which may then "assign, name and authorize" persons deemed appropriate for the office.⁴¹⁸ The canons of 1603 instruct church officials to present schismatics to the bishop or ordinary:

⁴¹⁶Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 26-7.

⁴¹⁷Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1123b-1125a, 91-95.

⁴¹⁸"Act of Supremacy," 1 Eliz. cap. 1 (1559), *Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I*, 4th edition, G.W. Prothero, ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 5-6.

If the Church-wardens, or Quest men, or Assistants do or shall know of any man within their Parish, or elsewhere that is a hinderer of the Word of God, to be read or sincerely preached, or of the execution of these our Constitutions, or a souter of any usurped or forreign power by the Laws of this Realm justly rejected and taken away, or a defender of Popish and erroneous Doctrine; they shall detect and present the same to the Bishop of the Diocese or Ordinary of the place, to be censured and punished according to such Ecclesiastical Laws as are prescribed in that behalf.⁴¹⁹

The established church did not recognize elders. As spokesman for the Church of England, John Whitgift tried to correct Thomas Cartwright's misperceptions about biblical elders. Cartwright had argued that elders assisted pastors in church discipline: "The first place is in Acts, which is that Paul and Barnabas did appoint by election elders in every congregation; [Acts xiv: 23] [I]n every congregation there were besides those preached other elders, which did only in government assist the pastors which preached."⁴²⁰ Whitgift countered that elders were actually pastors: "Luke in his place by *presbyteros* doth only mean pastors and preachers of the Word, as he doth also through the whole Acts speaking of Christians."⁴²¹ The elders supposedly authorized "to consult, to admonish, to correct, and to order all things appertaining to the state of the congregation" [Acts v: 4, I Cor xii: 28]⁴²² were, according to conformists, none other than the pastors. Presbyterians in the 1640s did distinguish between "preaching presbyters" and "ruling presbyters"; they agreed with Whitgift's understanding of the word *presbyter*

⁴¹⁹Church of England, "CX: Schismatics to be presented," *Constitutions and canons ecclesiastical* (London, 1633).

⁴²⁰Thomas Cartwright, *Reply in Admonition Controversy*, 473-4.

⁴²¹John Whitgift, *Defense in The Admonition Controversy*, 474.

⁴²²Thomas Cartwright, *Admonition in The Admonition Controversy*, ed. Donald Joseph McGinn, Rutgers Studies in English, No. 5 (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. P, 1949), 475.

in Scripture. The ordinances settling a Presbyterian polity in the Church of England in 1644, 1646, and 1648 say, "Whereas the word Presbyter, that is to say, Elder, and the word Bishop, do in the Holy Scripture intend and signifie one and the same function."⁴²³ However, the Presbyterian polity ordinances also echo Cartwright in empowering lay, ruling elders to assist preaching elders in spiritual discipline.⁴²⁴ Mid-seventeenth-century English Presbyterians supported a system in which lay leaders had disciplinary power in congregational, classical, regional, and national assemblies; those ruling elders, seemingly unlike Busy, were elected and ordained by the congregation because they met the standards outlined in Titus 1. The third article in the "Directions for the election of parochial and congregational elders" emphasizes that ruling elders must be well qualified: "That such shall be chosen for ruling Elders as are men of a good understanding in matters of Religion, sound in the faith, prudent, discreet, grave, and of an unblameable conversation, and willing to undergo the said Office."⁴²⁵ In both the Episcopal Church of England under James I and the Presbyterian Church of England under the Long

⁴²³ "An ordinance for the form of church government to be used in the Church of England and Ireland, agreed upon by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, after advice, had with the Assembly of Divines" (August 29, 1648) in *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, Ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, Vol. 1 of 3 (London: Wyman and sons, 1911), 1199-1200; see also "An ordinance after the advice had with the assembly of divines, for the ordination of ministers *pro Tempore*, according to the Directory for Ordination, and Rules for Examination, therein expressed" (October 4, 1644) in *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, 521-526 and "An ordinance for the ordination of ministers by the classical presbyteries, within their respective bounds for the severall congregations in the kingdom of England" (August 28, 1646) in *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, 865-870.

⁴²⁴ *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, 833-838, 1198-1199.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1188-1192, 833-838; see also "Titus 1," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

Parliament, a Banbury baker-elder, such as Zeal-of-the-Land Busy might be censured by presbyters, but he would not be selected to serve as one; Busy seems to be a presumptuous trouble-maker or Sectarian, not an ecclesiastical officer.

According to Patrick Collinson, Busy may represent the "Puritan faction" that toppled Banbury's crosses and desecrated the images thereon. This theory is supported by Busy's line, "Down with Dagon, down with Dagon!,"⁴²⁶ which is reminiscent of one Banbury rioter's exclamation, "God be thanked, Dagon the deluder of the people is fallen down!" Collinson finds the similarities between Busy and the Banbury rioter too particular to be coincidental, suggesting that Jonson was aware of the Oxfordshire iconoclasm.⁴²⁷ Jonson's critical appraisal of Busy mirrors the Star Chamber's assessment of the Banbury cross desecrators. "[T]he Banbury trial documents," Collinson tells us, "carry hostile insinuations that the motives of righteous and rigorous magistracy were not all that they might seem, 'being carried away with a covetous desire of their own private gain.'" Essentially, the Star Chamber officials accused the rioters of hypocrisy, of using religion as a cloak for greed. However, the Star Chamber's prejudice against reformers might lead us to suspect its motives as well.⁴²⁸ In other words, it had a vested interest in undermining the credibility of those who defied the crown in the name of religion.

This interpretive knot reminds us that Puritanism is a social construct that may or may not have a real referent. Patrick Collinson has tried to determine whether the

⁴²⁶Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 169.

⁴²⁷Patrick Collinson, "The Theatre Constructs Puritanism" in *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre, and Politics in London, 1576-1649*, Ed. by David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David Bevington (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. P., 1995), 160-1.

⁴²⁸*Ibid.*, 163.

character, the "stage puritan," or the referent, the actual puritan, came first: "either ... audiences and readers learned what a puritan was from the torrent of fictions released by Martin Marprelate; or ... these fictions helped them to identify, label and hate the puritan who had been all the time in their midst."⁴²⁹ I find both theories plausible and potentially reconcilable. Perhaps Elizabethans and Jacobeans found the fictional construct, Puritanism, useful in defaming and marginalizing opponents as they simultaneously measured and labeled others using the new criteria. *Bartholomew Fair* may be an example of an historical poesy, of verisimilar fiction. According to Alfred Beesley, there were religious activists in and around Banbury. Anthony Cope, the MP for Banbury in 1587-8, proposed ecclesiastical changes including the use of a more reformed liturgy.⁴³⁰ Thomas Brasbridge,⁴³¹ William Whateley,⁴³² and John Dod, were influential nonconformist or "precise" ministers there.⁴³³ Zeal-of-the-Land Busy may, by Jonson's design, share certain values or actions with the real Banbury men, but he does not represent any of them particularly. The actual Banbury reformers were much more sympathetic and complicated than Jonson's caricature. Parodies like *Bartholomew Fair* enable astute audiences and readers to recognize contemporary referents without

⁴²⁹Patrick Collinson, "Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the inventions of puritanism" in *The reign of Elizabeth I: court and culture in the last decade*, Ed. John Alexander Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 150-170, esp. 169.

⁴³⁰Alfred Beesley, *History of Banbury: Including Copious Historical and Antiquarian Notices of the Neighborhood* (London: Nichols and Son, [1841?]), 238-239.

⁴³¹*Ibid.*, 242-243.

⁴³²*Ibid.* 268-70, esp. footnotes 10 and 14.

⁴³³*Ibid.*, 245.

sympathizing with them. When audiences and readers identify with burlesque characters, they are, by extension, also judged by the poet. Whether the poet's criticism is a constructive instrument of change is debatable. Choosing the broken compass as his emblem, Jonson acknowledged that poetry frequently fails to improve society, as Reid Barbour has eloquently argued:

Jonson's emblem, the broken compass, took it for granted that the normative writer would undoubtedly fail in communicating reform to the world. So many things could go wrong. The audience would in all likelihood be obtuse, Jonson believed, but there was also the possibility that the genres in which one wrote lent themselves to corruption (in Jonson's case, the poetry of praise or the masque), or that one's style would vacillate between the too elitist and the too vulgar, or that one's person would be unable to sustain the authoritative ethos necessary for normative writing.⁴³⁴

Satirical drama is especially vulnerable to error. It may, like *Busy*, seem hypocritical and incredible. It may, like *Justice Overdo*, be too rigorous and alienating. Finding the mean between laughter and scorn is the satirist's dilemma just as identifying equity and exercising clemency is the ruler's dilemma. The good ruler, like the good poet, needs humility. When *Justice Overdo* acknowledges that he, too, is susceptible to folly, he stabilizes the community; this recognition that no one is perfect bonds the governor with his people.

Like most satirists, Jonson himself is a moralist, but he is not a perfectionist like Edwards and Prynne. *Bartholomew Fair* argues not only *against* extremists but also *for* tolerating enormities. That is one of principal differences between Jonon's satire and Thomas Edwards' heresiology or William Prynne's scourge, between Jacobean calls for conformity and Presbyterian calls for uniformity and austerity, respectively.

⁴³⁴Reid Barbour, *John Selden*, 18.

Bartholomew Fair, *Gangreana*, and *Histrion-mastix* affirm a particular vision of English community. Unlike Donne's "Satire 3," which tears down a spectrum of theological stances without raising another truth in their stead, *Bartholomew Fair* also attacks excesses, suggesting that existing spiritual and social practices be reformed moderately and gradually. *Gangreana* and *Histrion-mastix* tear down sources of scandal zealously, but they are charitable in intent and in rhetorical restraint. Although Jonson, Edwards, and Prynne are all like Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in disciplining others, they all separate themselves from the disagreeable puritan by showing self-awareness and flexibility. We may, in other words, see the final temperate, hospitable Justice Overdo as a representative not only of James I but also of Jonson, Edwards, and Prynne. Good poets, like, good rulers, have external measures that retrain their excesses. When Haggis and Bristle describe Overdo's anger and his lack of equity in ruling, Overdo embraces the criticism and vows to change: "I will be more tender hereafter. I see compassion may become Justice, though it be a weakness, I confess, and nearer a vice than a virtue."⁴³⁵

Similarly, in *Gangreana*, Edwards expresses a willingness to have his own sins and those of his coreligionists exposed (as he has done to others) so they may "give God glory in confessing."⁴³⁶ Overdo's statement betrays some skepticism about how compassion may balance or "become" justice; he does not, like Edwards, fully understand the "lesbian rule" of equity: that compassion may in one circumstance tend toward vice (as in toleration) and in another tend toward virtue (as in using tears to intercede for sinners) just as clemency may harm some (hardened criminals) and help others (those

⁴³⁵Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 108.

⁴³⁶Thomas Edwards, *The second part of gangreana*, 75-79, esp. 79.

capable of reforming), as Seneca argues in *De clementia*.⁴³⁷ Nevertheless, the ending of *Bartholomew Fair* seems hopeful. Overdo forgoes his catalogue of enormities and invites the offending parties to his home, where he will "correct" and "edify" rather than "destroy" and "tear down."⁴³⁸ Since Edwards had not yet written *Gangreana*, perhaps Jonson did not realize that catalogues of sins could constitute a moderate (i.e. virtuous) response when they were presented objectively, unemotionally, and with a zeal for the public good rather than with a perverse and self-righteous pleasure in spying on—and punishing—others. More likely, the contrast between Jonson's assessment of zeal and that of Edwards lay in their estimation of purity.

