4

Pulpit and printshop

And Elia came vnto all the people, and sayde: how long halte ye betwene two opynions? I Kings 18:21

A LOYAL OPPOSITION

After the *coup* against Thomas Cromwell in 1540 failed to become a full-scale purge, most of the leaders of English evangelicalism did not take the paths of exile or of outright rejection of the regime. Instead, they waited for the world to turn and the fortunes of officially sponsored reform to rise again. In the meantime, they continued working to spread the evangelical message, to build up the evangelical community and to call the nation as a whole to repentance. It was a mission which they shared with their exiled brethren, but which they pursued in a very different way. The ambiguities of late Henrician religious politics and the moderation of their own beliefs led these evangelical preachers and authors to engage constructively with their opponents in a way that more radical reformers could not or would not. The result was the emergence of a new and highly distinctive strain of evangelicalism.

Over the winter of 1540–1, the new limits within which evangelicals were going to have to operate became plain. Edward Crome's confrontation with Nicholas Wilson over Masses for the dead was the most public drama of these months, but two other incidents which excited less public comment were of more long-term importance. In the wake of Cromwell's fall, an anonymous ballad appeared, reviling him as traitor and heretic. William Gray, a former client of Cromwell's, found the attack on his old master too much to stomach, and replied with another ballad. The clerk of the queen's council, Thomas Smith, then took up the cudgels on the anonymous author's behalf. Centring around Smith and Gray, the controversy seems to have echoed more or less tunefully through London's streets for much of the autumn. We know of

nine ballads and two longer contributions.[1] Finally, in January 1541, both men appeared before the Privy Council, and both were imprisoned, with two of their printers. The Council's treatment of them was not even-handed. Smith, the conservative, was apparently summoned only as an afterthought, and the imprisoned printers, Richard Grafton and John Gough, were both evangelicals. Nevertheless, as in the Crome case, the Council's main concern seems to have been the threat to public order.[2] A more serious case came to light at the end of December 1540, when the Council heard that manuscripts of an English translation of Philip Melanchthon's tract against the Six Articles were circulating in Norfolk. This was, of course, a direct attack on the regime and could not be tolerated. For ten days, the matter dominated the Council's business. The translation was eventually traced, despite several false leads, from a Norfolk bookseller, through a chaplain to Bishop Goodricke of Ely, through the wife of the well-connected London evangelical John Blage, to the printer Richard Grafton – the same man who had printed some of William Gray's invectives.[3] The message was uncomfortably clear. If evangelical publicists stirred up public dissent, or openly challenged the political and religious status quo, they could expect to be silenced.

In the spring of 1541, however, the political winds began to change in the reformers' favour and the printers Grafton and Gough were released. They had learned their lesson. Both men now began to produce a different variety

[1] Brigden, *London*, 322–3; William Gray, *A balade agaynst malycyous Sclaunderers* (RSTC 1323.5: 1540); Thomas Smith, *A lytell treatyse agaynst sedicyous persons* (RSTC 22880.4: 1540); *A brefe apologye or answere to a certen craftye cloynar, or popyshe parasye, called Thomas Smythe* (RSTC 22880.7: Antwerp, 1540); Thomas Smith, *A treatyse declarynge the despyte of a secrete sedycyous person, that dareth not shewe hym selfe* (RSTC 22880.6: 1540); William Gray, *An answere to maister Smyth* (RSTC 12206a.3: 1540); Thomas Smith, *An Enuoye from Thomas Smith vpon thaunswer of one WG* (540, RSTC 22880.2: 1540); William Gray, *The returne of M. Smythes enuoy* (RSTC 12206a.7: 1540); R. Smyth P. (a pseudonym), *An artificiall apologie, articulerlye answerynge to the obstreperous Obgannynges of one WG* (RSTC 22877.6: 1540); *A paumflet compyled by G. C. / To master Smyth and Wyllyam G.* (RSTC 4628.5: 1540); Ernest W. Dormer, *Gray of Reading: Sixteenth-century Controversialist and Ballad-Writer* (Reading, 1923); Bale, *Catalogus*, vol. I, 704. Smith seems not to have been the author of the first ballad.

[2] *P&O* 103, 105, 107, 110. Initially, on 30 December 1540, the only persons summoned by the Council were Gray, Grafton and another of Gray's suspected printers, Richard Bankes.

[3] *P&O* 94–107. Despite Grafton's involvement, it appears that the treatise was never printed. There were relatively few copies involved, and it appears on neither of the lists of prohibited books issued in the 1540s. (Bonner Register fos. 40^{v}, 92^{r-v}). The involvement of Thomas Goodricke, the evangelical bishop of Ely, in this case seems to be a red herring. Since one of his chaplains and one of his servants were involved, the Council naturally suspected his complicity, but the investigators were instructed to search his study only if it 'appered certainly' that he was involved. There is no reason to believe that they did so, and it is in any case unlikely that so cautious a reformer would involve himself with so dangerous a document. *P&O* 98.

of evangelical propaganda. They were two of the principal figures behind a remarkable, if short-lived, strain of moderate reformist printing which cautiously pressed for continued reform while remaining within the law. During 1542 and 1543 these works dominated the output of vernacular works of religious controversy, and they continued to be produced in smaller numbers for the remainder of the reign.[4] Easily the most eye-catching of these works are those written by Thomas Becon, under the pseudonym Theodore Basille, and published by Gough with his associate John Mayler. Becon was a reformist Norfolk priest who had been brought to recant, probably in 1540, for his heretical preaching. After this, he moved to Kent, began to write and became the evangelical publishing phenomenon of the decade. In something like eighteen months, he wrote nine full-length books; a long preface to a translation of Heinrich Bullinger's *Der Christlich Eestand*; and two lost works, a metrical catechism and a collection of Christmas carols. The books are direct and accessible, and they were bestsellers. At least twenty-two editions were in print by 1543, and more reprints would probably have followed if Theodore Basille had not been forced into premature retirement that year.[5] One of his works was even translated into Dutch and printed in Antwerp in 1543.[6] It is no surprise that when Gough and Mayler printed the Bullinger piece, they chose to set it forth under Becon's pseudonym 'for the more redy sale . . . to make it the more plausible to the Readers'.[7]

While no other writer approached Becon's success, several other broadly similar reformist works appeared during the same period. All were produced in England, within the law, and pursued a studiedly moderate reformist line. A treatise by Richard Tracy on justification was published by Richard Grafton's business partner Edward Whitchurch in 1543. Gough printed a moderate (indeed, anodyne) Lollard text, *A generall free Pardon or Charter of heuyn blys*, in 1542. A work printed by William Middleton which only survives in a small fragment and appears to have been called *A meane to dye well* probably also belongs to this group,[8] as does a piece published by Richard Lant entitled *A compendyous treatyse of sclaundre*. Reformist

[4] See Appendix II.

[5] Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Thomas Becon and the Reformation of the Church in England* (Edinburgh, 1952), 16; RSTC; Bonner Register fos. 45^{r}, 92^{r-v}.

[6] Willem Heijting, 'Early Reformation literature from the printing shop of Mattheus Crom and Steven Mierdmans', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 74 (1994), 155. The bulk of Dutch evangelical printing in this period was also moderate in flavour: *ibid.*, 157–9.

[7] Thomas Becon, *The worckes of Thomas Becon*, 3 vols. (RSTC 1710: 1560–4), vol. I, sig. C 5^{v}.

[8] This fragment is dated by RSTC to c.1545, but a dating of 1543 or earlier would explain the Privy Council's otherwise peculiar decision to arrest Middleton for printing reformist books in 1543: Middleton's only other known religious publication from this period is a conservative devotional work. *APC*. 107.

printers also produced several editions of sympathetic patristic or humanist works in this period, some of which were given a reformist twist by their editors. The master of this practice was Richard Taverner, in whose hands Erasmus became a full-blown evangelical. Taverner's reworking of his material could be blatant, as when Erasmus' proverb 'Non omnes qui habent citharum, sunt citharaedi'[9] was rendered as 'All that have the gospel hangynge at theyr gyrdels be no gospellers. Nor agayn all that disprayse the leude facions of the Papistes be not forthwith Heretiques.'[10] Even Polydore Vergil could be repackaged as unmasking 'these manyfolde swarmes of popish religions' and demonstrating 'what hath crepte in to the congregacion to the peruertyng of our faithe and seducyng simple people with supersticion'.[11] However, venturing into scholarly territory carried its own dangers. Gough and Mayler produced a translation of a sermon of John Chrysostom's in 1542 apparently unaware of the existence of a markedly better translation by Thomas Lupset. The king's printer, Thomas Berthelet, rushed the Lupset translation into print.[12]

One important subgroup of these domestically produced evangelical texts consists of collections of homilies or 'postils'. These were preachers' handbooks which provided outlines for sermons on the set readings for each Sunday in the liturgical year. The most important such collection was Richard Taverner's semi-official set, which, although collected from a variety of sources, bears a strong editorial voice.[13] Parts of this set predate Cromwell's fall. However, the second volume was printed during the dangerous summer of 1540 itself – prompting Taverner to add, needlessly as it turned out, a panicky preface which assured the reader (and the censor) that he had no intention of teaching disobedience or heresy. The final volume, which contained the postils for holy days, dates from 1542. Moreover, the set continued to be reprinted throughout this period, with twelve known editions before Henry VIII's death. Taverner's was much the most widely circulated set of

[9] 'Not all those who have lutes are lute-players.'

[10] John K. Yost, 'German Protestant humanism and the early English Reformation: Richard Taverner and official translation', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 32 (1970), 618.

[11] Polydore Vergil, *An abridgement of the notable woorke of Polidore Vergile conteignyng the deuisers and firste finders out aswell of Artes, Ministeries, Feactes and ciuill ordinaunces, as of Rites, and Ceremonies*, ed. T. Langley (RSTC 24656: 1546), sig. A7^{r}. This was the book which the shepherd Robert Wyllyams bought when he was unable to buy an English Bible (see above, p. 49). In fact, however, a great many references to traditional religious practices were permitted to remain in this edition – see, for example, fos. 62^{v}, 85^{r}, 102^{v}, 110^{v}–12^{v}, 125^{v}. Indeed, Langley carefully distanced himself from Vergil's dangerous advocacy of clerical marriage (fo. 106^{r}).

[12] Both editions are dated 1542. However, Gough and Mayler's translator believed that the sermon was 'hyd from such as vnderstand not the Laten tonge', presumably indicating that their edition (RSTC 14640) predates Berthelet's (RSTC 14639).