Though Presbyterians, such as Edwards, did not value purity as much as Independents (or high reformers), such as the fictional Busy, Presbyterians placed more worth on pure forms of worship and on fighting enormities than did Episcopalians (or Roman Catholics), such as Jonson. I am not suggesting that Prelatical sympathizers did not value godliness, when we define it as piety or the beauty of holiness. Using Prelatical definitions of godliness, we could argue that Roman Catholics and Episcopalians valued godliness more than Presbyterians and Independents.⁴³⁹ However, because this study

⁴³⁷See Aristotle, "Book V: Moral Virtue (CONT.)," *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1129a-1138b, 106-136; Reid Barbour, *John Selden*, 15; Seneca, *De clementia*, Ed. John Calvin (1532), 1.2 in *Calvin's commentary on Seneca's "De clementia,"* Trans. Ford Lewis Battles and André Malan Hugo, Part Two, Renaissance Text Series, III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 66-67, 70-77.

⁴³⁸Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 177, 180.

⁴³⁹Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), *passim*, especially 200-214; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), *passim*, especially chapters 4, 5, and 6; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical

focuses on Presbyterianism, I am associating godliness with purity, with acts of worship that are recommended in Scripture and with forms of Christian living that demonstrate sanctification, not with beautiful artistic expressions of divine glory in sacred places. Episcopalians sought decent and lawful outward rites, buildings, and people in the Church of England; they did not demand, as did many Presbyterians and Independents, that the church follow Biblical models for polity and worship and that stumbling blocks in the spiritual *and* civil spheres be removed "root and branch."

To a certain extent, both Ben Jonson and Presbyterians (both religious polemicists and Parliamentarians) conceived of themselves as covenant-brokers. Though Jonson seems to mock covenants at the start of the play, he creates a covenant of sorts between the fairgoers and Justice Overdo at the end.⁴⁴⁰ The conclusion of *Bartholomew Fair* suggests that when civil rulers are active but not tyrannical or severe, their commonwealths will be harmonious and happy. When Justice Overdo accepts the counsel of others, he proves that he is not a tyrant and that he, too, may be reformed; within the play, that adjustment seems to be a guarantor of peace. Similarly, Jonson seems to promise that he, too, will embrace counsel and prove himself to be a submissive subject and a decorous poet. However, he offers that contract at the end of the play, after he has instructed the king in good governance. In the epilogue, Jonson invites King James to

Policies of James I and Charles I" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 42, 48; Nicholas Tyacke, "Archbishop Laud" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 59, 61-2, 68-9; Kenneth Fincham, "Episcopal Government, 1603-1640" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 82-3; Peter Lake, "The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s" in *The Early Stuart Church*, 162-183.

⁴⁴⁰Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, "Induction": lines 56-154, 4.6.93-111, and "Epilogue": lines 1-12, pps. 10-13, 179-180.

judge, "If we have used that leave you gave us well; / Or, whether we to rage or licence break, / Or be profane, or make profane men speak."⁴⁴¹ The play, however, had set the measure that the king was supposed to use; the play teaches the prince to discipline the poet by rebalancing the poetry rather than banning it (or its author).⁴⁴² Similarly, in the 1640s, religious Presbyterians were willing to respect Charles I as their prince if he agreed to support ecclesiastical and constitutional reforms. Like Overdo, they wanted to "correct" and "edify" the prince and the institutions of the commonwealth, not "destroy" and "tear down" monarchy, the diversity of houses and positions within Parliament, or the national church.⁴⁴³ Religious Presbyterians agreed with "the majority of the parliamentary gentry" that the goals of the conflict were "limited"; they sought "moderate reformation[s]" within the existing "framework of government," "society," and "[c]hurch."⁴⁴⁴ Lawrence Kaplan has convincingly argued that it was really the peace party that had that goal, and that it took Scottish Presbyterians awhile to realize that their interests were more aligned with the peace party than with the war party. Kaplan cites a passage from the *Memoirs of Denzil Holles* that summarizes that shift and uses language reminiscent of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: "the Scots 'found that the other party [the peace group] had been misrepresented, being the men who, in truth, did agree with them in principle and in design: which was only to reform, not to alter, to regulate and so to

⁴⁴¹Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 180.

⁴⁴²See Reid Barbour, *John Selden*, 15-16.

⁴⁴³Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fair*, 177, 180.

⁴⁴⁴David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 7.

save, not to destroy."⁴⁴⁵ Presbyterians in the 1640s remained optimistic about reforming the prince. They were willing to negotiate with King Charles I long after many religious Independents had given up on him.⁴⁴⁶ However, Presbyterians demanded that King Charles heed their counsel before they would heed his. In 1644, Denzil Holles and Bulstrode Whitelock tried to convince Charles I that the best way to win back the people's love and to get better terms of peace was to agree to Parliament's proposals; once the king showed himself willing to compromise, others would do so as well.⁴⁴⁷ The contracts that religious Presbyterians were offering Charles I were more severe than Jonson's proposed bond with James I, but mid-seventeenth-century religious Presbyterians were negotiating with a less flexible king (as well as less flexible Parliamentarians), and the stakes were much higher.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution: The Scots and the Long Parliament, 1643-1645* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 122; Denzil Holles, *Memoirs* (London, 1699), 20-21 cited in Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution*, 122.

⁴⁴⁶ Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution*, 41-2, 46, 75, 77

⁴⁴⁷ Lawrence Kaplan, *Ibid.*, 77-8, 124.

⁴⁴⁸ Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution*, 45, 152, 154, 157; "The proposals of the Houses presented to the king at Oxford, and subsequently discussed at the Treaty of Uxbridge" in *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 275-86; "The king's propositions to be discussed at Uxbridge" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 286-87; "The propositions of the Houses sent to the King at Newcastle" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 290-306; "The king's first answer to the propositions presented at Newcastle" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 306-309, "The king's second answer to the propositions presented at Newcastle" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 308-309; "The king's third answer ... at Newcastle" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 311-316; "Letter of Charles I to the Speaker of the House of Lords" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 328-332; "The four bills, and the propositions accompanying them" in *The*

Jonson was optimistic that social stability could be founded on accommodation rather than perfection. King James was known for listening to all sides, as he did at the *Hampton Court Conference*, and for reaching compromises that would "amend abuse" without alienating most parties.⁴⁴⁹ His greatest challenge was completing his promised reforms while maintaining peace. Religious Presbyterians in the 1640s, however, were opposed to concords founded on spiritual compromise. In general, they wanted to remove scandals more than they wanted peace. They were willing to make more concessions politically than religiously because religious Presbyterians maintained, as I have previously argued, that the church should not govern the state. Higher powers were to be respected and obeyed unless they commanded disobedience to God or began to govern tyrannically. If Charles I had agreed to sign the covenant, accept the ecclesiastical reforms, govern with Parliament instead of against it, and forgive the so-called "treasons" committed against him during the wars, then religious Presbyterians in good conscience could have settled a peace with Charles I.

The accommodation policies, which were the hallmark of the Jacobean Church may partially explain the relative concord of the first Stuart reign and the discord of the second.⁴⁵⁰ In *Bartholomew Fair*, zealotry divides and disrupts the community, while compromise unifies and regulates it. In his proclamations, King James makes a similar

Constitutional Documents, 335-347; "The king's reply to the four bills and the accompanying propositions" in *The Constitutional Documents*, 353-56..

⁴⁴⁹William Barlow, *The summe and substance of the conference*, 22, emphasis mine.

⁴⁵⁰Kenneth Fincham, "Introduction," *The Early Stuart Church: 1603-1642* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 12.

argument.⁴⁵¹ One danger of accommodation, however, is that the mean will not be found and the virtue will give way to vice. Calvin took this threat seriously, as demonstrated in one of his sermons concerning the sabbath: "If we allow the debauched and ruffians to influence us with their corrupt ways and bring into our midst more evil than we have, if we permit the profligate and corrupt to come here to practice their lewdness, will we not of necessity become debauched and totally corrupt with them?"⁴⁵² For those who interpret Busy's excessive eating and drinking as gluttony rather than charity, Busy's downfall illustrates Calvin's fearful prediction. Those who interpret Busy's indulgence as permissible because he eats "with a reformed mouth" or because the fair is officially sanctioned must grapple with Busy's ambiguous example for the weak. For Jonson, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy did not err when he participated in the fair; after all, the normative poet envisioned a gradual rectification, not an extirpation, of enormities. If "Puritans" were less zealous, he reasoned, then princes and poets could correct abuses more easily.

Calvinists, however, were anxious about spiritual discipline. While some were content to divide the spiritual and the secular swords, others were eager to give church laymen charge of Christians' bodies as well as souls. This discussion focuses on lay Calvinists who sought not only to enforce but also to epitomize virtue. Titus 1, which provides a character sketch of a good elder (or pastor, if we accept the Geneva gloss on

⁴⁵¹"The care which wee have had, and paines which wee have taken to settle the affaires of this Church of England in an uniformitie as well of doctrine, as of government," Proclamation on July 16, 1604 (London, 1604).

⁴⁵²John Calvin, "The Second Sermon on the Sabbath," (June 21, 1555), in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, Ed. and Trans. Elsie Anne McKee, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 263-4.

bishops),⁴⁵³ suggests that church leaders must be "unreproveable."⁴⁵⁴ However, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy was not bound by Jewish ceremonial laws; he participated in the new covenant of faith, not the old covenant of works. According to Calvinist theology, Busy's justification and sanctification did not depend on his actions; his actions were supposed to be a response to salvation, not a means of earning it. Colossians 2:16-17 reminds new Christians that Jesus had fulfilled the law, "Let no man therefore condemn you in meat or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moone, or of the Sabbath dayes, Which are *but a shadowe* of things to come: but the body is in Christ."⁴⁵⁵ Nevertheless, justification was supposed to bear good fruits; Christians were still commanded to love God and neighbors. According to Elsie Anne McKee, John Calvin saw love of others as an extension of love for God: "In fact, keeping the law of righteousness and justice, loving one's neighbors as oneself, may at times be the best evidence for the believer's real devotion to God."⁴⁵⁶ For Calvinists, charity is a sign of salvation, bringing assurance and hope. Charity benefits both the giver and the receiver, but the benefits for the receiver may outweigh the benefits of the giver. Often, the weaker Christian's faith may be at stake; thus, the stronger Christian is obliged to sacrifice his or her liberty. The weak may be edified or scandalized by the example of the holy, so the actions of self-professing

⁴⁵³"Side note 7" in "Titus 1," *Geneva Bible*.

⁴⁵⁴"Titus 1:6," *Geneva Bible*.

⁴⁵⁵"Colossians 2:16-17," *Geneva Bible*.

⁴⁵⁶Elsie Anne McKee, "Section I: Piety, Ethics, and the Christian Life," *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 249.

Christians may be weighed by their consequences for others.⁴⁵⁷ Busy did not err when he ate pork; he erred when he gave his party and other fair-goers an occasion to sin. Ironically, the action that he considered most charitable may, according to Paul's measure, have been the least charitable.

The problem with accommodation, for Presbyterians, was that it was *not* charitable; it permitted too many occasions for offense. Ideal church leaders were supposed to be "love[rs] [of] goodness, wise, righteous, holy, [and] temperate"; the apostle Paul takes pains to distinguish outward purity from inward purity and to insist that *both kinds* be present in elders. Presbyterians concurred with Paul. Those who kept the Jewish commandments often had outward purity without inward purity; they *appeared* blameless, but their "minds and consciences [were] defiled."⁴⁵⁸ The same could be said of Christians who, in the presence of weak brethren, ate meat sacrificed to idols or who, in the 1630s and 40s, either used scandalous ceremonies or separated from true churches. Following the letter of the law was not sufficient for Paul or Presbyterians; both demanded that Christians also honor the spirit of the law. Similarly, the lawfulness of indifferent external rites or politics settled by godly magistrates did not reassure Presbyterians; they demanded that Christians avoid any practices—be they ceremonial, disciplinary, or social—that might cause the weak to stumble. Presbyterians thought that Christians had a duty to protect not only themselves but also others who might follow in their wake and be cast upon the rocks. They were not to elevate idols above God or themselves above their associates, even their enemies.

⁴⁵⁷"I Corinthians 8 and 9," *Geneva Bible*.

⁴⁵⁸"Titus 1:15," *Geneva Bible*.

Though Busy covers the "foul face" of fair-going with a "veil" so that "the weak" do not see the corruption, this masquerade is self-deceiving. Others already know what lies beneath the veil, and the ignorant may imagine the worst. Under the Papacy, doctrinal ignorance and ceremonies kept many from distinguishing between true and false religion, Calvin tells us, but that only gave the illusion of impunity, not true immunity. "[H]ypocrites, hiding behind their cover, are confident that they are at liberty to do anything they like," but Calvin warns that they will be held accountable when the veil is lifted.⁴⁵⁹ Busy was wrong to equate outward piety with inward holiness; he was wrong to think that the images on the gingerbread posed a greater threat than the pork and the punk. This ridiculous confidence in outward appearances extends to Busy's judgment of the puppets. Busy was wrong to believe that, without the capacity to err, puppets lacked the capacity to promote error. Paul reminds us that the strong may lead the weak astray because what is safe for the strong is not safe for the weak; as Prynne's *Histriomastix* warns, a theatre with virtuous actors may still be a den of sin for playgoers. It is as true that puppets without sexual organs do not have a biological sex against which to dress just as "[a] stone which by nature moves downwards" does not have to capacity to "move upwards," but it is also true that puppets, as symbols, may be used to send mixed messages just as stones, as weapons, may be moved in unnatural ways. Habituation does not change the nature of things, Aristotle teaches, but art may manipulate nature for good

⁴⁵⁹John Calvin, *Concerning Scandals* (Geneva, 1550), Trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 58.

(according to Sidney) or for ill (according to Plato and Prynne).⁴⁶⁰ Puppets cannot have sexual intercourse, and they cannot crossdress, but they can be used to represent sexual intercourse, and they can represent one sex dressing as another. Stones do not have gravitational potential energy of their own, but people may use gravitational potential energy to resist the force of gravity on the stone. The puppets and the stone are not culpable, but that does not make them harmless; they still may be instruments of mischief. The same could be said of many ecclesiastical and civil abuses denounced by Presbyterians in the 1630s and 1640s, such as church ceremonies, bishops, Sunday sports, festivals, and plays. Even if *Busy* were acquitted of personal impiety, he might still be accused of promoting it; even if worship, ecclesiastical hierarchies, recreations, and art are indifferent, they may nevertheless be too prone to abuse to be permissible in a godly commonwealth. Similarly, Jonson's play might strike the golden mean of satiric indignation but incite envy or spite in others; fearing that outcome, Presbyterians sought a different kind of mean, one predicated not only on moderation but also on the union of forms.⁴⁶¹ Edwards' decision to employ more than one mode of persuasion in *Gangreana*, and to use the safest form of each mode, could correspond to the Presbyterian principle of employing more than one means of grace in the church—the word of God "true[ly]

⁴⁶⁰Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1103a, 28; see also Sir Philip Sidney, *A defence of poetry*, 23-7; Plato, *The Republic*, *passim*, especially chapters 4 and 13; William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix* (London, 1633).

⁴⁶¹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108b, 43.

preach[ed]," the sacraments "right[ly] administ[ered]," and "discipline uprightly ministered"—and to using the simplest form of each.⁴⁶²

Accommodation challenges Christians to identify and avoid the perilous while navigating the rough waters of the permissible. According to Aristotle, the permissible varies from person to person, from place to place, and from time to time. That is why he calls justice "essentially something human."⁴⁶³ The Apostle Paul acknowledges as much when he asserts that people must not betray their consciences. Paul's notion of conscience is explained aptly in the Genevan note on 1 Corinthians 8:12: "For this force hath conscience, that if it bee good, it maketh things indifferent good, and if it be evill, it maketh them evil."⁴⁶⁴ Applying this principle, Busy's decision to participate in the fair might be considered good for he seemed to reconcile his actions with his beliefs. That logic, however, seems to justify Antinomianism as well. According to Samuel Rutherford, Antinomians thought that God judged man's spirit, not his actions and that God's spirit worked from within man and not from without; this doctrine led them to reject not only civil and ecclesiastical laws but also the preaching of scripture and administering of sacraments to sinners: "under the Gospell," they say, "there is no need of Scripture, Preaching, Sacraments, hearing nor doing of any duties to men, nor abstinence,

⁴⁶²See "Cap. XVIII. Of the notes by whiche the true kirk is discearned from the fals, and who shalbe judge of the doctrine," *The confession of the fayth and doctrin beleved and professed by the Protestantes of the realme of Scotland*" (Edinburgh, 1561) in *The works of John Knox*, Ed. David Laing, Vol. 2 of 6 (Edinburgh: Printed for the Bannatyne Club, 1846), 110.

⁴⁶³Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1137a, 132.

⁴⁶⁴"Note k" in "I Corinthians 8:12," *Geneva Bible*.

from murdering killing, whoring, stealing &c. all externals are indifferent."⁴⁶⁵ One of the foremost apologists for *adiaphora*, Richard Hooker, emphasizes that liberty without limits leads to anarchy: "if the Church did give every Man license to follow what himself imagineth that God's Spirit doth reveal unto him, or what he supposeth that God is likely to have revealed to some special Person ... what other effect could hereupon ensue, but the utter confusion of his Church under pretense of being taught, led and guided by his Spirit?"⁴⁶⁶ It is no coincidence that Jonson has Busy claiming authority from the spirit or that Busy swings from one extreme—lax self-indulgence—to another—severe iconoclasm. Nicholas McDowell suggests that Busy's vices are meant to represent doctrinal corruption within Puritanism more broadly: "The Puritan claim to elect status is ridiculed [by Jonson] as self-justifying rhetoric: a means of allowing the few to live a life of indulgence while they call for the full rigour of the law to be imposed on the multitude."⁴⁶⁷ However, Antinomians and Libertines were the only so-called "Puritans" who vindicated their licentious lives with the plea of predestination.

One of the problems with Puritanism is that it is a broad category. Collinson tells the story of a playgoer who could not take John Dod seriously when she later met him because he reminded her of an Anabaptist character she had seen in Ben Jonson's *The*

⁴⁶⁵Samuel Richardson, *A survey of the spirituall antichrist. Opening the secrets of familisme and antinomianisme in the antichristian doctrine of John Saltmarsh and Will. Del, the present preachers of the army now in England, and of Robert Town, Tob. Crisp, H. Denne, Eaton, and others* (London, 1648), 25-38, esp. 35.

⁴⁶⁶Richard Hooker, Book 5, *The laws of ecclesiastical polity* in *The works of ... Mr. Richard Hooker*, 36-7.

⁴⁶⁷Nicholas McDowell, "The Stigmatizing of Puritans as Jews in Jacobean England: Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon and the Book of Sports Controversy," *Renaissance Studies: Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies* (19:3), June 2005, 348-63.

Alchemist. The anecdote in Collinson's reading illustrates how real people were measured by the puritan type rather than vice versa. What I find most interesting is that the woman noticed the similarities between the actual man and the caricature but ignored the differences between them. She did not differentiate Dod, the dissenting minister, from the Ananias, the Anabaptist character. When she saw the resemblance between Dod's beard and Ananias's, she automatically began to laugh at him as Jonson had encouraged her to do with Ananias.⁴⁶⁸ Does that incident suggest that Jonson's play had taught this playgoer to scorn all nonconformists or is the woman making mistakes of her own, thereby fulfilling Jonson's expectation that audiences often err? In *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson gives Busy very particular habits, yet they are drawn from many different kinds of nonconformists. Busy is by turns an unaffiliated "Elder," an Enthusiast, an anti-Judaizer, a Biblical literalist, a Banbury-man (an association that itself was ambiguous), and an Antinomian, to name only his most obvious affiliations. Insofar as Busy is more of a character sketch, a "stage-puritan," than a faithful representation of a particular religious group, we may in this case blame Jonson rather than McDowell for the false generalization. So why did Jonson choose to conflate various dissenting theologies? Was he ignorant of their distinguishing features? Did he willfully disregard them? Were they irrelevant for his purposes?

Jonsonian satire signals real early modern anxieties about license and oppression, anxieties founded on the idea that peace may be disturbed by many parties: by those pursuing greater reforms, by those without a moral compass, and by immoderate

⁴⁶⁸Patrick Collinson, "Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: The Theatre constructs Puritanism," 157-169.

governors, who are too lenient or too severe. As John Creaser has argued, Jonson ritually deflates holier-than-thou types because their real-world counterparts seemed to endanger both church and state. As Richard Bancroft's *Dangerous Positions* suggests, Presbyterians could disrupt much more than a fair.⁴⁶⁹ However, early modern people in England and Scotland feared tyranny as well. Remember that William Drummond of Hawthornden's criticisms of Covenanters in *Irene* are interwoven with warnings to the crown not to incite rebellion with repressive measures. If Jonson's social critique was grounded in historical circumstances, circumstances in which Presbyterians were momentarily contained but still mistrusted, then the critiques by Edwards and Prynne were also responses to historical circumstances in which the magistrates, in their opinions, were promoting rather than preventing scandals.

Jonson did not want his readers to take his characters too seriously, but the ideas and habits associated with them were quite real, as was Jonson's scorn. He created caricatures not only because they would be funny but also—and more importantly—because laughter would bring the audience together in collectively condemning social threats. The absence of laughter—or any pleasurable instruments—in *Gangreana* may help to account for its persuasive failures in the 1640s and for Thomas Edwards's reputation today as "one of the most bigoted and intolerant of English Presbyterians."⁴⁷⁰ However, Edwards was not bothered by personal defamation; he counted his personal losses for Christ as gains. That sentiment was common among Presbyterians; we are

⁴⁶⁹John Creaser, "Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and Bancroft's *Dangerous Positions*," *Review of English Studies (RES)* (April 2006) 57 (229): 176-184.

⁴⁷⁰Lawrence Kaplan, *Politics and Religion during the English Revolution*, 54.

about to turn to the pamphlets and performances of one man, William Prynne, who turned his martyrdom into a Presbyterianism exemplum. Like Jonson, Prynne sought to reform civil and social as well as religious abuses.⁴⁷¹ But like Edwards, Prynne would not tolerate the confusion of truth and falsehood or the real and the verisimilar. The cartoonish characters and the not-so-scary stocks into which Zeal-of-the-Land Busy and Justice Overdo are cast (and from which Wasp escapes) belie the substantial menace of their real counterparts, of corporeal punishment, and of leniency. That obfuscation was more sustainable in the Jacobean era of peace and accommodation than in the Caroline era of war and separation. Presbyterians in the mid-seventeenth-century considered passionate parables much more useful, and thus permissible, than pleasurable plays.