[13] Yost, 'German Protestant humanism', 622.

postils, but, perhaps inspired by his commercial success, other sets followed. Richard Grafton printed a single-volume set of postils, which shows the signs of having been composed in some haste.[14] Stephen Cobbe, a scholar in John Gough's household, prepared a translation of another set, presumably for publication, although these are now lost. The preparation of a full set of postils was a major undertaking, easier to start than to finish. One unknown author, whose work is certainly late Henrician, set out to produce such a set but, having written nine folios of close script for the first homily, was apparently too daunted to write any more. One John Pokysfene, the author of another late Henrician set which again survives only in manuscript, tackled the problem in another way. The postils in his (complete) collection are highly condensed and tediously bland, often doing little more than paraphrasing the biblical text.[15] All of these texts have an evangelical slant to them (although in the case of Pokysfene's set it is faint). The author of Grafton's collection went so far as to take his biblical texts, not from the authorised Great Bible, but from Tyndale's illegal 1534 New Testament.

This flourishing trade in moderate evangelical books was, for a time, permitted to continue unchecked. Gough, Grafton and their associates printed their works openly in London and cited their royal privilege as printers. When Bishop Bonner issued a list of prohibited books in 1542, none of these publications were included.[16] This toleration came to an abrupt end in the spring of 1543, when, as we have seen, the regime took steps to close down domestic evangelical printing and to silence several leading evangelical preachers. Grafton, Whitchurch, Mayler and others were imprisoned; Gough was interrogated; Becon compelled to make a humiliating recantation. After this, the legal trade in evangelical books was reduced to a shadow.[17] The few evangelical imprints which appeared after 1543 only underline the point. Most reformist printers were driven to such bland projects as Grafton's 1544 *Praiers of holi fathers*, an unadorned collection of biblical prayers. William Middleton printed another book of prayers, perhaps in 1546, which is a little more plain-spoken. Its long discussion of penitence makes no mention of auricular confession, instead insisting that true repentance is performed through private prayer and that it arises from divine grace rather than from the sinner.[18] The most outspoken of these imprints to survive is a small

[14] *The ende of this brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles of all the Sondayes in the yeare* (RSTC 2972.7: 1543). The postils decrease dramatically in length through the work, and towards the end of the collection, the author begins simply to give outline sermons in note form, or even to omit some postils entirely, referring the reader to relevant texts earlier in the book. See, for example, fos. 159^{v}, 229^{v}, 299^{r}.

[15] *APC*, 115; BL Harleian MS 1197 fos. 144–203; BL Royal MS 7.C.xvi fos. 182–91.

[16] Bonner Register fo. 40^{v}. [17] See above, pp. 46–7; Appendix II.

[18] *A boke of prayers called ye ordynary fasshyon of a good lyuynge* (RSTC 3326.5: 1546?), sigs. B1^{r}–5^{r}.

pamphlet, *Twoo fruitfull and godly praiers*, printed in 1545. Towards the end it comes close to affirming a Protestant view of justification:

> No merites nor good workes, now of myself I haue
> Before ye to knowledge, wherfore my flesh doth quake
> But only it lieth in the good lorde, my soule to saue
> Not able I am to ye, for my synnes amendes to make
> Through thy mercy by faith, yet in thy blod I take
> A perfect hope & trust, thou wilt not impute my syne
> But accept into thy grace, through ye heuen to winne.[19]

This stanza was the height of the evangelical printers' daring in the last years of Henry's reign.

A few other post-1543 domestic imprints were more clearly evangelical, but were produced in safer circumstances. Even so, they were painfully moderate. William Hughe's 1546 work *The troubled mans medicine* was more Erasmian than evangelical, but it did take a reformist line on justification. Philip Gerrard's preface to his 1545 translation of Erasmus' *Epicurus* went so far as to attack as papists those 'whiche bee not wyllyng that gods woorde shoulde bee knowen'. The most apparently innocuous of all was Arthur Kelton's long poem, *A commendacion of welshmen*, printed in 1546. This included, some two-thirds of the way through, a substantial section in which the king was praised in exalted terms for the English Bible, as well as for destroying images and shrines and for expelling the pope (who seduced the people to have 'more trust / in thynges vniust / Then in Cristes passion'). Kelton also prayed that Prince Edward would finish what his father had begun. These three books, however, only underline the weakness of the evangelicals' position after 1543. Kelton's praise of the king for the English Bible, and Gerrard's similar celebration of the fact that 'the swete sound of gods worde is gone thorough out all this realme', required heroic evasion of reality after 1543. More importantly, these books could only be printed because of their authors' connections. Hughe, as chaplain to Lady Denny, belonged to one of the most influential evangelical households in the realm; Gerrard was a groom of Prince Edward's privy chamber; and Kelton was a client of William, Lord Herbert, the king's brother-in-law.[20] It is perhaps more striking that, even with such powerful patrons, these authors had to be so

[19] *Praiers of holi fathers, Patryarches, Prophetes, Iudges, Kynges, and renowmed men and women of eyther testamente* (RSTC 20200: 1544); *Here after foloweth twoo fruitfull and godly praiers, the one in laude and praise of the trinitie, and the other desiryng grace to with stande the feare of death* (RSTC 20197.3: 1545).

[20] William Hughe, *The troubled mans medicine*, 2 vols. (RSTC 13910: 1546), vol. II, sigs. A1^{v}, E5^{r}–8^{r}; Desiderius Erasmus, tr. Philip Gerrard, *A very pleasaunt and fruitful Diologe called the Epicure* (RSTC 10460: 1545), sigs. A8^{r}, B1^{v}–2^{r}, B3^{r}; Kelton, *A commendacion of welshmen*, sigs. F6^{v}–G5^{v}, G8^{v}–H1^{r}; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, 149. See below, p. 199.

circumspect. The point is reinforced by the caution of the most vulnerable of all these moderate reformers, Queen Katherine Parr. Her book of evangelical devotions, the *Lamentacion of a Sinner*, which undoubtedly belongs to this group, remained unpublished until after the king's death. The final domestically printed evangelical work from after 1543 is a complete reprint of Taverner's postils on the epistles and gospels, probably dating from 1545–6. This is an oddity. The work had been commissioned by Cromwell and so had semi-official status, but while this might explain the fact that it was never banned it remains peculiar that it continued to be reissued. It is probably significant that Richard Bankes, Taverner's printer, was one of only three major printers operating in London in 1543 who was not arrested in April of that year. If so, this only serves to underline the impact of those arrests.[21]

This whole body of work, both before and after 1543, is highly diverse in form. Nevertheless, it is strikingly congruent in its doctrinal content and, equally importantly, in how it deals with the problems of being an evangelical in a society which was at the same time predominantly conservative and bitterly divided. Nor was this approach restricted to the printed and written word, although that is both where it is most visible to us and also one of the arenas where, by its nature, it flourished most readily. Preachers such as Crome and Robert Wisdom took a similar line, and echoes of their views and methods can be found in most of the sources where religious views are recorded in this period. This group was not a party or faction. No clear boundaries can be drawn, and they lacked even the self-conscious coherence of many of the exiles. They were, however, quite as united in their approach as the exiles were in their rejectionist, quasi-Reformed position, and they were far more numerous. Despite the disparate nature of this group, two distinctive doctrinal priorities stand out and can serve to define them. First of all, they stressed the importance of a Protestant understanding of justification by faith alone. Secondly, and critically, they were not sacramentaries; they wished to maintain a belief in Christ's objective presence in the Eucharist.

These doctrinal touchstones were matched with political priorities which, at least initially, complemented them. The high doctrine of obedience and

[21] Bankes was also one of the two printers involved in the *Twoo fruitfull and godly praiers*. It is less clear, however, quite how Bankes escaped arrest in April 1543. Part of the answer may lie in the investigation into the 1540 pamphlet war between Gray and Smith. Bankes was arrested for printing four of Gray's pamphlets, which indeed bear his colophon, but he apparently persuaded the Council that Grafton was responsible for these, and was released. Whether or not Bankes was innocent in 1540 – and it seems unlikely – some aspect of the Council's experience with him then may have convinced them that it was unnecessary to rearrest him in 1543. *P&O* 103, 105–6; E. Gordon Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade* (1905): RSTC.

associated culture of recantation prevalent amongst English evangelicals, and the regime's genuine openness to some parts of the evangelical agenda, limited the extent to which this group of reformers was willing to oppose or denounce the regime. Given the pervasiveness of dissimulation, it should be no surprise that, in some cases, this moderation was a matter of policy rather than of principle. Becon's publishers, John Gough and John Mayler, both favoured ideas far more radical than those they were prepared publicly to support. In 1540 Mayler was arrested for unmistakably sacramentarian beliefs – he had called the Mass 'the baken god' – and in the early 1530s John Gough appears to have been involved with a conventicle importing Anabaptist books.[22] They presumably found the milk-and-water reformism that they were being forced to publish in the 1540s somewhat distasteful. However, there is no reason to suspect that, as a whole, this phenomenon of conformist evangelicalism was a conspiracy to conceal more radical views. The opinions of these reformers seem to have been much the same in public and in private. If they were ambiguous, their ambiguity was, as Annabel Patterson has written of their Elizabethan successors, 'creative and necessary'. The reformers and the regime shared an interest in avoiding confrontations.[23] For authors writing for the domestic printing press, such considerations affected tone more than content. In 1544, Richard Tracy followed his piece on justification with a polemic calling for social reform. Since this second piece was printed abroad, Tracy had an entirely free hand, but while his beliefs were expressed more forcefully they were not markedly different. These writers and preachers unanimously protested their loyalty to Henry VIII and exalted his authority. They certainly had their criticisms of his Church, but they remained essentially loyal to it and saw themselves as part of it. They understood it to be a true Church, flawed but capable of reformation. When Tracy denounced those who trusted in the power of works to save, he denounced *us* rather than *you*, seeing himself as a part of an erring Church rather than an external critic of an apostate one. Becon praised 'the commendable order of thys Realme nowe a dayes vsed amonge vs'. To be sure, further reformation was needed, but the principal obstacle to it was the irreligion of the common people, not the papistry of the hierarchy.[24] While this faith in the regime was neither bottomless nor sustained by goodwill

[22] PRO SP 1/237 fo. 290^{v} (*LP* Addenda 809); PRO SP 1/243 fo. 79^{r} (*LP* Addenda 1463). However, if Gough had ever had Anabaptist sympathies, he had abandoned them by 1539, when he went out of his way to insert an attack on Anabaptism in a text he had prepared for publication. Jennifer Britnell, 'John Gough and the "Traite de la difference des schismes et des conciles" of Jean Lemaire de Belges', *JEH* 46 (1995), 72.

[23] Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, WI, 1984), 11; see above, pp. 88–9.

[24] Richard Tracy, *The profe and declaration of thys proposition: Fayth only iustifieth* (RSTC 24164: 1543), sigs. B4^{r}–5^{r}; Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs. L1^{r}–2^{r}, R4^{v}.

alone, it remained the starting point for a short-lived but strikingly eirenic form of evangelicalism.