II. *"Let Christ be your all in your all, your onely solace, your onely Spectacle": Abusive spectacles and spectacles of abuse*

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle suggests that humans are naturally inclined toward imitation. Both imitative action and image making please us, he argues, because they increase our understanding of the world.⁴⁷² Recognizing that imitation can bring knowledge of evil as well as good and that people tend to follow bad examples more readily than good, some Christians discouraged all sorts of spectacles. They argued that if dramas and other forms of art had instructed many, they had no doubt corrupted many more. In late sixteenth-century England, the central proponent of this position was

⁴⁷¹See Reid Barbour, *John Selden*, *passim* for discussions of Ben Jonson as a normative poet.

⁴⁷²*Aristotle's Poetics*, Trans. Stephen Halliwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), *passim*.

Stephen Gosson. According to Gosson, plays were more likely to promote vice than virtue. In the *Schoolhouse of Abuse*, Gosson advises Philip Sidney, to whom the work is dedicated, and his other readers not to trust secular recreations, especially plays, because they could not trust themselves; self-control, he thought, was very fragile and best not tested. Gosson had himself written plays "when [he] knew not what [he] did"; however, his goal in the *Schoolhouse of Abuse* is to guide others to a safer path than the one he has traveled. His advice is to avoid temptations. Gosson hoped (in vain, alas) that Sidney would "commend [Gosson] at the laste, for recovering [his] steppes, with graver counsell" and would, in turn, follow Gosson's example of abandoning the theatre. Sidney did not take Gosson's advice, but William Prynne did.

In the 1632, when Queene Henrietta Maria was rehearsing a masque, Prynne wrote a scourge, *Histrion-mastix* (1632) that, like *Gangreana*, is as misunderstood today as it was when it was first published. It decried both female actors and anything else that could possibly be associated with plays or superstitions, including lawful ecclesiastical and social rituals, traditions, and sports, such as "[b]ayes in windowes, [N]ew [Y]eres guiftes, May games, danceing, [and] pictures in churches."⁴⁷³ In *Histrion-mastix*, Prynne

⁴⁷³"Proceedings in the Star Chamber: Attorney Regis versus William Pryn" (Add. MSS. 11, 764, ff. 8b029) in *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Westminster New Series XVIII (London, 1877), xxxviii, 2-3, 10-11; see pages 10-11 for a description of Prynne's offences against the Queen. Addressing the issue of whether Prynne libeled the queen, Gardiner says, "At p. 52 we have Prynne's own statement of the dates at which his book was licensed and printed. These dates fully confirm the usually received opinion, that it is impossible that the scandalous words about female actors in the Index to *Histrion Mastix* should have been used with an intention of reflecting upon the public performance of the Queen's Masque, which took place many weeks after the whole book had been printed. But they do not prove that Prynne had not in his mind the rehearsal of that Masque, which as we know from Salvette's newsletters, took place almost precisely at the same time when the Index was passing through the press" (xxxviii); In William Prynne, *A new discovery of the*

rejects the "paradox" of treating vice with vice, of "mak[ing] Vice a balme, an antidote against it selfe," yet his cures for the vices associated with spectacles, his "speedy corrosives" and "emplaisters," were considered so immoderate and inflammatory that Prynne was prosecuted in the Star Chamber for writing a "scandalous and libellous Book against the State, the Kinge, and all his people."⁴⁷⁴ Apparently, Prynne did not consider his act of "ripping up [ulcer's] noxious and infection nature on the publicke theater" to be vicious.⁴⁷⁵ Instead, he considered it to be charitable. Like God, who—according to Justus Lipsius—providentially uses natural and man-made afflictions as chastisements and scourges to "refo[r]m those that may be amended," Prynne hoped his exposé would save souls. Like other Presbyterians, he felt responsible for "ignorant" and "seduced souls"; he imagined that if he "neglec[ted]" to help "rescue" them "from these chaines of Hell, and cordes of sinne," then he would be "guiltie of the death" of them.⁴⁷⁶ *Histrion-mastix* might

prelates late tyranny (London, 1641), 7-8, Prynne says *Histrion-mastix* was published around Christmas time in 1632, well before Queen Henrietta Maria's performance, as Prynne himself emphasizes: "It came to pass, that some six weekes after the publication of this booke, the Queenes Majesty acted a part in *A pastorall* at Somerset-house; and there being some passages in this booke [*Histrion-mastix*] against Women-actors, ... and this reference to them in the Table of the booke, Women-actors notorious whores, relating to those Women-actors only whom these actors thus branded; Canterbury & the prelates ... the next day after this pastorall acted, carrying Master Prynnes booke to his Majesty, ... misinformed his Highnesse and the Queene that Master Prynne had purposefully written this book against the Queene, & her pastorall; wheras it was licensed, and most of those passages printed neere two yeeres before; and the whole booke finished at the presse at least three moneths, and published six weeks before the personating of this pastorall" (8).

⁴⁷⁴William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, 5, 104; *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne*, 2.

⁴⁷⁵William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, 5.

⁴⁷⁶Justus Lipsius, *Two bookes on constancie*, Trans. John Stradling (London, 1594), 80-82; William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, 5.

be "sharpe in taste," like God's medicinal afflictions defended by Lipsius, but it is "wholsome in operation."⁴⁷⁷ Our potential difficulty in swallowing Prynne's apology is intensified by Prynne's seeming hypocrisy in his subsequent pillory performance (1637) and his retraction of *Histrion-mastix* (1649), not to mention his many polemics.⁴⁷⁸ As we watch Prynne wrestle with normative rhetoric and poetics, we watch an early modern Presbyterian making sense of his call to be Christ-like and to create a godly community. How do you imitate Christ without presumption, and how do you typify the heavenly kingdom without removing the tares?

Opponents of the theatre did not doubt that the arts could be instruments of moral instruction; they knew that representations could shape the dispositions of men. Like Plato, the godfather of artistic censorship, they believed that "the prime importance of cultural education [is] due to the fact that rhythm and harmony sink more deeply into the mind than anything else and affect it more powerfully than anything else." Stephen Gosson and William Prynne fully grasped the desirability and utility of poesy as well as its deplorable and destructive potential. With the ability to stimulate sensations in others, artists could manipulate emotions, perceptions, and ideas; they could lead or mislead, present or misrepresent the truth. Because the weak of mind were especially susceptible to scandal, even honest and noble poets might inadvertently harm them either by exposing them to offences or by activating and strengthening their passions. Those most dependent on artistic pedagogies were precisely those least likely to benefit from them

⁴⁷⁷Justus Lipsius, *Two bookees on constancie*, 73.

⁴⁷⁸See William Prynne, *His defence of stage-plays, or a retraction of a former book of his called "Histrion-mastix"* (London, 1649).

and most likely to be endangered by them. For their sake, Presbyterians spent considerable energy anatomizing the threats of pleasurable instruments.

Plays and playgoing were dangerous, Gosson argued, because they stimulate men's passions. Although both spectacles and the affections they rouse are indifferent in and of themselves, Gosson expects audiences to abuse them because people are sinful. Unlike stoics, who considered themselves capable of governing affections with reason, Calvinists considered themselves incapable of being moderate and virtuous without God's divine assistance (over and above right reason).⁴⁷⁹ Though plays might depict great and good deeds and even inspire heroism, feelings—once ignited—would be hard for sinners to control; even if they did imitate the noble actions seen on stage, the audience would remain blameworthy (in stoic diction) or sinful (in Christian diction) if they performed the great and good deeds for the wrong reason or in the wrong way.⁴⁸⁰ Similarly, the Mosaic law, though good, brought condemnation on those who put their faith in the works themselves rather than in Christ, whom the laws typified.⁴⁸¹ Obedience was not the same as obedience unto Christ, and inspiration by art was not the same as inspiration by the Holy Spirit. For Calvinists, the dangers of misreading spectacles of worship corresponded to dangers of misreading spectacles in theatres. According to Gosson and other Calvinists, people had a hard time distinguishing between outward appearances and inward conditions or between what seems and feels good and what is actually beneficial.

⁴⁷⁹See Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1105b, 35-36; Justus Lipsius, *Two bookees of constancie*, Trans. John Stradling (London, 1594), *passim*.

⁴⁸⁰Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1105b, 35-36.

⁴⁸¹See "Galations 3," *Geneva Bible*.

Gosson agreed with Lipsius that the people needed to stop the "contagion of senses," which corrupts the soul: "[E]xternal pleasures do beguile the mind, & under pretence of helping, doe greatly hurt us."⁴⁸² In theatres, people were unable to detect poisons because they seemed sweet. Throughout *The schoolhouse of abuse*, Gosson echoes Seneca, who said, "[N]othing is so hurtfull to good manners as to sit in a Theatre, for there by the pleasures we conceive, the vices steale on us more easily."⁴⁸³ Pleased and seduced, audiences, according to Gosson, laugh with villains and lust for whores (or worse: boy actors) instead of judging critically and learning to act rightly: "[S]weete comfortes" in "theaters ... rather effiminate the minde, as pricks unto vice, then procure amendment of manuers, as spurres to vertue." Harmless delights were gateways to more sinister ones, Gosson frets:

You are no sooner entred [The school of abuse], but libertie looseth the reynes, and geves you head, placing you with Poetrie in the lowest forme: when his skill is showne too make his Scholer as good as ever twanged, hee preferres you too Pyping, from Pyping to playing, from play to pleasure, from pleasure to slouth, from slouth too sleepe, from sleep to sinne, from sinne to death, from death to the devill.⁴⁸⁴

In *Histrion-mastix* (1632), William Prynne also conceives of plays as capable of leading men from one sin to another, "*drawing them on to idlenesse, luxurie, incontinenzie, prophanenesse, and those other dangerous vices*": "How many thousands have Stage-playes drawne on to sinne, to lewdnesse, to all sorts of vice, and at last sunke downe to

⁴⁸²Justus Lipsius, *Two bookes of constancie*, 6, 11.

⁴⁸³Lucius Anneaus Seneca, "Epistle VII," *The epistles of Lucius Anneaus Seneca the philosopher. Written unto Lucilius, together with the argument unto every epistle of Justus Lipsius* (London, 1613) in *The workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, both morall and naturall*, Trans. Thomas Lodge (London, 1614), 170.

⁴⁸⁴Stephen Gosson, *The schoolhouse of abuse* (London, 1579).

hell, with the weight of those prodigious evils which they had quite avoided, had they not haunted Play-houses?"⁴⁸⁵ William Prynne continues Gosson's tradition of defaming pleasure rather than the Horatian or Ciceronian tradition of marrying instruction and delight. Like Gosson, Prynne thinks that playgoing is more likely to damn than to sanctify Christians:

Stage-plays ... are the very workes, the pompes, inventions and chiefe delights of the Divell, which all Christians solmenly abjure in their baptisme: the most pestilent corruptions of all mens (especially young mens) minds & manners; the chiefe fomentors of all vice, and wickednesse; the greatest enemies of all vertue, grace and goodnesse; the most mischievous plagues that can be harboured in any Church or State; yea lew infernall pastimes not tollerable among Heathens, not sufferable in any well-ordered Christian Republike; not once to be haunted or applauded by any civill or vertuous persons, who are either mindfull of their credits, or of their owne salvation.⁴⁸⁶

Prynne took Aristotle's theory of imitation seriously. Aristotle noted that people did not fear images and scenes that would (and should) be scary in reality. Similarly, Presbyterian polemicists recognized that people did not (but should) fear sinful sights, actions, and thoughts at plays as well as other social gathering because men are "prone" both to sin and "to Paganisme, and Heathenish superstition."⁴⁸⁷ If "imitat[ing] the Fashions, Customes, Vanities, Habites, Rites, or Ceremonies of Infidels, and Heathen Gentiles" was not an actual sin, it certainly promoted sin. Since players were merely acting, they were not guilty of the sins they dramatized, but they set bad examples; plays and other pagan practices were stumbling blocks at best and diseases at worst. Though

⁴⁸⁵William Prynne, "To the right Christian, generous young gentlemen students of the 4 famous Innes of Court, and especially those of Lincolnes Inne," *Histrio-mastix* (London, 1633).

⁴⁸⁶William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix*, 987.

⁴⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 27.

strong Christians might not succumb to the temptations around them, weak Christians probably would. Moreover, exposing oneself to diseases repeatedly invited infection; desensitization was dangerous. Imaginary vice (such as that imitated on stage) could lead to actual vice; it could weaken men's minds and morals. Prynne rejected most fictions and representations of wrongdoing; as we shall see later, he decided that historical parables and poetry could be embraced because it was an act of honoring providence and learning from it. False and sinful images or stories, however, were unnecessary. Though they might be instructive, even more so if Sidney is to be believed, Presbyterians considered them too risky. Because the fall had weakened right reason, people could easily misinterpret ambiguous art or react to it sinfully, according to Presbyterians. Those reasons are important because Prynne's retraction of the player's scourge and his pillory performances can, in Prynne's reasoning, be defended on those counts. In those seemingly hypocritical works, Prynne is faithful to his Christian mission: revealing the truth and opposing sin and presumption.

The same Prynne that in 1632 spent over a thousand pages describing why plays were—and had always been—"infamous, scandalous," and "unlawful for Christians," in 1639 wrote a short polemic in which he not only defended stage-plays, especially at court, but also described actors as dutiful subjects. He directed his former outrage (at Christians who tolerated plays and his scathing comments about those, like the king and queen, who participated in them) at the army as the new disease that was endangering the souls and bodies of Englishmen and of England herself. In *Histrion-mastix*, Prynne warns that playgoing can pervert Christians; in the *New Discovery of the Prelates' Tyranny*, Prynne warns that prelates are endangering the state as well as the church; and in the *His*

defence of stage-plays, or A retraction of a former book of his called Histrio-Mastix (1649), Prynne warns that soldiers are the new tyrants, robbing people of lawful liberties in all aspects of society. Rather than "preserving and defending monarchy" and Parliament, these cancerous covenant-breakers were denying the king his prerogative rights, trying to replace monarchy with representative government, changing the composition of Parliament, and oppressing ordinary subjects.

By 1649, dens of vice, pagan recreations, idolatrous modes of worship, and the tyranny of government were less alarming to Prynne than the New Model Army. At the end of the second civil war, Independents in the army, claiming to protect the liberties of the people, suppressed and disenfranchised supporters of the *Solemn League and Covenant* and the Newport Treaty, those—in other words—who favored Presbyterian church government and settlement with the king. Seeking greater freedom in church matters, payment of arrears, and control of the parliament, soldiers intimidated and imprisoned their rivals: political Presbyterians in Parliament and royalist leaders and sympathizers. Under these unusual circumstances, Prynne's former enemies—stage-players—became *de facto* allies. Answering the charge of fickleness grounded in his changed stance on plays and actors, *Defence of stage-playes* argues that the same spirit that led Prynne to write *Histrio-mastix* later led him to retract it. His "conscience and courage," he says, made him brave enough to defy the king when he "governed without any control" in 1632, and that same spiritual boldness was empowering him to challenge the army as they became tyrannous, even if his defiance led to martyrdom.⁴⁸⁸ As in his

⁴⁸⁸William Prynne, *His defence of stage-plays, or a retraction of a former book of his called "Histrio-mastix"* (London, Jan. 1649).

description of his Star-Chamber trial of 1634, Prynne here cultivates an image of himself as a typological antitype of the apostolic martyrs, whom Foxe posited as more valiant and worthy of imitation than pagan heroes.

Scourges and heresiologies, such as *Histrion-mastix* and *Gangreana*, were safer to imitate than fanciful stories; they did not need to be interpreted because they were factual and self-evident. Though they were passionate, they were not poetic; they did not "tickle" the senses" (to borrow a phrase from Lipsius).⁴⁸⁹ *Histrion-mastix* presents syllogism after syllogism to prove that playgoing is dangerous. Prynne leaves no room for probability or doubt. Both his message and his form are plain: "here is neither *Tragicke stile*, nor Poeticall straines, nor rare Invention, nor Clowne, nor Actor in it, but onely bare, and naked *Truth*, which needes no Eloquence, nor straine of wit for to adorne, or pleade its cause."⁴⁹⁰ In *Gangreana*, Edwards also presents evidence without ornament; he distills poisons, removing sweet syrups intended to conceal the venom within. Both Prynne and Edwards believed that people could pursue the truth when they had help in distinguishing it from falsehood:

[I]n this Catalogue [*Gangreana*] the Reader may see greater errorrs, and yet may turn himself again and behold greater, namely, damnable heresies, and yet turn himself again and read horrid blasphemies, and a third time and ead horrible disorders, confusions, strange practices, not only against the light of Scripture but nature....I am perswaded that if even seven yeer ago the Bishops ... had but preached, printed, licensed, dispersed ... openly, a quarter of these errorrs, heresies, blasphemies, ... the people would have risen up and stoned them and puld down their houses, and forced them to forbear such Doctrines.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹Justus Lipsius, *Two bookes of constancie*, 60.

⁴⁹⁰William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, 5-6.

⁴⁹¹Thomas Edwards, *Gangreana*, 143-144.

Sinners, like the adolescent guardians in Plato's *Republic*, had weak judgments; that meant that they also had little self-control. It was important, Presbyterians thought, to assist the weak in "recognizing madness and badness in men and women" (as Plato says), but it was also important to protect audiences from base impulses to imitate those vicious people.⁴⁹² Exposing sins as truly vile was quite different, Prynne and Edwards maintained, than presenting sins as pleasurable. Similarly, curing existing contagions was quite different from permitting new ones to spread or exposing oneself to sources of contamination unnecessarily.

As I have suggested, Gosson's argument persuaded Prynne, but it did not persuade Sir Philip Sidney, whose *A Defense of Poetry* claims that passions empower, rather than weaken, reason. Sidney claims that poets can stimulate spectators' fancy without letting it run wild. By showing what "is fittest for the eye to see," they can compel imaginations to run in a particular direction; in other words, poets can compel readers to pursue the ideal: what "may be and should be."⁴⁹³ Poetic invention is safe, Sidney argues, so long as the poet's mind is temperate, and pleasure in poetry is safe so long as it leads the reader/viewer toward a noble rather than a base purpose. Poetry, including plays, may be successful instruments of education or edification; taking advantage of people's propensity to imitate what they see, good poets may use spectacles (whether enacted on stage or in the mind of the reader) to correct rather than corrupt viewers/readers. Sidney

⁴⁹²Plato, *Republic*, Trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 396a, 92.

⁴⁹³Sir Philip Sidney, *A defence of poetry*, 26.

goes so far as to suggest that delight may be not only redeemable but also indispensable because it "moves men to take that goodness [the precept] in hand."⁴⁹⁴

We may wonder if Presbyterians were more willing to dispense with delight than Sidney because they attributed the work of "moving men to take ... goodness in hand" to be the work of the Holy Spirit. They did not—like Roman Catholics, some Episcopalians, and many enthusiasts—acknowledge the power of humans or human institutions, such as poets and churches, to serve as conduits of grace. Though right preaching and duly administering the sacraments were divine offices, those practices had authoritative measures: Scripture. Enforcing that rule was a Presbyterian objective in the mid-seventeenth century. It was much harder, Presbyterians thought, to find a safe measure for poesy.

Presbyterians were not opposed to pleasure or pain or to affections themselves. Like stoics, they opposed delights of the senses, not "true and lawful delights" of the soul; they discouraged unnecessary or irrational suffering, not godly perseverance or mercy. Adversity, chastisements, and scourges are beneficial, Presbyterians insisted.⁴⁹⁵ Adversity gave Christians an opportunity to persevere and prove their faith; it gave them an opportunity to reflect and repent. Contemplating and imitating God was not only acceptable, it was advisable. Stirred by considering Christ's passion and resurrection as well as their salvation, the faithful could elevate themselves above earthly concerns:

[B]ut let Christ be your all in all, your onely solace, your onely Spectacle, and joy on earth, whose soule-ravishing heart-filling presence, shall be your eternall solace, your everlasting visible all-glorious most triumphant

⁴⁹⁴Ibid., 27.

⁴⁹⁵Justus Lipsius, *Two books of constancie*, 29, 31, 63, 73-82.

Spectacle in the highest heavens; wither God bring us all at length for this his Sonne and mercies sake.⁴⁹⁶

The safest pleasures, *Histrio-mastix* suggests, have a higher end. The same argument could be made for pain. Negative emotions, such as fear and sorrow, were edifying, according to Calvinists, when they reconciled men to God and to one another. When affections spring from fountains of truth, from man's realization of his own sin or that of others, they are fruits of grace, not seeds of perdition. When Presbyterians, full of hope, strive to prevent others from experiencing harm, they are following God's edicts and examples, not acting in vain self-interest. Presbyterians oppose base, inappropriate, or immoderate affections, not sacred, suitable, sensible ones.

Presbyterian moderation is evident when contrasted with the severe stances of some, like Tertullian, who feared all emotional responses. In *De spectaculis* Tertullian seems to suggest that even divine ecstasy may be dangerous and ungodly:

*Deus praecepit spiritum sanctum, utpote pro naturae suae bono tenerum et delicatum, tranquillitate et lenitate et quiete et pace tractare, non furore, non bile, non ira, non dolore inquietare. Huiusmodi cum spectaculis poterit conuenire? omne enim spectaculum sine concussione spiritus non est. Ubi enim voluptas, ibi et studium, per quod scilicet voluptas sapit; ubi studium, ibi et aemulatio, per quam studium sapit. Porro et ubi aemulatio, ibi et furor et bilis et ira et dolor et cetera ex his, quae cum his non competunt disciplinae. Nam et si qui modeste et probe spectaculis fruitur pro dignitatis uel aetatis uel etiam naturae suae condicione, non tamen immobili animo et sine tacita spiritus passione. Nemo ad uoluptatem uenit sine affectu, nemo affectum sine casibus suis patitur. Ipsi casus incitamenta sunt affectus. Ceterum si cessat affectus, nulla uoluptas, et est reus iam ille uanitatis eo conueniens, ubi nihil consequitur.*⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ William Prynne, "To the right Christian gentlemen students of the 4 famous Innes of Court, especially those of Lincolnes Inne," *Histrio-mastix*.