POLEMICISTS AND THEIR AUDIENCES

One of the most important characteristics of these conformist writers is somewhat less tangible than their political loyalties. Their work is suffused with a certain mood of calm, favouring persuasion and even dialogue over polemical denunciations. This was, of course, a significant departure from the vitriolic conventions of sixteenth-century religious debate. No modern reader can spend long in the company of Reformation-era polemic without beginning to wonder whether this was a literature which was in any way effective, and, indeed, quite what it might have been trying to achieve. Much the same could be said of many of the recorded sermons of the period. Indeed, on closer examination, some fundamental questions become increasingly vexed – such as, who religious polemicists believed their publics to be, what they were trying to communicate to them, and what the purposes of polemical literature and preaching actually were.

Proselytisation was perhaps the obvious task for evangelical publicists in this period, but it was neither the only objective nor always the most important. The exiles' polemic was so violent that it is difficult to imagine many conservatives being converted by it, even granting that rhetorical norms were a good deal more robust in the sixteenth century than in our own. It batters the reader, inviting retaliation rather than agreement. Indeed, the exiles rarely addressed themselves to doubters or the uncommitted, as we might expect apologists to have done. Bale's *Epistle exhortatorye*, the most popular (or at least the most reprinted) of the exiles' works, was not even addressed to reformers but to the conservative clergy. Likewise, William Turner's *The huntyng and fyndyng out of the Romishe fox* was addressed to the king, and Henry Brinklow's blistering tracts were addressed respectively to the House of Commons, the City of London, the clergy and – if the last tract is his – the king.[25] On one level, of course, this was merely a rhetorical device. Most of those who actually read these works were presumably committed evangelicals. However, while propagandists certainly used such devices, it is worth emphasising that these authors had other objectives than propaganda. The conservative polemicist Richard Smith claimed that his first reason for writing in defence of the Mass was to avoid burying his talent. The truth had been impugned, and he was duty-bound to defend it. This was principally an act of piety rather than of apologetics, since the effectiveness of such a

[25] Bale, *Catalogus*, vol. II, 105.

defence was in the hands of God.[26] Reformers as well as conservatives were drawn to such acts of piety. Robert Crowley argued that those whom God had called to preach had no option but to obey, whether single or married, lay or ordained, and if they might not preach with their mouths then they must needs do so with their pens.[27] John Hooper compared himself to Caleb and Joshua, fulfilling their duty to describe the promised land truthfully even though no one was willing to hear them; and Anthony Gilby claimed that he would have replied to Gardiner's writings even if he had only been able simply to assert that they were false.[28] The best modern analogues to Bale, Joye, Turner, Hooper and others who rushed to rebut conservatives would not be the leaders of a carefully crafted publicity campaign; but rather, the outraged letters-page correspondents who cannot allow the smallest murmur of dissent to pass without smothering it in refutation.

Nevertheless, some of even the most venomous and personal of the attacks penned by the exiles and those who thought like them were put in print, meaning that reaching a wider audience was at least one of their subsidiary aims. It was, however, an audience which they judged would be edified by such violent polemic: those who had already accepted the reformers' Gospel. When such people read a tract of Bale's or Brinklow's, they were in a sense spectators. Most such tracts were formally addressed to conservatives, whom they lambasted. The response they clearly expected from their evangelical readers was a hearty cheer and a renewed commitment to the battle themselves. If such people were to remain committed, they had to remain convinced that their estrangement from traditional religion was a reflection of the cosmic gulf between Christ and Antichrist. Bale thus justified his bitter attacks on Bishop Bonner, saying, 'Moche better ys yt to the Christen beleuer that Sathan apere Sathan, and the deuill be knowne for the deuil, than still to lurke vnder a faire similitude of the angell of lyght.'[29] Joye, too, half-apologised for writing a 'sharpe tothed' book, asking his readers to 'consider in howe sharpe a tyme it was writen'. Making a similar apology, Anthony Gilby declared that in such a time 'there is no meane for styll and ware politicke persons'. If one was not with Christ, one was against him.[30]

Manifestly, the audiences which these books would find would principally be committed gospellers, and most of their authors were content with this.

[26] Richard Smith, *Assertion and defence*, fos. 2^{v}, 4^{r}.

[27] Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sigs. $F8^{v}$–$G1^{r}$.

[28] John Hooper, *An answer vnto my lord of wynchesters booke* (RSTC 13741: Zurich, 1547), sig. $A3^{v}$ (cf. Numbers 14:6–10); Gilby, *An answer to the deuillish detection*, fos. 2^{v}–3^{r}.

[29] Bale, *A dysclosynge or openynge of the Manne of synne*, fo. 96^{r}. Cf. Alec Ryrie, 'The problem of legitimacy and precedent in English Protestantism, 1539–47', in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon (Aldershot, Hants., 1996), vol. I, 87–8.

[30] Joye, *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration*, sig. $A2^{v}$; Gilby, *An answer to the deuillish detection*, fos. 5^{r-v}, 10^{v}.

Coverdale's reply to John Standish's attack on Robert Barnes was dedicated 'to all them that either reade or heare gods holy worde, and geue ouer them selues to lyue vnfaynedly acording to the same'.[31] George Joye's *A present consolacion for the sufferers of persecucion* proclaims its limited audience in its title (although he also professed the hope that he might reach more faint-hearted reformers). Bale made it clear that he had ceased believing that conservatives might convert at all. In 1546 he declared that while he expected to be labelled a heretic by his enemies, 'neyther loke I for reasonable answere of them, nor yet for amendement of theyr knaueryes'. When one conservative, John Huntingdon, did convert, Bale was of course delighted, but he described the event in such a way as to maximise God's action in saving Huntingdon and to portray Huntingdon's own role in his conversion as entirely passive.[32] This was simply the practical application of the doctrine of election which was very widely held amongst English evangelicals in this period, but the fatalism it engendered was hardly conducive to proselytisation.

The priorities of, and the approach taken by those evangelicals who preached and published within England during these years could hardly be more different. Thomas Becon's works were written in a far less aggressive style. He could certainly show his teeth when dealing with those he judged to be heretics, but most of the time he genuinely seems to have been trying to make himself heard by the uncommitted and the sceptical. Aware that his books might be 'a songe sunge to them that are deafe', he went to some trouble to ensure that they did not grate too offensively on conservative ears.[33] He also repeatedly emphasised the importance of reaching the unconverted. Several of his tracts from this period are couched in the accessible form of a dialogue between a godly host, Philemon, and three guests who are eager to learn the Gospel. At the end of the first of these tracts, Philemon urges the guests to good works, 'that by your vertuous conuersacion ye myghte not plucke men from, but vnto the Gospell . . . not hynder but prouoke the Euangelical trueth'. To emphasise proselytisation at all was unusual for the exiles, let alone to suggest that it should be done through so non-confrontational a method as providing an example of virtuous living. The theme is picked up at the beginning of the next of Becon's dialogues, when Philemon rejoices at the change in the guests' lives. 'By theyr meanes', he soliloquises, 'there are, I thancke my LORDE God, many of oure neighbours whiche nowe begyn to folowe that trade and to practyse like godlynes.'

[31] Coverdale, *Confutacion of . . . Iohn Standish*, sig. A2^{r}.

[32] Joye, *Present consolation*, sigs. B5^{v}–6^{r}; John Bale, *The actes of Englysh votaryes, comprehendynge their vnchast practyses and examples by all ages* (RSTC 1270: Antwerp, 1546), fo. 6^{v}; Bale, *Mysterye of inyquyte*, sig. A3^{v}.

[33] Becon, *Inuectyue agenst swearing*, fo. 11^{r}. For Becon's more forthright side, see his *Potacion for lent*, sigs. C4^{r}–D1^{r}.

Elsewhere, Philemon declares, 'I desyre & wysh with all my herte, that all menne lyuinge were in the bowelles of Christ.'[34] Becon was as passionate on this subject when he was speaking with his own voice. One of the main motivations for the Christian to do good works, he believed, was 'that we may wynne our neyghbour also vnto Christ', and indeed one of the most important good works was to strive 'to brynge all men to the true knowledge of God & euen to engraffe them in the bodye of Christ'. Becon felt his evangelistic responsibilities heavily. 'Certes', he wrote, 'he is no true Christen manne, that prouideth for hys owne saluacion, and carethe not for the helthe of other.' This was one of the driving forces behind his publishing campaign. He compared himself to the watchman in the book of Ezekiel who, if he does not warn the people of impending doom, will not be free of guilt for their destruction.[35]

Most of the other domestic authors and preachers were less explicit about this priority than Becon, but it is ever-present in their work. Richard Tracy ended his tract *The profe and declaration of thys proposition: Fayth only iustifieth* with a prayer for those who refused to believe his doctrine: for God 'to open theyr eyes, and to mollifye theyr hartes, that they may be conuerted, and that he maye make them hole'. His next tract opened with a biblical text which Becon also quoted: the harvest is great but the labourers are few.[36] Richard Lant's imprint, *A compendyous treatyse of sclaundre*, betrays similar preoccupations. It is addressed to convinced evangelicals, but its purpose is to urge them to renounce conduct which, while not inherently sinful, 'scarreth men from the gospell'. Readers are urged to practise 'sobrenesse and dyscrecyon, for euen amonge enemyes ther be some that rather shuld be reconsyled than styred & prouoked'. Their concern instead should be to 'beutyfye the gospell' with the excellence of their conduct.[37]

The very form which some of these works took was informed by this concern with reaching the unconverted. The various sets of postils, intended as they were to reach into the pulpits of ordinary parish churches, are unmistakably a tool of proselytisation. It is no surprise that the postils' contents repeatedly reflect this priority. The author of the set published by Grafton urged Christians to good works, 'that the Heathen thoroughe theyr good conuersation maye be lyke wyse conuerted to the Lorde'. The reason one

[34] Becon, *Christmas bankette*, sig. G4^{v}; Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sigs. A7^{v}–8^{r}; Becon, *Pleasaunt newe Nosegay*, sigs. B6^{r}–7^{r}.

[35] Becon, *New yeares gyfte*, sig. O3^{r-v}; Becon, *Dauids Harpe*, sig. C1^{r}; Becon, *Inuectyue agenst swearing*, fos. 10^{r}–11^{v}; cf. Ezekiel 3:16–21, 33:1–9. In 1543 Becon was made to recant the presumption of claiming Ezekiel's mantle for himself: Bonner Register fo. 45^{r}.

[36] Tracy, *Profe and declaration*, sig. D8^{v}; Tracy, *Supplycacion to . . . Kynge Henry the eyght*, sig. A1^{r}. Cf. Becon, *Dauids Harpe*, sig. B3^{r}.

[37] *A compendyous treatyse of sclaundre, declarynge what sclaundre is* (RSTC 24216a: 1545?), sigs. A3^{r}, B1^{r}, B4^{r}.

should love one's enemy, we read, is to 'helpe to conuerte him to Christ'. One model suggested for Christians to imitate is that of the friends of the deaf and dumb man in Mark's gospel, who brought him to Christ: 'Thus also we praye for all them that haue no fayth. Noman yet can be saued by another mans fayth, yet it maye be by another mans fayth, that he maye get fayth of his owne.'[38] The priority thus proclaimed was put into practice by the author of another homily, who compared his audience to Saul on the Damascus road. He suggested that the objections which they made to the Gospel might just as plausibly have come from the apostle's lips, and urged that they follow Saul's example in resisting such temptations:

> He made no such carnall reasons vnto Christe, sayenge: Shall I forsake thys fashion of seruynge God, and thys maner of lyuynge, that I haue led hetherto? Shall I now begynne to lyue otherwayes, than my fathers haue done before me? Doth not all the whole multitude of the prestes, scribes, and pharises cleue to the tradicions of the fathers? Ame I wyser than so many learned men?[39]

The evangelistic purpose is unmistakable. So too is the sense that conservatives had arguments which needed to be engaged with, and which were worth countering. The author of this sermon, and the authors of the other sets of homilies, were not intending to preach to the converted.

Indeed, proselytisation had an apocalyptic significance in these authors' minds. Like their co-religionists in exile, these authors feared divine judgement on the nation if it did not repent, but they differed from the exiles both in their assessment of the prospects for national repentance, and in their understanding of what such repentance entailed. The exiles were resigned to being Jeremiahs, prophetic voices which were doomed not to be heard. But those writing and preaching within England understood themselves to be Ezekiels, or even Jonahs, whose words genuinely might bring the nation to repentance and true faith. As such, they were less exacting than the exiles about quite what that true faith might mean, concentrating on a simple willingness to hear the Gospel and on moral renewal. Becon quoted a series of biblical stories to demonstrate that if a nation was granted preachers to call them to repentance, but ignored them, then judgement would follow.[40] The beginning of such judgement would be that England would be given up to its sins:

> Excepte we shortely repent, & receyue this glorious lyght of christes most blessed gospel which nowe is come amonge vs . . . , God wyll surely take it away againe from vs, & throw vs into more blynd darkenes than euer we were inuolued & wrapped in before.[41]

[38] *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fos. 173^{r-v}, 201^{v}, 245^{v}; cf. Mark 7:32.
[39] BL Royal MS 17.C.xvi fo. 186^{r}. [40] Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs. R7^{v}–S4^{v}.
[41] Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, sig. A7^{v}; cf. Constantine, 'Memorial', 59.

The set of postils published by Grafton made a similar point, warning that 'thys tyme of helpe & felycite' would not last for ever. It urged repentance 'whyle we haue lyghte, for the nyghte commeth in the whyche no man can worke'. John Pokysfene's postils, too, stressed the urgency of repentance.[42] The fate not only of individual souls but of the nation, indeed of Christendom was in the balance. The reformers needed to make their message heard – even if a few corners had to be cut in the process.

This set of priorities engendered an approach to religious controversy that was wholly different from the confrontational methods of the exiled polemicists and their allies. The exiles sought to accentuate the divisions between reformer and conservative, so as to convince reformers that any compromise was a doomed attempt to straddle a chasm. Bale celebrated the stark division of humanity into the righteous and the reprobate, and rejoiced that God's Word was 'the marke of contradiccion and rocke of reproch'.[43] Those who remained in England and preached and published within the law were more concerned to make straight the way of the Lord. They sought to minimise and indeed to disguise any doctrinal divisions. Their hope was that if they could bridge the chasm, they might tempt conservatives to cross. Most of the printed works produced by these reformers do not draw attention to the fact that they are works of religious controversy. The sets of homilies are, at first glance, simply resource-books for preachers; Becon's works, merely pious treatises. Indeed, two of Becon's books go further. His *New pollecye of warre*, hurriedly produced when war broke out in late 1542, concealed the evangelical pill in a spoonful of patriotic saccharine. And his version of Bullinger's book on matrimony, *The golden boke of christen matrimony*, presents itself as a general advice-book on marriage. It is possible that this book's considerable commercial success in this period arose from its being given as a wedding present.[44]

This trend of surreptitious reformism reaches its logical conclusion in a set of imprints which quietly advance the evangelical cause despite not being works on religious topics at all. In 1542 Grafton printed an anonymous book called *A glasse for housholders*, one of the dreary tracts on ordering one's life prudently and piously that were a staple of sixteenth-century publishing. However, unwary traditionalists who bought this volume at the St Paul's book market would find themselves being instructed in the basics of justification by faith. Readers are also admonished to give to the poor on the grounds that they are the true images of God, and that 'other deed Images hath nothing commune with these Images but onely the shadowe, wherfore

[42] *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fo. 130^{r-v}; BL Harleian MS 1197 fo. 144^{r}.
[43] Bale, *Image of bothe churches*, sigs. E5^{v}, Ff6^{r}.
[44] I am grateful to Carrie Euler for discussions on this point.

they might be called better tokens or signes of remembraunce': a familiar argument in both the Zwinglian and the Lollard traditions.[45] A number of other purportedly 'secular' imprints from this period are also spiced with evangelicalism. Early in 1543 Grafton printed an edition of John Hardyng's violently anti-Scottish *Chronicle*, to celebrate the victory of Solway Moss, and he incorporated other histories to bring the chronicle down to 1540. In the process, he added a few comments of his own. For example, Hardyng's account of King John's reign contrasts 'kyng Iohn his great misgouernance' with the pope's 'full greate pitee', but Grafton's marginal note describes how John 'by the Roomyshe byshop and his adherentes was most shamfully & vylanously abused'. Similarly, Grafton's brief account of the 1530s consists mostly of praise for the king for the expulsion of the pope and the suppression of idolatry.[46] Grafton was not the only evangelical printer to use such opportunities. In 1542–3 John Gough printed a translation of a news pamphlet describing recent developments in the Franco-Imperial wars. The translation, prepared by Gough's partner John Mayler, left the anti-French polemic of the original untouched, but presented Francis I's alliance with the papacy as conclusive proof of the French king's perfidy: 'hys deades declare hym to be the mooste vn-Christen Kynge, lyke as the Bysshoppe of Romes workes declare hym to be very Antechriste'. Likewise, *The order of the greate Turckes courte*, also translated from French, was given a new preface before Grafton printed it. The preface's description of Ottoman tyranny, and of God's coming judgement on Islam, is essentially the standard evangelical diatribe against the papacy, with only the minimum of changes to names. A third translation, the *Lytle treatyse of the instruction of chyldren* printed by Jean le Roux in 1543, has a more explicit evangelical subtext. While its ostensible purpose is to teach French, the texts which it uses to do so are unmistakably Lutheran.[47] Yet another work which might be considered as part of this group is *The Plowman's Tale*, a Lollard pseudo-Chaucerian text

[45] *A glasse for housholders, wherin thei maye se, bothe howe to rule them selfes & ordre their housholde* (RSTC 11917: 1542), sigs. A2^{r}–3^{r}, 7^{v}. For Lollard uses of this argument, see John Gough (ed.), *The dore of holy scripture* (RSTC 22587.5: 1540), sig. L5^{r-v}; Geoffrey Chaucer, *The workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed with dyuers workes whiche were neuer in print before* (RSTC 5070: 1542), fo. 124^{r} (the *Plowman's Tale*). Cf. John Phillips, *The Reformation of the Images: Destruction of Art in England 1535–1660* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), 33–4. Thomas Bilney had taken a similar line: Batley, *On a Reformer's Latin Bible*, 48.

[46] John Hardyng and Richard Grafton, *The chronicle of Jhon Hardyng in metre, from the first begynnyng of Englande*, 2 vols. (RSTC 12766.7: 1543), vol. I, fos. 149^{v}–50^{v}, vol. II, fo. 160^{r}.

[47] Alfonso d'Avalos, *A ioyfull new tidynges of the goodly victory that was sent to the Emperour*, tr. John Mayler (RSTC 977.5: 1543?), sig. E3^{r}; Antoine Geoffroy(?), *The order of the great Turckes courte* (RSTC 24334: 1542), sigs. *2^{v}–4^{r}; [Ends:] *Here ends thys lytle treatyse of the instruction of chyldren* (RSTC 14106.2: 1543), esp. sigs. A7^{v}–B1^{v}.

which was included in a printed edition of Chaucer's works for the first time in 1542, although its printing probably owed more to Chaucer's fame than to reformist zeal.[48]

Dressing evangelical works in innocuous covers was a strategy which may have annoyed the book-buying public, but other evangelicals could hardly object.[49] The same cannot be said of the other main way in which these moderate reformers tried to appeal to conservatives: that is, by adjusting the content of their message, playing down controversial doctrines and presenting reformist ideas in traditional terms. This was hardly a new idea. Indeed, it was an obvious way of making 'new' doctrines palatable to a people profoundly suspicious of novelty. In 1536 Thomas Talley, a protégé of Bishop Barlow of St David's, was accused of preaching that

> if the Sowles that be departed haue any nede of our prayers (if it myght doo them any goode) ye shall praye that Christe the soner at the Contemplacion of our prayers may take them to the fruition of his glory.[50]

In other words, rather than condemning prayer for the dead outright, Talley tried to strip away its troublesome doctrinal implications while allowing the practice itself to remain. Likewise, it was said in London in 1537 that some reformers 'praying for theym that be departid, craftely ment of theym that be separated from God by synne, and not of the deade'.[51] In the early 1540s, however, this rhetorical trick began to appear more frequently. The area which was most commonly subject to this kind of blurring was the veneration of the saints and the piety which went with it. While all evangelicals were uncomfortable with prayer to saints, these authors and preachers were often willing to overlook it or to treat it as a second-order issue. Becon attacked the cult of Thomas Becket, which had been suppressed on the king's orders in 1538, but left it to his readers to draw the implications for the cult of saints more generally.[52] Robert Wisdom's careful consideration of the subject concluded that actually to invoke saints was to supplant God and

[48] That fame meant that it was exempted from the controls on books in the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion. For a more conspiratorial assessment of the *Tale*'s importance, see Andrew Wawn, 'Chaucer, *The Plowman's Tale* and Reformation propaganda', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 56 (1973).

[49] Indeed, more radical texts were occasionally repackaged in this way. The conservative Richard Whitford wrote with some annoyance in c. 1541 that he had seen one of his own books being sold bound together with an anonymous text which he identified as a work of Luther's. Even John Bale's plays of the 1530s have been seen as an attempt to provide an evangelical alternative to traditional play-cycles. Richard Whitford, *Here foloweth dyuers holy instrucyons and teachynges very necessarye for the helth of mannes soule* (RSTC 25420: c. 1541), sigs. A1^{v}–2^{r}; Ruth H. Blackburn, *Biblical Drama under the Tudors* (The Hague, 1971), 48–9.