⁴⁹⁷ Tertullian, *De spectaculis* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), *cap.*: 15, *linea*: 1.

In view of Tertullian's and Gosson's arguments that no passion is safe, Prynne's recommended restraints seem much more modest. Prynne was neither an ascetic nor what Lipsius terms a "bad stoic"; he opposed "vice-fomenting evils," not virtue-encouraging delights.⁴⁹⁸

The opinion that art is permissible when useful helps to explain why William Prynne, who had rejected spectacles so strongly in *Histrion-mastix* (1632), then encouraged the audience at his pillory punishment in 1637 (and the audience of his later pamphlets about being pilloried) to view his punishment as a spectacle. Prynne's torture upon the pillory for writing against Laudian innovations was intended to inculcate obedience. Punishing Prynne, the Caroline establishment could discourage both him and pillory spectators from questioning the existing religious and civil laws; however, Prynne appropriated the living parable. He interprets his punishment (having his ears butchered off so fully and cruelly that it almost killed him and having his face thrice branded) typologically, suggesting that his sufferings should remind men of Christ's wrongful suffering upon the cross. Prynne also reclaimed the S and L with which the state marked him as a "seditious libeller"; he declared that they were "the marks of the Lord Jesus," visible signs of Prynne's godly obedience. Just as Jesus had peaceably handed himself over to the Romans for persecution and for God's praise, Prynne had also willingly surrendered himself to Laud for persecution and for God's praise. He expressed those sentiments in the verses he allegedly composed on his way from the pillory to prison:

S.L. STIGMATA LAUDIS.

⁴⁹⁸Justus Lipsius, *Two books of constancie*, 45; William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, "Epistle dedicatorie" and 104.

*STIGMATA maxillis referens insignia Laudis,
 EXULTANS remeo, victima grata Deo.
 Which one since thus Englished,
 S.L LAUDS SCARS
 Triumphant I returne, my face describes
 Lauds scorching SCARS, Gods grateful sacrifice
 [and]
 Bearing LAUDS STAMPS on my Cheeks, I retire
 Triumphant, Gods sweet sacrifice, by Fire.⁴⁹⁹*

Reinterpreting a humiliating civil penalty as an edifying spiritual ritual empowers Prynne, but he gives God the glory. He presents himself as a Christian exemplar in the tradition of John Foxe's "myld and constant Martyrs of Christ," whose spiritual sufferings "garnish the lyfe" as an "exampl[e] of great profite ... to encourage men to all kinde of Christian godlines"; unlike the "gaye" epics of the pagan era that "delight the eare," Prynne's narratives of his trial and punishment are designed to be a "lively testimony of Gods mighty working in the life of man."⁵⁰⁰

Prynne's pillory poetry also functioned sacramentally both for him personally—bringing assurance of salvation and sanctification—and for those who read it in his martyrology, *A new discovery of the prelates' late tyranny* (1641). Prynne agreed with Sidney that art should promote "what can be and should be," but he also accepted John Foxe's theory that God's providence toward a real man might be more moving, especially in times of affliction, than fictional accounts. He was more optimistic than Edwards but more cautious than Sidney. Publishing that tract, Prynne sought to stir others' virtuous passions, such as longsuffering and hope, but he restrained those passions by using his

⁴⁹⁹William Prynne, *A new discovery of the prelates' late tyranny*, 2nd ed., Thomason 28:E.162[2] (London, 1641), 65-6.

⁵⁰⁰John Foxe, "The utilitie of this story" in *Actes and monuments*, 4th ed. (London, 1583).

discourse to tie those affections to reason, not opinion. Prynne was using his passions decently and charitably and encouraging others to follow his example. Both on the pillory and in his pamphlet, Prynne was testifying, teaching the audience to read his life and their own providentially. Like Foxe, Prynne tried to present a "playne witnes," an encouraging reminder that physical pain and temporal trials serve a higher purpose:

[In Christian martyrs] we have a much more assured and playne witnes of God both in whose lives and deathes appeared such manifest declarations of Gods divine working, whiles in such sharpnes of tormentes we behold in them strength, so constant above mans reach, such readiness to answere, such patience in imprisonment, such godliness in forgeving, cherefulness so couragious in suffering, besides the manifold sense and feeling of the holy ghost which they in their lives so plentifully tasted in theyr afflictions.⁵⁰¹

As a Presbyterian, Prynne believes that God may increase man's grace through (but not dependent upon) godly works and godly men, even though those works and men remain sinful. With Foxe, whose prayer is that his history may help "true disposed minds" to "receive some such spirituall fruit to theyr soules through the operation of his grace, that it may be to the advancement of his Glory, and profite of his Church, through Christ Jesus," Prynne tries to benefit his readers spiritually, emphasizing that grace may flow through him but it is not of him (or dependent on him).⁵⁰² Those who believed in free will thought man could cooperate with God in his salvation, but neither Prynne nor Edwards held that view; instead, they encouraged spectators to observe God's operations in man (or man's operations without God, as is the case in *Gangreana*) and to find comfort or censure therein.

⁵⁰¹Ibid.

⁵⁰²John Foxe, "To the true and faythfull congregation of Christes universall church," *Actes and monuments*.

Prynne restrains passion with reason; poetry with history; and human history with divine typology. Prynne's pillory performance is a parable; it is a story with both literal and figurative meaning. It is an example, an exemplar, and a sign; it is illustrative, imperative, and commemorative. As an actual event, the punishments resulting from Laud's alleged tyranny have tangible consequences; his injustice harms real people in material ways. Eager for his experiences to have a broader meaning and to shake the people from complacency, Prynne emphasizes that all of England is facing a real danger; ordinary people must oppose prelacy if they wish to preserve their civil and spiritual rights:

For my own part rather then I will have my case a leading case, to deprive the Subjects of their Liberty which I seek to maintaine, I will joyfully expose my person to be a leading example, to beare this punishment. I beseech you all to take notice of their proceedings against me in this cause.... See now into what times we are fallen, when as Libelling (if it were so) against Prelates only is ten times more severely censured, and deemed a farre greater Offence then Libelling against the King or Queene in these late Princes dayes.... [T]he prelates sending forth of writs and proces in their own names, and under their own seales, [is] against the law, and ... entrench[es] on his Majesties Prerogative Royall, and the Subjects Liberty.... We praise the Lord, we feare none but God and the King: Had we respected our Liberties, we had not stood here at this time: it was for the generall good and Liberties of you all that we have now thus farre engaged our owne Liberties in this Cause.... Christian people, I beseech you all, stand firme, and be zealous for the cause of God, and his true Religion, to the shedding of YOUR dearest blood, otherwise you will bring your selves, and Posterities, into perpetuall bondage and slavery, to these Romish Innovators, and Tyrannizing Prelates.⁵⁰³

This 1637 rallying cry becomes a prophetic jeremiad as part of Prynne's subsequent publication of his trial and punishment, *A new discovery of the prelates' late tyranny* (1641). That martyrology is also anti-prelatical propaganda; it recounts the pillory

⁵⁰³William Prynne, *A new discovery of the prelates' late tyranny*, 2nd ed., Thomason 28:E.162[2], 36, 40, 41, 42, 44.

performances of Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton both to remind England of Laud's crimes and to stir readers to follow their pattern of resistance. Reminding readers that Bastwick, Prynne, and Burton represent "Divinity, Law, and Physick" respectively, the preface implies that the archbishop's past injustice towards these particular men Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne signifies prelacy's ongoing threat to the essential institutions of English society. Saying, "[s]uch a spectacle to men, and Angels, no age ever saw before," Prynne implies that the events of that particular place and time, of the English commonwealth suffering under Laud, are special; like the heroes of the Bible, their actions have celestial significance.⁵⁰⁴ Though Christ's passion provided the ideal Christian spectacle, Prynne and other faithful Christians felt bound by duty to "God and King" to reenact the sacred drama of self-sacrifice for a higher good.

The performance on the pillory (1637), recounted in *A new discovery* (1641), was not Prynne's first role as a sacrificial victim. In *Histrio-mastix* (1632), a long and inflammatory text that associates drama with Satan and Charles I with the infamous tyrant, Nero, Prynne casts himself in the martyr's mold. Producing *Histrio-mastix*, he says, was an act of Christian heroism. Like Christ, he embraced persecution, obeying God's call to save others:

I resolved with my selfe at last to endure the crosse, and despise the hate, and shame, which the publishing of this Histrio-Mastix might procure me, and to assuage (at least in my endeavours, if not otherwise,) these inveterate, and festred ulcers (which may endanger Church, and State at once,) by applying some speedy corrosives, and emplaisters to them, and ripping up their noxious, and infectious nature on the publike theater, in these ensuing Acts, and Scaenes.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴William Prynne, "To the courteous reader," *A new discovery of the prelates' late tyranny*, 2nd ed, Thomason 28:E.162[1] (London, 1641), 3.

⁵⁰⁵William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix* (London, 1633), 5.

In addition to comparing himself to Christ, Prynne likens himself to a doctor who is willing to use harsh measures to cure society, even if he is punished for it. The conceit of writer as doctor and text as medicine is commonplace, as we have seen, but this correspondence is particularly apt here because it acknowledges that the style of his writing may be unpleasant and even potentially dangerous. His mode of treatment is similar to the disease; both corrosives (his remedy) and ulcers (the disease) destroy flesh. The difference is in the relative benefit or harm of the destructive process. The damage and pain caused by *Histrion-mastix* are temporary, necessary, and controllable, unlike the vices of "publike theater." His treatment is commensurate with the threat: "inveterate gangrend ulcers, as Playes and Players are, neede sharpe emplaisters, biting corrosives, else they will not be cured; because gentle lenitives cannot cleanse them."⁵⁰⁶

Prynne's harsh medicine is akin to God's loving chastisement of his adopted children. In Hebrews 12: 10-11, a text that Prynne likely considered when writing *Histrion-mastix*, the Apostle Paul says God "*chasteneth us* for our profite, that we might be partakers of his holinesse. Now no chastising for the present seemeth to be joyous, but, grievous: but afterwarde, it bringeth the quiet fruite of righteousness, unto them which are thereby execised."⁵⁰⁷ *Histrion-mastix* and other virulent texts were participating in a biblical tradition of harsh reproof for edifying; while that precedent may have legitimized the form, the authors were certainly taking a personal risk in using such intimate, incriminating forms. Hence, these authors had to emphasize that they were operating as

⁵⁰⁶William Prynne, "Epistle Dedicatorie," *Histrion-mastix* (London, 1633).

⁵⁰⁷"Hebrews 12: 10-11," *Geneva Bible*.

agents of God and not as personal vigilantes. To emphasize that he is following Christ's example, that he has a biblical warrant (even a mandate) for doing so, and that he expects his reward from God rather than man, Prynne accompanies his explanation above with a marginal reference to Hebrews 12:2, a passage shortly before the one just quoted:

"Looking unto Jesus as the authour and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God."⁵⁰⁸ Readers familiar with Prynne's training as a lawyer may be surprised by Prynne's claim that he wrote *Histrion-mastix* in response to a God-given call; some might even dismiss the following remark as a conventional defense for an offensive text:

God had put this oportunitie into my hand, and will into my heart, to doe it: my Conscience then perswaded me; that my negligence, my slackenesse in this kinde, *might make mee guiltie of the death of all such ignorant, and seduced Soules, which these my poore endeavours might rescue from these chaines of Hell, and cordes of sinne: and interest me, in all the evill which they might suppress.*"⁵⁰⁹

Prynne suggests that opportunities are providential; that desires can be implanted by God; that God may use pamphlets as well as sermons (and lawyers as well as preachers) to call for repentance; and that disobedience will lead to suffering and possible damnation not only for reprobates but also for the wayward servant.