[50] BL Cotton MS Cleopatra E.v fo. 415^{r}.

[51] Cranmer, *Letters*, 340; cf. the case of Thomas Wylley, above, pp. 1–4.

[52] Becon, *New yeares gyfte*, sigs. H1^{r}–2^{r}.

was unacceptable, but 'to desire them to praye with vs and for vs I thinke it after a maner tollerable'.[53]

This comparative openness to the cult of saints was matched by a willingness to appropriate the piety which went with it. For example, when Becon emphasised that Christ will pray for the believer, he used language strikingly reminiscent of traditional piety: 'His watching, fastynge, prayenge, almes dedes, & al that euer he dothe, shall be done for you.'[54] Writing in 1546, William Hughe laboured heroically to come up with a doctrinally acceptable substitute for the comfort provided by prayer for the dead. Addressing the bereaved, he emphasised that they are only parted from the deceased for a little while before being forever reunited, and added: 'You may at al times . . . in the meane space, in youre myndes, and memoryes, se hym, talke with him, and embrace him.'[55] Similarly, a 1545 imprint gave a clearly evangelical view of Christ's sacrifice but described the Passion in terms borrowed from the old piety of devotion to the Name of Jesus.[56] Most intriguingly of all, Katherine Parr's *The lamentacion of a sinner* emphasised that the Christian should learn from 'the booke of the crucifixe'. In a delicately balanced passage, she implied that the piety associated with the use of images such as crucifixes was of real value, without either condoning or condemning – indeed, without explicitly mentioning – images as such. And all this in the context of a thoroughly evangelical exposition of justification.[57]

Not all controversial ideas could be given traditional veneers in this way. Nevertheless, the need to avoid unnecessary provocation was a constant theme amongst these reformers. They were painfully aware that their opponents needed no excuses to tar them with the more extreme heresies of the quasi-Reformed group represented by the exiles. As one moderate reformer wrote in the mid-1540s:

> Whoso preacheth faith shalbe accused of sedition and disorder for denying good woorkes: if he set foorth Christ, he shalbe noysed to contemne saincts, if he say Iesus is our onely mediator and peasemaker he is persecuted as an anabaptist.[58]

Many of these evangelical authors therefore went out of their way to embrace as much traditional religious practice as their consciences could bear.[59] The

[53] BL Harleian MS 425 fo. 5[r].
[54] Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, sig. F6[r]. Cf. *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fo. 34[r].
[55] Hughe, *Troubled mans medicine*, vol. II, sig. F7[r].
[56] *Here after foloweth twoo fruitfull and godly praiers.*
[57] Katherine Parr, *The lamentacion of a sinner, bewayling the ignoraunce of her blind life* (RSTC 4827: 1547), sigs. B8[v]–D2[v]; cf. Ann Eljenholm Nichols, 'Books-for-laymen: the demise of a commonplace', *Church History* 56 (1987), 457–73.
[58] BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv fo. 8[v].
[59] While such attitudes sat uncomfortably with the stern rejectionism which Protestantism cultivated, it is becoming clear that pastoral and evangelistic imperatives led later generations

most comprehensive attempt to do this is in Becon's *Potacion for lent*, where he showed himself willing to accept almost the full panoply of traditional Lenten ceremonial as long as its meaning was explained in evangelical terms. This line of argument had several advantages. Creative reinterpretation of the ceremonies could yield distinctly evangelical messages. Mischievously, Becon had one of the 'guests' in his dialogue suggest that one reason for the covering of images in Lent is 'to put vs in remembraunce that although we haue in ony parte of the yeare paste commytted Idolatry with them, yet at this tyme we shoulde vtterly gyue ouer this abhominacion, & only cleue to God.'[60] Moreover, this approach gave the evangelicals a polemical edge over their opponents, because explaining the spiritual significance of laudable ceremonies to the people was certainly royal policy, and policy which some conservatives resisted.[61] As we have seen, several reformers applied the same kind of constructive criticism to auricular confession.[62]

If compromise on an issue was impossible, the usual response from these reformers was obfuscation. For example, several of them were outspoken in their denunciations of their religious opponents while maintaining a studied vagueness as to who those opponents actually were. Philip Gerrard attacked the 'blind stiffe hearted, and obstinate' who were opposed to God's Word. In a detailed and unpleasant passage, Becon argued at length that the Jews who had persecuted Christ had modern equivalents, but never stated who they might be. Elsewhere, when he lamented that Christians' enemies 'cruelly assayle vs', he appeared to mean spiritual rather than corporal enemies.[63] Others simply ignored difficult issues. For example, the author of Grafton's set of postils – the most radical of those sets to survive – simply ducked the problem presented by the Epistle for Passion Sunday, from Hebrews 9. This text, which vigorously asserts the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice, was a key proof-text for the Protestant attack on the sacrifice of the Mass. As such, in 1546 this passage was to be at the centre of a major religious confrontation. However, it drew from Grafton's author a wholly anodyne homily that is one of the shortest in the set.[64] Some of the other texts produced by these reformers are extraordinarily bland. Gough's *A generall free Pardon or Charter of*

of Protestants to accommodate themselves to their audiences' cultures in similar ways. See, for example, Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*; Bruce Gordon, 'Malevolent ghosts and ministering angels: apparitions and pastoral care in the Swiss Reformation', in *The Place of the Dead*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge, 2000).

[60] Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sigs. H4^{v}–5^{r}.

[61] See, for example, CCCC MS 128 pp. 11–12, 15–16, 59 (*LP* XVIII (ii) 546 pp. 293, 295–6, 309).

[62] See above, p. 32.

[63] Erasmus, *A Diologe called the Epicure*, sig. A7^{v}; Becon, *New pollecye of warre*, sig. D4^{v}; Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. A4^{v}.

[64] *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fo. 153^{r-v}; cf. Hebrews 9:11–15. See below, p. 142.

heuyn blys is manifestly Lollard in origin, but is simply an exhortation to devotion to Christ and to good works.

At times, we find evangelicals raising their heads a little above the parapet, and implying provocative ideas without openly committing themselves to them. For example, in his preface to *The golden boke of christen matrimony* Becon praised matrimony and deplored celibacy in immoderate terms, but he did so while maintaining the pretence that he was speaking only of the laity, and did not mention the clergy at all.[65] The author of Grafton's *A glasse for housholders* also had serious reservations about clerical celibacy, urging parents to discourage their sons from ordination so that they should not be forced to promise the celibacy which only God can give, and arguing that Christian marriage was chaste. Again, however, this author did not explicitly discuss the legitimacy of the practice.[66] Elsewhere Becon spoke of the need to worship God as he had commanded, rather than according to human whims, but made no attempt to move from this to criticise established practices and ceremonies.[67] Perhaps the most delicately balanced example of this approach is in Becon's *A Christmas bankette*. This dialogue begins by describing the godly host's idealised evangelical home. His living space has been sacralised without embracing idolatry or superstition, by the means of inscribing a series of apposite Bible verses at various points around the house. One such verse – 'He that eteth my flessh, & drinketh my bloud, he dwelleth in me, and I in him' – is inscribed on the crockery. In answer to his guests' questions, the host explains:

> This putteth vs in remembraunce when we eate oure meate of the breakynge of Christes moost blessed body and the shedding of his moost precious bloud & by the remembraunce of it, & the beleuyng of the same, our soules at that very present, are no lesse fed and susteyned, than oure bodyes are wyth the meate that is brought vnto vs in these dysshes.[68]

Becon was thus able to bring in the evangelical emphasis on remembrance of Christ's Passion in the Eucharist without actually mentioning the Mass at all.

Intriguingly, this technique of playing down differences, conceding what could safely be conceded and appropriating the opposition's language, was also used by some moderate conservatives in this period.[69] Two sermons published under Bishop Bonner's supervision in 1544 are outspoken in their

[65] Heinrich Bullinger, *The golden boke of christen matrimonye, moost necessary and profitable for all them, that entend to liue quietly and godlye in the Christen state of holy wedlock*, ed. and ascribed to Thomas Becon (ps. Theodore Basille), (RSTC 4047: 1543), sigs. A3^{r}–4^{r}.

[66] *A glasse for housholders*, sigs. F4^{v}–5^{v}. [67] Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, sigs. E4^{v}–5^{r}.

[68] Becon, *Christmas bankette*, sig. B2^{r}.

[69] These themes have been explored, principally for a later period, in Wooding, *Rethinking Catholicism*; although Wooding downplays the extent to which any polemical purpose shaped such apparent moderation.

denunciations of the papacy, speak positively of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and condemn clerical greed and corruption – all themes to which evangelicals would have warmed.[70] Bonner's own injunctions to his clergy in 1542 ordered them to engage in a rigorous programme of study of the Bible and the *Bishops' Book*; to expound the meanings of ceremonies; and to avoid preaching from fables or legends in the manner which the reformers so despised.[71] The Bristol preacher Roger Edgeworth had a knack for using the evangelicals' arguments against them. A favourite early evangelical line of argument pointed out that Christ had promised that the Gospel would bring division and persecution, and argued that the absence of such troubles before Luther indicated that the true Gospel had been lost. Edgeworth took up this claim and accepted that the Church had been deeply corrupted; but he then suggested that it was only because of this corruption that Luther's heresies had been so widely received. Or again, Edgeworth agreed that salvation came only through Christ's merits, but countered the evangelical argument that faith gave rise to good works with the suggestion – couched in strikingly similar language – that good works arise from the fear of God.[72] The Oxford theologian Richard Smith went one better. He turned the Protestant emphasis on assurance of salvation on its head by arguing that no one can be sure of the steadfastness of their own faith, but everyone can be certain of the efficacy of the Mass.[73] Even in Edward VI's reign, one somewhat idiosyncratic conservative could write that 'gospeller' was an honourable name, but that those who claimed it for themselves were not applying Scripture to their lives; rather, they had abandoned the false gods of popery but put nothing in their place.[74] For the evangelicals, as also for the conservatives, such approaches may have lacked candour, but they were a sensible way of trying to deal with the situation of religious confusion which partisans of both sides faced. If they could reduce the polemical volume, they might succeed in making themselves heard.

Unsurprisingly, those evangelicals who adopted this style met with the scorn and contempt of more uncompromising reformers. Bale, in particular, reviled the 'worldlye wyse brethren . . . which are neither hote nor colde'.

> Some there be abrode in the worlde, walkynge vndre the pretence of the gospell, whych do all they can to hyde the fylthye partes of that monstrouse madama, that rose couloured whore of Babylon. . . . The bokes whych hath bene putt forth

[70] Chedsay and Scott, *Two notable sermones*, sigs. G3^{v}–6^{v}, H1^{v}–2^{r}.
[71] Bonner Register fos. 39^{v}–40^{v}. On Bonner's own religion, see below, pp. 216–18 and 220–21.
[72] Roger Edgeworth, *Sermons very fruitfull, godly and learned: preaching in the Reformation c. 1535– c. 1553*, ed. Janet Wilson (Cambridge, 1993), 160, 168–9.
[73] Richard Smith, *Assertion and defence*, fo. 63^{r}.
[74] John Proctor, *The fal of the late Arrian* (RSTC 20406: 1549), sigs. A8^{v}, B4^{r}.

by menne of lernynge to discouer her myscheues, do they now gelde, myngle, hacke, cutte, take fro and putt to. . . . Easye it is to perseyue, what hath brought these menne to the gospell . . . ther owne fylthie lucre and dampnable deuylyshe pleasure.

He did not spell out precisely which books he meant, but an obvious candidate would be Coverdale's translation of Bullinger's *Der Christlich Eestand.* Becon expunged the most controversial chapters and added a new preface to his version of this. Likewise, Bale's attack on those who print English Bibles 'whych now hath neyther annotacyons nor table' can only be directed at Grafton, the publisher of the officially authorised Great Bible. He also made clear his disgust with Richard Taverner's editions of the Augsburg Confession and of Sarcerius Erasmus' *Commonplaces.*[75]

George Joye had equally little time for those who were willing to make compromises: 'These vnright rightwysemakers wold serue two contrary masters at once, the Pope and God to, the gospel and the popis lawis but whyls thei thus halt on both sydis with Baals preistes thei serue trwlye the deuill.'[76] Anne Askew flung the same text at Lord Chancellor Wriothesley shortly before her condemnation, asking how long he would 'halte on both sydes'. In his 'elucydacyon' of her words Bale took up the theme, seeing this as a description of the whole English Church, and added references to two more texts which were favourites amongst anti-Nicodemites:

For all our newe Gospell, yet wyll we styll beare the straungers yoke with the unbeleuers, and so become neyther whote nor colde, that God may spewe vs out of hys mouth.[77]

Nor was this a problem confined to the printed page. John Foxe related how William Smith, a radical preacher in Calais in the late 1530s, was approached by some reformist members of the Calais council. They suggested 'that he should not be so earnest against them that yet could not away with [God's word], willing him to beare with suche, for by bearing with them they might hap to be wonne'. Smith, however, felt that this was mere dissimulation, and gave his reply from the pulpit: 'Let all such take heede, for before God, I feare that God for their contemning of his word, will not long beare with them, but make them in suche case as some of them shall not haue a head left them vpon their shoulders to beare vp their cap withal.'[78]

The most obvious accusation which could be made from the moral high ground of exile was that of cowardice – although Bale's criticism of those

[75] Bale, *Image of bothe churches*, sig. B1^{v}; Bale, *A dysclosynge or openynge of the Manne of synne*, fos. 6^{v}–7^{r}.
[76] Joye, *George Ioye confuteth, Winchesters false Articles*, fo. 4^{r}. Cf. I Kings 18:21.
[77] Askew, *The lattre examinacyon*, fo. 19^{r-v}. Cf. II Corinthians 6:14; Revelation 3:16.
[78] *AM.* 1224.

reformers who did nothing to help their imprisoned or exiled brethren was at least tinged with personal bitterness.[79] It is true that persecution did not appeal to those evangelicals who were trying to operate within the law, and it is also true that their commitment to proselytisation could lead them into the familiar grey areas of dissimulation. This, however, was only part of the truth. The mildness which these reformers showed to their opponents was a symptom as well as a cause of their distinctive doctrinal position. The exiles were as divided from these writers and preachers in doctrine as they were in style. Moreover, the doctrines of the more moderate writers were more palatable to the unconverted. The radicals' fear of their conformist brethren was, in other words, entirely justified.

JUSTIFICATION AND THE MASS

If a single theme ran through the work of these moderate evangelical writers and preachers, it was the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which this topic dominates the printed output of this group. Becon's first book, *Newes out of heauen*, is essentially an extended exposition of the doctrine, although, in keeping with his general approach, he uses the associated theological jargon sparingly. Most of his subsequent books return to this subject, tackling it from several different angles. It is of course also the subject of Tracy's book, *The profe and declaration of thys proposition: Fayth only iustifieth*. Taverner's postils repeatedly emphasise the importance of faith; those in Grafton's set repeat the doctrine *ad nauseam*. It also seems to be the theme of the fragmentary pamphlet printed by William Middleton, whose only surviving leaf expounds the link between faith and assurance.[80] The *Lytle treatyse of the instruction of chyldren*, published by Jean le Roux, includes a brief but comprehensive exposition of justification by faith. It is the only controversial issue to which John Pokysfene's anodyne postils allude. For example, he notes, in his account of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, that the publican called on God's mercy alone: 'he doth not allege for to haue his workes, his merytes his good dedes, to be exalted'. The doctrine of justification is the subtext of much of Grafton's *A glasse for housholders*. For example, it retells the gospel story of the rich man and Lazarus in such a way that the rich man is damned for placing his trust in his wealth, and for rejecting God when he came to him in Lazarus: in other words, he is damned for lack of faith rather than evil deeds. William Hughe's *The troubled mans medicine* not only teaches the doctrine, but uses the technical Protestant terminology

[79] Bale, *Image of bothe churches*, sigs. S2^{v}–3^{r}.
[80] *A meane to die well* [= headline, sig. B1^{r}] (RSTC 17760.5: c. 1545).

of imputation to do so.[81] Several anonymous manuscript treatises on the subject which are datable to this period survive; one has been attributed to Cromwell's publicist Richard Morison.[82]

This preoccupation also dominated evangelical pulpits during Henry's last years. The Scottish reformer Alexander Seton felt strongly enough about the doctrine that in 1541, goaded by a conservative's preaching of free will at Paul's Cross, he assembled a gathered congregation at St Antholin's church in London to denounce the preacher and to expound predestination and the inability of good works to aid one's salvation.[83] Robert Wisdom, too, was troubled for a sermon in which he preached 'howe vnperfecte all our rightwisnes is, and . . . moved all men to sett hand vpon the rightwisnes of faith'.[84] The dossier of heresy charges against Kentish reformers drawn up in 1543 reveals that the doctrine was widely preached in that county. An agent of Archbishop Cranmer's called Humphrey Churden took it to one of its more contentious logical extremes when he preached in February 1543 that 'if Iudas had gone to god, & confessed his fawte, saying Peccavi ['I have sinned'], as he went vnto the preists, he had not been damned'.[85] Indeed, Cranmer himself, the most highly placed proponent of this conformist evangelicalism, was passionately convinced of the Protestant doctrine of justification. He risked the king's anger by opposing to the last the treatment of the doctrine in the *King's Book*; and he remained quietly but unshakeably convinced that salvation was through faith alone and by grace alone.[86]

Justification by faith was, of course, common ground to all Protestants, and it may seem unnecessary to labour these reformers' commitment to the doctrine. Nevertheless, three aspects of that commitment are worth emphasising. First, for all the apparent moderation they showed in dealing with their opponents, there was nothing moderate in the commitment these reformers showed to this doctrine. It was not the most politically convenient of sticking-points, given the king's well-known antipathy to it; but while these authors certainly shaped their expositions of justification in response to that antipathy, their commitment to the doctrine did not waver. Secondly, while all evangelicals affirmed justification by faith, there were significant differences of emphasis. The exiled writers rarely treated it as a doctrine important in itself. In the whole body of works Bale published in this period, he only once discussed the subject at any length.[87] The only substantial exile treatments of justification are George Joye's pamphlets written

[81] BL Harleian MS 1197 fo. 190^{v}; *A glasse for housholders*, sigs. A3^{v}–4^{r}; Hughe, *Troubled mans medicine*, vol. II, sig. E5^{v}. Cf. Luke 16:19–31, 18:9–14.
[82] BL Harleian MS 423 fos. 12–33; PRO SP 6/11 no. 7, pp. 315–21 (*LP* XVIII (i) 611.3).
[83] Seton and Tolwin, *Declaracion made at Poules Crosse*, sigs. A2^{r}–3^{v}.
[84] BL Harleian MS 425 fo. 4^{r}. [85] CCCC MS 128 p. 29 (*LP* XVIII (i) 546 p. 299).
[86] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 338–47. [87] Bale, *Epistle exhortatorye*, fos. 17^{r}–18^{r}.

against Stephen Gardiner, in which he took his lead from the bishop's rejection of the evangelical interpretation. When the exiles did mention justification and related doctrines, they usually did so in order to make more provocative points. Joye, for example, argued from St Paul that faith justified the believer, but only if that faith was openly confessed: 'For fayth in oure herte iustifyeth and the confession with oure mouthe bringeth saluacion.'[88] More commonly, the exiles pointed out that justification by faith was incompatible with the sacrifice of the Mass; for as we have already seen, the Mass was the issue which dominated their outlook. While they affirmed justification by faith, it was something of a side issue.[89] A central emphasis on justification by faith, which does not attempt to use the doctrine as a bridge to more radical beliefs and behaviour, is one of the most distinctive characteristics of those writers and preachers who remained in England in these years.