To Laud and members of the Star Chamber, those claims were mere excuses for presumption and treason. Unlike Calvin, Prynne had not followed his legal training with pastoral ordination; thus, he had no official authority to meddle with spiritual or ecclesiastical affairs. Officiating at Prynne's trial in 1637, Lord Heath and other judges

⁵⁰⁸"Hebrews 12:2," *Geneva Bible*.

⁵⁰⁹William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, 5.

rebuked Prynne for exceeding the bounds of his profession.⁵¹⁰ However, Hebrews 12 offers Prynne a defense; verse 15 gives an imperative to all Christians to prevent heresy and live model lives: "Take heede, that no man fall away from the grace of God: let no roote of bitternes spring up and trouble *you*, lest thereby many be defiled."⁵¹¹ The Geneva notes to that verse reinforce that point, saying, "We must studie to edifie one another, both in doctrine and example of life"⁵¹² "[t]hat no heresie, or backesliding be an offence."⁵¹³ Less willing to endow all Christians with the office of edification, Archbishop Laud and members of the Star Chamber distrusted Prynne's attempts to spur people, especially office holders, to repentance and reform. Officials of the Star Chamber equated Prynne's belief that he had a vocation not only in civil society (as a lawyer) but also in the spiritual community (as a writer capable of correcting others by fighting offences and modeling charity) with mutiny. Conversely, Prynne equated the prelates' civil actions with presumption. Because he was a lawyer and thus a lawful civil officer, Prynne claimed that he had a professional obligation to oppose lawbreakers, such as Archbishop Laud, and unlawful policies, such as prelacy: "And to defend our lawes and liberties against Prelaticall incroachments, is one principall part of a Lawyer's Profession; so that

⁵¹⁰"The Proceedings in the Star Chamber: Attorney Regis versus William Pryn, Esp. Thomas Buckner, Clarke, Michaell Sparkes, and others" (Add. MSS. 11, 764, ff. 8b029) in *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637. With a biographical fragment by the late John Bruce*, Ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Camden Society New Series XVIII (London: Westminster Press, 1877), 18.

⁵¹¹"Hebrews 12:15," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

⁵¹²"Side note 10" in "Hebrews 12:15," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

⁵¹³"Side note f" in "Hebrews 12:15," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

in this regard this *Antipathy* [i.e. this pamphlet] is neither without, nor besides my calling."⁵¹⁴

Though Prynne sometimes took refuge in his profession as a lawyer, his principal defense was his Christian calling, a calling that demanded that he serve as his brothers' keeper and use all decent means to accomplish that end. The moral law, which Presbyterians considered themselves bound to obey, contained one table commanding proper worship of God and second table commanding service to neighbors. Prynne's pamphlets and performances were, in my opinion, meant to be faithful responses to the second table. A Presbyterian reading of the second table is included in the *Scots confession of faith* (1560):

To honour father, mother, princes, reullaris, and superiour poweris; to love thame; to support thame; yea, to obey thair charges (not repugnyng to the commandiment of God); to save the lyves of innocents; to repress tyranny; to defend the oppressed; to keep our bodyes cleane and holy; to lyve in sobrietie and temperance; to deall justlie with all men, boyth in word and in deed; and, finallie, to repress all appetite of our nychtbouris hurte;—ar the good workis of the Second Table, whiche ar most pleasing and acceptable unto God, as those workis that are commanded by him self.⁵¹⁵

As Presbyterians hereby suggest, God demands that Christians "repress" their harmful "appetite[s]," but that does not mean that they become completely passive; He also demands that individuals "save the lyves of innocents," "repress tyranny," and "defend the oppressed." The parenthetical aside in this passages is crucial; "not repugnyng to the commandiment of God" is the measure both of civil obedience and of civil practice.

⁵¹⁴William Prynne, *Antipathie of English lordly prelacie* (London, 1641), sig. Bv.

⁵¹⁵*The confession of the fayth and doctrin beleved and professed by the Protestantes of the Realme of Scotalnd* (Edinburgh, 1561) in *The works of John Knox*, Vol. 2, 106.

Passionate and poetic practices, then, must also conform to that rule: to "lyv[ing] in sobrietie and temperance" while acting spiritually or temporally to ensure that others do so as well.⁵¹⁶

To understand anti-stage polemic, we must understand the reformers' respect for the power of the theatre and other provocative forms. Those, such as Stephen Gosson and William Prynne, who sought to suppress delightful arts and close the theatres did not lack an aesthetic sensibility; rather, they had a heightened awareness of poetic influence. The connection between the depth of reformers' sympathy for poetics and the zealotry of their attacks on it mirrors the equally ambivalent attitude of "John Milton and his contemporaries" to pagan philosophy and literature. According to Charles Dunster, those authors deemed Stoicism "worthy of a more particular examination" and refutation precisely because, as Reid Barbour aptly summarizes the point, "it seem[ed] so attractive and amenable to a Christian culture."⁵¹⁷

Presbyterians believed that poesy is amoral; it could promote virtue or vice, predispose man to good or evil, and erect or destroy the foundation of reason.⁵¹⁸ Unlike Enthusiasts, such as William Dell, who believed that human "learning, arts, [and] tongues, are in their nature and kind, heathenish," Presbyterians, such as Samuel

⁵¹⁶Ibid.

⁵¹⁷See Charles Dunster, *"Milton's 'Paradise Regained': Two Eighteenth-Century Critiques*, ed. and intro. Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), 229-30, cited in Reid Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 1.

⁵¹⁸Plato, *Republic*, Oxford World Classics, trans., intro., and notes by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 401d-e.

Rutherford, believed that "they are neither heathenish nor Christian, but naturall and well polished habits and acquired qualities indifferent and extrinsicall to either the state of Ethnicisme or Christianity."⁵¹⁹ In other words, our abilities as humans—to acquire knowledge from experience and education, to think abstractly and concretely, to communicate and interpret, to represent ideas and objects, and to imagine unnatural or supernatural phenomena—are *adiaphora*. According to Presbyterians, when *adiaphora* are orderly and edifying, they may benefit Christian societies, but when *adiaphora* are disorderly and destructive, they may harm Christian societies. Our intellectual and material creations, including disciplines and cultural artifacts, are neither good nor evil on their own. Their contexts, rather their being, determine their moral worth.

When judging *adiaphora*, Presbyterians considered whether those externals were rightly understood and used. Calvin warned his readers that indifferent things are permissible as long as people consider them nonessential, enjoy them moderately, and employ them properly (for their intended purpose); when *adiaphora* trouble, enslave, or inflame men, they must be abandoned.⁵²⁰ Reformed discussions of Christian liberty emphasized that Christ freed Christians from the covenant of works, but he did not free them from the moral law, which taught men to avoid being a scandal, "an occasion of unbelief or moral lapse," or an offence, "a cause of spiritual or moral stumbling."⁵²¹ According to Luther, "All things are free to us by Faith, yet all things are under the obligation of the Law, in regard of charity"; "externall servitude is laid on the outward

⁵¹⁹Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spirituall antichrist* (London, 1648), 49.

⁵²⁰John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.19.8-9.

⁵²¹*Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

man, that by love he is to serve his neighbour."⁵²² According to Calvin, "all external things [are] subject to our liberty, provided that our minds have regard to this liberty before God. But if any superstitious notion cause us to scruple, those things which were naturally pure become contaminated to us."⁵²³ Those, then, who consider poesy heathenish and thus unlawful, would indeed be sinning by using it because they would be betraying their conscience. The conscience, however, is not the best religious measure because many people sin with a free conscience. The Antinomians, for instance, deluded themselves and others into believing that outward behavior and human instruments are inconsequential to those with a pure heart or good intentions.

In strong contrast to Antinomians, Presbyterians maintained that all actions have consequences both for the individual actor and his community; *adiaphora* cease to be indifferent when they become a stumbling block.⁵²⁴ When *adiaphora* promoted sanctification, they were a blessing; when they promoted backsliding, they were a curse. Presbyterians used I Corinthians 14, especially verses 26 and 40, as their measure for *adiaphora*: "Let all things be done unto edifying" and "Let all things be done honestly and by order."⁵²⁵ Proponents of Episcopacy and Independency used the same measure (of edification and order), reminding us that they held values in common. However, their commonality had limits; they did not share the application of their measure. In other words, they disagreed on whether certain "accidentals, accessories, and circumstantials"

⁵²²Martin Luther, qtd. in Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist*, 148.

⁵²³John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.19.8.

⁵²⁴Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist*, 60, 62.

⁵²⁵"I Corinthians 14:26, 40," *Geneva Bible* (1587).

of religion and apparatuses of human learning were strengthening and stabilizing religious and political communities or weakening and confusing them.⁵²⁶

Conceiving of poesy as an indifferent instrument may help us to understand how Stephen Gosson and William Prynne could promote poesy with one hand and attack it with another without, in their estimation, being hypocritical. Gosson's and Prynne's approaches to poesy makes sense when compared to the moderating movements of other zealous reformers. There are parallels between Presbyterian poetics and Presbyterian opposition to toleration, opposition to bishops, and opposition to ceremonies.⁵²⁷ These comparisons illustrate the Presbyterian policy of mitigating risks by removing abuses and preventing their reoccurrence. "Lawfull moderation" may "wink at" imperfections and proceed slowly in disciplining, but it does not mitigate the "severity of scripture" or stop reformations halfway.⁵²⁸

In both the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century controversies concerning ceremonies, Presbyterians promoted simplicity and opposed embellishments for several reasons. First, scripture, considered by Presbyterians to be the "onely rule and principle in matters of Religion and Reformation," associated the church with the people who worshipped, not the places or practices of worship.⁵²⁹ In a fast-day sermon on September

⁵²⁶Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 73; Samuel Rutherford, *A survey of the spiritual antichrist*, 55.

⁵²⁷See below, chapter 3, for discussions of Presbyterian opposition to toleration and episcopacy.

⁵²⁸Anthony Burgess, *The difficulty of, and encouragements to a reformation* (London, 1643), 20.

27, 1643, Anthony Burgess, a former conformist and moderate Presbyterian, reminded the House of Commons that God expected them to increase the inward, spiritual beauty of English Christians rather than the outward, worldly beauty of church buildings or rites.⁵³⁰ Borrowing the reprimand of Isidore to the allegedly pompous prelate, Eusebius, Burgess reprimands Parliament: "the Church is one thing, the place of the Church another; the one consists of unblameable men, the other of wood and stone." Scripture, Burgess argues, demands that they protect and edify the people, enhancing them with "heavenly graces," not "buil[d] and ador[n]" cathedrals and altars, which are dangerous at best.⁵³¹ Burgess does not demand that Parliament stop the restoration of cathedrals or the use of ceremonies; instead, he counsels them with alternating threats and incentives to recognize that true worship is spiritually joyful, not "outward[ly] glorious." "[H]oly ordinances" and "holy Worship" are designed to bond the people with God; they are instruments, not ends.⁵³² Burgess reminds the statesmen that God punishes those who fail to fulfill His will: including those who delay reformation, those who do not entirely reform worship, those who subsequently corrupt the pure worship by retaining or restoring remnants of idolatry, and those who presume to worship the true God with unwarranted rituals. "[T]he neglect of any order [God] hath left with his Church," Burgess warns, may result in a terrible scourge for "though they have done much, yet if

⁵²⁹Anthony Burgess, *The difficulty of, and the encouragements to a reformation* (London, 1643), 3.