Finally, while the emphasis on justification was certainly an end in itself, most of these works do give that doctrine a particular slant. It was one of the central concerns of these reformers to rebut the charge, so frequently made, that the evangelical doctrine of justification was antinomian. The claim was that if good works played no part in the salvation of the Christian – as all evangelicals did indeed preach – Christians were thus licensed to sin without thought of the consequences. This was an unjust parody of the evangelical doctrine, but it was a parody which that doctrine invited. This accusation was made across Europe, but Henry VIII's strong views on the subject made it essential for English evangelicals to engage with the problem. Archbishop Cranmer's response to his failure to convince the king of his view of justification in 1543 was to gather authorities to support his position, and a central purpose of this collection was to refute the charge of antinomianism. The political problem was reinforced by these reformers' general concern to reach the unconverted. The result was a remarkable concentration of polemical resources on this subject. Becon rarely mentioned justification without also emphasising the Christian's absolute obligation to perform good works. In print and in the pulpit, others went out of their way to make the same point.[90] Tracy's piece on justification is largely focused on this question; so too is the manuscript treatise ascribed to Richard Morison. Robert Crowley described evangelicals as taking a virtuous middle way between Pelagianism and libertinism.[91]

It was a subject to which these writers devoted not only time, but passion. Becon's usual moderation of tone deserted him when he launched withering

[88] Joye, *Daniel*, fo. 34[r]; Romans 10:9. [89] Davies, *Religion of the Word*, 18.
[90] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 345–7. See also, for example, BL Harleian MS 425 fo. 4[r]; PRO SP 1/119 fos. 185[v]–7[r] (*LP* XII (i) 1147).
[91] Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sigs. A5[r]–7[r].

attacks on those whom he called 'the grosse Gospellers, the rayling readers of the scripture . . . and brayneles bablers of the gospell, whych bable muche of gods trueth, and yet lyue no part therof'.[92] Tracy, likewise, reviled the 'wanton christians' who 'euer haue in their mouthes, thys proposition: fayth onely iustifyeth, whyche neuer tasted in theyr harte, any parte of that lyuyng fayth'.[93] Such libertines probably were a genuine problem rather than a polemical straw man.[94] In any case, they were a staple of conservative polemic, and so dangerous whether they existed or not. 'Such grosse gospellers', Becon wrote, 'haue much hyndered the prosperous progresse of Goddes worde.' Katherine Parr agreed that 'suche gospellers are an offence, and a sklaunder to the worde of God'. Richard Lant's piece on slander was almost entirely concerned with this last issue. Likewise, the author of Grafton's postils urged his audience not to 'hurte . . . the conscience of the hearer, beynge an offence vnto hym'.[95]

It is entirely typical of these moderate reformers, however, that some of them were not content with railing against antinomianism, and tried to find more creative solutions to the problem. Protestant theology may have denied works any role in salvation, but salvation need not be the only issue. Within the kingdom of heaven, a strong scriptural tradition suggested, some of the saved would have exalted positions, others lowly ones. Perhaps these gradations, if not salvation itself, were influenced by one's deeds. Philip Melanchthon argued that 'there will be different rewards for different labours' and 'distinctions in the glory of the saints'. Luther was content to see these rewards as, in Emma Disley's phrase, an 'unmerited recompense' for good works; an integral part of the process of sanctification which his theological system had separated so assiduously from justification.[96] Such ideas appear to lie behind Richard Tracy's insistence that 'to beleue that good workes shall not be rewarded of god, is deuelyshe and dampnable'.[97] One anonymous writer embraced this argument explicitly, arguing that 'no man maye merite of his owne power, but it is true that our lorde will rewarde everye man after his owne deedes'. The elect, he continued, are rewarded for their works with a higher place in heaven; whereas if one of their number sins and repents 'notwithstandinge that repentaunce he shall have for that evill deade the lower place in heavyn'. This was a complex and highly problematic argument. For 1540s evangelicals, however, its usefulness for

[92] Becon, *Christmas bankette*, sig. O4^{v}. [93] Tracy, *Profe and declaration*, sigs. D3^{r}–4^{r}.
[94] Ryrie, 'Counting sheep', 98–105.
[95] Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sig. F4^{v}; Parr, *Lamentacion of a sinner*, sig. F1^{v}; *Compendyous treatyse of sclaundre*; *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fo. 140^{v}.
[96] Emma Disley, 'Degrees of glory: Protestant doctrine and the concept of rewards hereafter', *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 42 (1991), 99–101.
[97] Tracy, *Profe and declaration*, sig. D4^{r-v}.

emphasising the importance of works outweighed the dangers of its potentially treacherous theology.[98]

On the question of justification, the differences between the exiles and their brethren in England were more of style than substance. The same cannot be said of the other hallmark of this moderate evangelicalism, the Eucharist. The Eucharistic presence was the most explosive doctrinal issue in 1540s England. Both to Henry VIII, and to the exiles and other evangelicals who held to a quasi-Reformed position, it was the most fundamental litmus test of religious allegiance. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these more cautious reformers preferred to engage with the question indirectly, or to avoid it altogether. However, enough of them were unable or unwilling to evade the issue in this way for a clear consensus to appear. Part of this consensus was a distaste for the Mass, and in particular for the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass, although it is uncertain quite how widely this distaste was shared. The other, far more solid part of the consensus was a firm unwillingness on the part of any of these moderates to be associated with rejection of the Real Presence. If there was a single fault line dividing English evangelicalism, this was it.

Within a decade of Henry VIII's death, the Mass had become the critical issue delineating Protestant from Catholic in England. Few then tried to straddle the line; and few of those who had once done so cared to remember the fact. Becon, for example, moved towards a Reformed view of the sacraments at some stage after 1543, and when the folio edition of his works was printed in Elizabeth I's reign he removed embarrassingly Catholic phrases such as 'the sacrament of the altar' from his earlier books. This folio edition formed the basis for the Parker Society's editions of Becon's works, through which most modern readers have come to know him.[99] The success of Becon's retrospective doctrinal clean-up is symbolic of the extent to which modern scholarship has viewed Henrician evangelicals through an Edwardian and Elizabethan prism; a prism whose blind spot largely conceals the moderate reformism with which this chapter is concerned.[100] It has always been apparent that there was a division amongst Henrician evangelicals between those who took a Reformed view of the Eucharist and those whose opinion was more akin to that of the Lutherans: the latter view being that Christ's body and blood were objective, corporally present in the consecrated elements, but that the substance of bread and wine still remained, rather than being

[98] PRO SP 6/3 no. 20, pp. 164–5 (*LP* XIV (i) 376).

[99] John Ayre, editor of the Parker Society volumes, was aware of these changes but simply commented that Becon's views 'did not and could not at once arrive at all the clearness and decision by which they were afterwards distinguished'. Thomas Becon, *The Early Works of Thomas Becon*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1843), xviii.

[100] Witness, for example, Foxe's unenthusiastic comment that, in the 1540s, Cranmer was 'yet but a Lutheran'. *AM.* 1224.

miraculously transformed ('transubstantiated') into the substance of Christ. The quasi-Lutheran views of some leading reformers, notably Archbishop Cranmer and Robert Barnes, are well known. One Elizabethan writer even added that 'the most part of the other byshoppes and learned men' also held such views.[101] Yet the powerful evidence for a more widespread evangelical suspicion of the Reformed position has rarely been acknowledged.[102] Rory McEntegart, in one of the most careful assessments of late Henrician religious politics in recent years, has acknowledged that by 1539 English evangelicalism has to be divided into two camps, which he characterises respectively as sacramentaries and (more cautiously) as Lutherans. He places Thomas Cromwell into this second group, and emphasises, quite correctly, that 'during the 1530s there was in fact no contradiction at all in being an evangelical and opposing denial of the real presence'.[103] Becon (later in life), Foxe and later Protestant generations were consistently concerned to downplay the prevalence of such opinions in the 1530s, but contemporary evidence suggests otherwise.

William Gray, the balladeer who defended Cromwell's reputation after his execution, conceded that his former master had been a traitor and had suffered justly. He was not, however, willing to admit that Cromwell had been a heretic. He was proud to proclaim that

> The sacrament of the aulter, that is most hyest
> Crumwell beleued it to be the very body of Chriest.[104]

It is hard to doubt that this claim is true, especially since less than a year before the veteran evangelical George Constantine had been writing to Cromwell with a mixture of indignation and alarm to counter accusations that he was a sacramentary – a crime, Constantine protested, as heinous as treason.[105] Another of Cromwell's correspondents, Henry Goderick, the parson of Hothfield in Kent, was as hot-headed a reformer as one might hope to find. He had preached in Folkestone that Christians should trust in Christ's passion rather than in the elevated Host – which was certainly an attack on the Mass, although not on the Real Presence. He was also accused, probably falsely, of preaching that Christ took no flesh from the Virgin. In 1539 he

[101] This was Cranmer's anonymous biographer, whom Diarmaid MacCulloch has tentatively identified as Stephen Nevinson. Nichols (ed.), *Narratives*, 224; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 633–6.

[102] For example, Basil Hall argues that 'from the beginning of the reformation in England . . . almost all' English reformers were 'uneasy and even hostile' toward Lutheran sacramental ideas. Basil Hall, 'The early rise and gradual decline of English Lutheranism (1520–1660)', *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500–1750*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History: Subsidia* 2 (1979), 109.

[103] McEntegart, *Henry VIII*, 135–7.

[104] Gray, *Balade agaynst malycyous Sclaunderers*.

[105] Constantine, 'Memorial', 77.

wrote to Cromwell in a fury to denounce idolatry in the neighbouring parish of Ashford. There was a rood in the north aisle of the parish church, he alleged, to which illegal offerings were made and at which

> dayly the people blaspheme god . . . for they make reuerence & Inclination vnto it as many as goith by it, it is in there way as they goo to see the sacrament of the body & blode of Crist mynystered at the high aulter.[106]

For all his loathing of idolatry, Goderick was prepared to use archetypally conservative language to describe the Mass, and to allow reverence to the sacrament to pass without comment. Like Gray and Constantine, his unmistakable evangelicalism apparently did not extend to sacramentarianism.

For Cromwell's clients, there were obvious advantages in being seen to be on the safe side of such a dangerous doctrine, but evangelicals who remain convinced of Christ's presence in the Eucharist can be found outside Cromwell's circle; nor did they disappear after the minister's death. These include many of the authors and preachers with whom we are already familiar. Becon happily referred to the sacrament simply as 'Christes body'. He wrote that when Christians receive it, they receive 'the very body of our lord Iesus Christ, of al treasures moost precious' and 'taste of the true Paschall Lambe, which was offered & slayne for our sake'. He implicitly supported the traditional practice of fasting before receiving the sacrament; and he urged his readers 'to be present at the ministracion of the moost blessed Sacrament of the altare Christes very body and bloud'. By contrast, he was bitter in his attacks on 'the Anabaptistes, Sacramentaries & other Phanaticall & frentyke Spirites which haue vayne visions inuented of theyr owne braynes'. Even Becon's enemies tacitly conceded that his views on the sacrament were not actively heretical. In the recantation sermon prepared for him in 1543, he was made to admit to having preached on the cult of saints, prayer for the dead and clerical celibacy 'vntruylie', but the worst fault that could be found with his preaching on the sacrament was that 'men were offended with me'.[107] Other evangelicals can also be found using resolutely realist language about the Eucharist. A book of prayers published by William Middleton even provided a set of Mass devotions, emphasising that Christ 'hath lefte his body here amonge vs in fourme of breade & wyne'.[108] One anonymous writer, laying out principles for scriptural interpretation which were otherwise highly damaging to traditional religion, insisted that the Real Presence should be maintained because the plain words of Scripture,

[106] PRO SP 1/152 fo. 1^{v} (*LP* XIV (i) 1053); BL Cotton MS Cleopatra E.v fo. 397^{r} (*LP* IX 230). For the dating of this document, see Elton, *Policy and Police*, 163.

[107] Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sigs. K4^{v}–L4^{v}; Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs. L1^{r}–2^{r}; Becon, *Dauids Harpe*, sig. K4^{v}; Bonner Register fo. 44^{v}.

[108] *A boke of prayers called ye ordynary fasshyon of a good lyuynge*, sig. B6^{r}.