⁵³⁰E. C. Vernon, "Burgess, Anthony (d. 1664)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵³¹Anthony Burgess, *The difficulty of, and the encouragements to a reformation*, 23-4, 26.

⁵³²*Ibid.*, 26-7.

they have not done completely, [God] hath been angry.”⁵³³ The woeful phrase then quoted, “*Neverthelesse the high places were not taken away*,” is, Burgess implies, as relevant in 1643 as it was in the days of the greatest kings of Israel.

Using a rhetorical strategy popular among Presbyterians, the similar situation typology, Burgess invites his audience, who has just passed the *Solemn League and Covenant* two days prior, to recall the old covenant that God made with Moses, the covenant that promised blessings for those who would “follow [His] statutes and keep [His] commandments and observe them faithfully” and curses for those who “break [His] covenant.”⁵³⁴ The particular refrain that Burgess cites pertains especially to the failure of the Israelites to worship God as He desired to be worshipped, failures closely linked with their perpetual idolatry. Until Hezekiah destroyed all of the places and instruments of idolatry, sacrileges spread; when the people broke the covenant, God terrorized them with physical, emotional, environmental, social, and political losses.⁵³⁵ The analogical message is clear: complete God’s reformation or He will do it, and His way will further devastate the kingdom.⁵³⁶ The war, Burgess’s typology suggests, is a consequence of previous reformation failures. Correcting those failures could not only end the war but

⁵³³Ibid., 23.

⁵³⁴Leviticus 26: 3-33, especially verses 3 and 14-16, *Geneva Bible* (1587). See R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen’s Interpretation of Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 22; John S. Pendergast, *Religion, Allegory, and Literacy in Early Modern England, 1560-1640: The Control of the Word* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 22, 31, 50-51;

⁵³⁵See Leviticus 26:30; Numbers 33:52; I Kings, 3:2, 9:6-9, 11:7-13, 13: 32-33, 14: 23, 15:14, 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3, 14:4, 15:4, 15:35, 17:9, 18, and 22-23.

⁵³⁶Anthony Burgess, *The difficulty of, and the encouragements to a reformation*, 23-5.

also usher in a new period of prosperity and peace; ignoring them would practically ensure defeat.⁵³⁷ The implied threat of military defeats and widespread suffering would have been tangible to the M.P.s. Even those inclined to dismiss the relevance of Old Testament stories might still have wondered whether God's providence would support them or the other side. Burgess's typological sermon conveys a troublesome narrative to discipline his audience; though "[d]ifficul[t]" his "[e]ncouragements" might be, his intention, like Edwards', was to heal the nation, not hurt it.⁵³⁸

Burgess wanted the House of Commons to learn that God's reformation entailed changes much more fundamental than those associated with the polity or prayer book; simplicity in worship was a means to a higher end: recognizing that we should be temples that venerate God. Arguably, Hooker, Laud, and other apologists for the forms of worship used in Church of England also wanted people to glorify God; Presbyterians and Episcopalians had a common goal. However, Episcopalians and Presbyterians had different notions of how to accomplish that end. Hooker, Laud, and King Charles conceived of God as splendid and majestic; they thought they could create outward "signs" that could "resemble" the heavenly beauty they were trying to "signify." Episcopalians thought God would be rightly praised when his "divine sublimity" was reflected outwardly in the people and their communal worship.⁵³⁹ Like Burgess, most

⁵³⁷Ibid., 24.

⁵³⁸Anthony Burgess, *The difficulty of, and the encouragements to a reformation*, frontispiece, 24; the title aptly encapsulates that premise.

⁵³⁹William Laud, *The works of the most reverend father in God William Laud sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, Vol. 1: Sermons (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847), *passim*; Richard Hooker, "Book V," *The works of that learned and judicious divine Mr.*

Presbyterians, including John Calvin, John Knox, and George Gillespie, also considered it presumptuous and sinful to try to represent God and his “incomprehensible essence.” Calvin says, “God’s glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood whenever any form is attached to him.... [W]ithout exception he repudiates all likenesses, pictures, and others signs by which the superstitious have thought he will be near them.”⁵⁴⁰ When God has represented Himself, Calvin observes, He has done so enigmatically; his “symbols of heavenly glory” “restrained the minds of all, like a bridle placed on them, from attempting to penetrate too deeply.”⁵⁴¹ The pedagogical instruments God uses, the book of nature and scripture, teach “us first to fear God, then to trust him” because God desires that we “worship him both with perfect innocence of life and with unfeigned obedience” and “depend wholly upon his goodness.”⁵⁴² In other words, Presbyterians opposed attempts to reflect God’s glory; instead, they praised God with reverent humility. When Prynne gave his pillory performance, he was showing the audience how to worship God, not making himself into an idol or a symbol of God himself. Presbyterian positioning was inspired and regulated by a fixed purpose (promoting holiness) but responsive to changing circumstances (necessitating the abandonments of instruments perverted by human weakness or made obsolete by social change). Gosson’s movement

Richard Hooker, containing eight books of the laws of ecclesiastical polity, and several other treatises. To which is prefixed the life of the author, by Issac Walton. To this edition is subjoined a new index to the whole, Vol. 2 of 3, (Oxford, 1793), 23-4; Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, passim, especially 200-214; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, Altars Restored, passim, especially chapters 4, 5, and 6.

⁵⁴⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.1.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1.11.3.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.1.2.

from one stance, that plays could be morally useful, to another, that the moral hazard outweighed the moral benefits and the reverse movement by Prynne, is characteristic of Presbyterian positioning. Whether Gosson was a Presbyterian is irrelevant to this study; Gosson need not be classified as a "Presbyterian" to illustrate the Presbyterian habit of reevaluating social apparatuses. Indeed, that habit was common in Nonconformists of many persuasions both in the late-sixteenth century and in the mid-seventeenth. Independents were also flexible. The problem, according to Presbyterians like Thomas Edwards and William Prynne, was that they were too flexible, as evidenced not only by their advocacy of toleration but also by their own changing beliefs.

Henry Burton's evolution from "*quondam* fellow-sufferer" with John Bastwick and William Prynne to arch nemesis of theirs is a prime example of the immoderate flexibility that frightened Presbyterians. Presbyterians judged Burton's evolution to be despicable and dangerous because his changes treated indifferent things as if they were essential; his changes were soteriological, and his new soteriology shared tenets with a very old heresy, Donatism. In the 1630s, he held the orthodox position that salvation is not contingent on the purity of the congregation or its ceremonies. His efforts to reform the church, ridding it of practices associated with Papistry, were conventional; although the Star Chamber censured him for libeling the church and state, he had acquiesced to the proper authorities. He had appealed to the magistrate to free the church from scandals, and he had defended the legitimacy of sacraments administered by sinful men. In the 1640s, Burton separated from the established church because he no longer recognized the authority of the magistrate to reform the church, the authority of a national assembly to govern congregations, or the legitimacy of sacraments in mixed churches. His efforts to

transform the visible church into a perfect image of the invisible were, according to Presbyterians like Edmund Calamy, a stumbling block for those both within and without his congregation.⁵⁴³ When Burton stopped supporting the Presbyterian ideals that ecclesiastical government should glorify God and edify the people and should turn to the civil government for protection and support and began promoting the Judaic and Donatist notions that the church *must* be a perfect, divinely-instituted, and divinely-protected community, he erred in a fundamental way, a way that could endanger his soul and the souls of his followers.

The magisterial reforms advocated by Presbyterians, such as Thomas Edwards and William Prynne, were not, by contrast, essential or scandalous; their positions on “accidentals, accessories, and circumstantialls,” to borrow Edwards’ phrasing, may have shifted, but their fundamental beliefs and core objectives did not change.⁵⁴⁴ When Edwards and Prynne adjusted their attitudes towards Independents and plays, respectively, they were responding to new data: to the new policies, practices, and polemics of religious and political Independents as well as to other sources of disorder in England. Their aim was unaltered: both continually sought to correct abuses in the ecclesiastical, civil, and social systems. Neither modified their soteriologies or violated the orthodox, I Corinthian standard for *adiaphora*. In 1646, Edwards still embraced Congregationalists as fellow Christians, even though he opposed toleration and the errors it encouraged, and Prynne still opposed public entertainments and scandalous rituals, even though he offered concessions to the king. Their tactics were amended, but their

⁵⁴³ Edmund Calamy, *A just and necessary apology* (London, 1644) and *The door of truth opened* (London, 1645).

⁵⁴⁴ Thomas Edwards, *Antapologia*, 73.

tenets were the same. Though Edwards loved Congregationalists, he no longer trusted them; though Prynne feared plays, he no longer feared the king's use of them. Thomas Edwards, William Prynne, and other Presbyterians had a similarly flexible approach to rhetoric and poesy, to passion and pleasure. They supported the godly use of them but opposed the sinful abuse of them.

Epilogue

In the 1630s and 1640s, powerful pens denigrated Presbyterians. Supporters of Charles I accused them of being ambitious rebels; supporters of state reform accused them of being insincere cowards. Episcopalians accused them of being heretics; Independents accused them of being too loyal to existing institutions and practices. Presbyterians were attacked on all sides; they were accused in state affairs of being either disobedient or equivocal and in religious affairs of being unorthodox or overly zealous. They became general signifiers of strife: cultural lightning rods amidst fields of colliding civil and spiritual agendas. For some, this desire to malign Presbyterians or Presbyterianism was born of essential—or perceived—ideological differences: they disliked some aspect of Presbyterian theology or ecclesiology or some literary or political action that they had taken. Others developed an antipathy for Presbyterians in response to their wartime maneuvers: how they obtained power, justified their cause, or imposed themselves on others.

Scholars of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms mistakenly think of Presbyterianism in equally dualistic ways: treating it either as a political or a religious phenomenon. Though religious Presbyterians did play a key role in the British wars and were concerned with who governed the visible church, past treatments of Presbyterianism have neglected the centrality of spirituality for Presbyterians. Studies that treat Presbyterian theology seriously have often focused on predestination to the detriment of other key doctrines; they have done so to oppose, amend, or extend Nicholas Tyacke's influential thesis. My thesis, however, is that while Presbyterians were alarmed that men and women in England and Scotland were being taught that atonement was universal and that God's

grace could be resisted, they saw the spread of those heresies as symptoms of the primary diseases: presumption and neglect. Episcopalians were presuming to add ceremonies that were not commanded (to worship in new ways). Bishops were presuming to hold civil as well as spiritual offices. The Church of England was presuming to declare anathemas against people for civil offences. The prince presumed that he was the head of the visible church and could require rites and recreations that many deemed ungodly. Independents were presuming to separate the wheat and the chaff; they were neglecting the souls of those outside their congregations. Independents were neglecting true charity.

Recognizing that one thing could flip to its opposite—that truth could become lies and lies could become truth—Presbyterians tried to exploit and control that movement: turning poison into medicine but preventing their polemical and political medicines from becoming poisons. The Presbyterian *via media* was paradoxical but not hypocritical.

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