'Hoc est corpus meum', admitted no other interpretation.[109] Robert Wisdom was equally explicit: 'We confesse and knowledge . . . that the Lorde Iesus giveth at all tables of his holie sowper to all that receiue yt his very bodie and bloude.' And he refused to defend the condemned sacramentaries John Frith and John Lambert.

This was not capitulation to the conservatives. No sooner had Wisdom affirmed the Real Presence than he moved to the attack, using (typically enough) his opponents' terminology against them. He claimed that while traditionalists gloried in their commitment to transubstantiation (a term which Wisdom carefully neither criticised nor endorsed), 'their was never heritique did so grett dishonoure to the blissed Sacrament of Christes souper' as they did. In the Mass, Christ's institution had been replaced with 'an Ordinaunce of their awne Imagination'. As such, he claimed, it was the conservatives who were the true sacramentaries: a term which Wisdom clearly still regarded as a wounding insult.[110] Richard Tracy made a similar point once Henry VIII was safely dead. He affirmed that those who receive the sacrament 'eate Chrystes flesshe, and drynk hys bloude', but added: 'Note well Chrysten Reader, whether our clargy be not most detestable sacramentaryes, which take awaye christes woordes of Instytucyon, of the sacramente of hys body and bloude.'[111] Wisdom and Tracy's dislike of the Mass was by no means incompatible with their commitment to the Real Presence. There were plenty of other aspects of the Mass to which reformers objected. For example, much traditional piety ascribed considerable spiritual value simply to witnessing Mass, and especially to seeing the elevation of the consecrated host. The cleric John Cardmaker mocked this piety: 'it is as profitable to a man to heare Masse, and see the Sacrament, as to kysse Iudas mouth, whyche kyssed Christ our Sauiour'. But while this was clearly inflammatory and anticlerical, it does not appear to have been sacramentarian. The implication is that those who hope for contact with Christ mediated through the priest (Judas) are deluded, but that if they receive the sacrament themselves they will indeed be receiving Christ.[112]

Likewise, reformers of all stripes rejected the Catholic understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice as inimical to the Protestant doctrine of justification.

[109] PRO SP 6/3 no. 20, p. 158 (*LP* XIV (i) 376). Cf. *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fos. 160^{r}–1^{r}, where the sacrament is referred to as 'the true Easter lambe whyche is oure Lorde Iesus Christe . . . our Easter feaste, in the whyche oure sauyoure Christ was offered to the heauenly father'. Taverner, *Catechisme*, sigs. K4^{v}–6^{r}, insists that 'we must fastly beleue that chryst with all his rychesse is here gyuen and presented vnto vs, no lesse then yf he stode euen personally present'.

[110] ECL MS 261 fos. 116^{r-v}, 121^{r-v}.

[111] Richard Tracy, *A bryef & short declaracyon made, wherby eue[ry] chrysten man maye knowe, what is a sacrament* (RSTC 24162: 1548), sigs. A3^{r}, B6^{v}.

[112] *AM*, 1205: PRO SP 1/243 fo. 64^{r}. Cardmaker was also known as Tavlor.

Many English reformers can be found who either directly or indirectly made this distinction. Even Becon went out of his way to stress that Christ's sacrifice was unique and unrepeatable, although with his characteristic caution he did not explicitly connect this to the Mass.[113] Thomas Hancock, the curate of Amport in Hampshire, was suspended from his cure in 1546 for denying that the Mass was a sacrifice. On the same day, preaching from the same text, Edward Crome sparked the last major religious crisis of Henry's reign by preaching that 'the Bisshopp of Rome hath wrongly applyed the sacrafice of the Masse making yt a satysfaccyon for synnes of the quyck and the deade. . . . A sacryfice it is of thankes geving.' With his usual precision, Crome did not extend his attack to the Real Presence.[114]

The Eucharistic presence was a dangerous issue, and the wiser and more prominent of these moderate reformers either left it alone or affirmed the Real Presence only in vague terms. However, several less cautious reformers can be found attempting to formulate more complex viewpoints, denying transubstantiation but insisting on some other form of real, objective presence. The author of one treatise on this subject affirmed a corporal presence as the necessary meaning of the words of institution, but denied transubstantiation, arguing that there was no scriptural evidence or logical reason that the substance of bread and wine should be absent after the consecration. He even turned a favourite conservative argument to his own use, suggesting that to affirm transubstantiation is to deny that Christ had the power to maintain two substances together, and thus to blaspheme.[115] Another anonymous treatise takes the form of a dialogue. In the portion that survives, a master instructs 'D.' (presumably a disciple) as to the meaning of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Christ's body is indeed present corporally and naturally, the master argues, but it is not corporal and natural in the same sense as our own bodies. This much is orthodox, but he then goes on to suggest that the words 'corporal' and 'natural' are approximations chosen simply for convenience. The disciple wonders if other terms might be preferable, and the master briefly considers 'supernatural' and 'supercorporal' before deciding that they would mislead and create doubt among the unlearned. The traditional terms should be retained, but their purpose, he insists, is

> not to schewe or signifi the state or maner of the thyng but most serteynly to confyrme & ratyfy the veryte therof. For the veryte of cryst body in the sacrament is the thyng that we ar most bound to beleve & not after what maner & sorte it is there, whiche passit the reche of al mens wyttes.

[113] Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, sigs. F8^{v}–G1^{r}.
[114] Nichols (ed.), *Narratives*, 71; BL Harleian MS 425 fo. 66^{r}.
[115] BL Cotton MS Cleopatra E.v fos. 179^{r}–83^{v} (*LP* XIV (i) 1067).

'Natural' and 'corporal', therefore, become code-words for a 'true' presence, and the question of quite *how* Christ is truly present becomes unimportant. The terms should be retained, both to protect the faith of the simple and to refute the Manichean heresy that Christ was not incarnate; but the learned will know what actually lies behind them.[116] Although we have only a fragment of this dialogue, it is unmistakably an exercise in doctrinal double-speak. The author is attempting to smuggle evangelical views in under the cover of orthodox terminology. The fact that this fragment is found amongst the State Papers suggests that the attempt failed.

However, while some arguments may be flavoured with political expediency, there is no reason to doubt that such attempts to find a compromise were sincere. The regime certainly had little interest in differentiating among those who, by rejecting transubstantiation, had already broken the bounds of acceptability. People who held ambiguous views such as these were already anathematised by the Act of Six Articles. One Coventry heretic who clearly accepted the Real Presence within the context of a celebration of Mass was troubled by the reservation of the sacrament: he had said that

> The bodie of our lorde Ihesu Christ is not now in the Canapee or pixe ouer the high aulter, ther. It is not ther at euery tyme but at the tyme of consecracion therof by a preist beying at masse.[117]

Thomas Trentham, a London pinner, was likewise arrested for claiming that the sacrament 'was a very good thing but it was not as men toke yt, very god'.[118] We know from the zealous young Zwinglian Richard Hilles that Richard Mekins, burned in 1541, 'did not entirely deny the corporal presence, but claimed (as our Wyclif did) that the accident of bread did not remain there without the substance'. This did not save him, and the conservative chronicler Charles Wriothesley simply noted that he died for heresy against the sacrament.[119]

In the early 1540s, these two doctrinal boundary-markers – justification by faith and the objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist – enclosed a very substantial body of reformers. It is, however, perhaps from outside that the potential strength of their position is most visible. English conservatives apparently felt the preaching of justification by faith to be a serious threat. The conservative John Standish had to admit that the preaching of justification by faith alone was popular: 'It is commonly sayde no venym or poyson is wurse or more pestylent then that whiche to the tast semyth swete and

[116] PRO SP 1/152 fos. 23^{r}–4^{v} (*LP* XIV (i) 1066).
[117] PRO KB 9/129 fo. 5^{r} (*LP* XVII 537).
[118] PRO SP 1/243 fo. 73^{r} (*LP* Addenda 1463).
[119] Wriothesley, 126; *ET*, 147 (*OL*, 221).

dilycious.'[120] Gardiner agreed with him, claiming that those who preached grace were popular because they irresponsibly refused to confront their audiences with the reality of sin: 'In a miserable state of iniquitie and synne, some wolde haue nothynge preached, but mercye, with onely Christe, and howe he beareth al synne, payeth all, purgeth all, and clenseth all.'[121] Across the confessional divide, Robert Crowley shared the worry that congregations did not wish to be reprimanded for their sins, but merely to be told that 'Christes bloude doth suffice'.[122] This part at least of the evangelical message was apparently winning a sympathetic hearing.

Perhaps the clearest demonstration of the strength of the conformist evangelicals' doctrinal position is the concern which some conservatives showed to break it up. For example, in a printed poem from around 1540 which only survives in a fragment, the author tried to refute justification by faith by associating it with sacramentarianism:

> They saye that confessyon, is ryght nought . . .
> They saye it is ynough, god knoweth our thought
> We shall be safe, Christ hath so dere vs bought.
> But who so dothe, confessyon dispyse
> The sacrament of the aultre, setteth as lytell pryse.[123]

This author was clearly hostile to any doctrinal innovation. However, he recognised that the evangelical attack on confession might well appeal to his readers. It is an attack which he summarised fairly deftly, and whose connection with evangelical views on justification he recognised. Yet he also assumed that the same readers would find attacks on the Mass repugnant. Therefore he attempted to discredit the one by association with the other. Discrediting moderate beliefs through association with radical ones is an old trick; but as here, it will only prove effective when it is false, that is, when the moderates are not in fact willing to embrace more radical views. Likewise, Gardiner argued in 1547 that belief in the Real Presence was incompatible with justification by faith, citing Zwingli to prove 'that these things are so joined and interdependent that whoever has admitted the doctrine of "only faith" in justification is compelled to reject the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the way we profess it.'[124] The unlikely alliance between Gardiner and Zwingli is a reminder that conservatives and radical reformers shared an interest in partitioning the doctrinal territory which these moderate evangelicals occupied. In the early 1540s, however, their eventual success in doing so was still only on the horizon.

[120] Standish, *Lytle treatise against the protestacion of Robert Barnes*, sig. C2^{r}.
[121] Gardiner, *Detection of the Deuils Sophistrie*, fo. 114^{v}.
[122] Robert Crowley [fragment on the prophet Joel] (RSTC 6088.9: 1547?), sig. D6^{r}.
[123] *Here beginneth a good lesson for yonge men* (RSTC 15525: 1540), sig. A2^{v}.
[124] Gardiner, *Letters*, 335.

This is the distinctive, conformist, moderate yet unmistakable evangelicalism of the world of England's pulpits and printshops in the years after Cromwell's fall. This was the acceptable face of reformism: the loyal opposition, working within the system rather than against it, persuading rather than denouncing. If we wish to, we can invent party labels for these reformers. 'Eirenic evangelicals', perhaps, although their eirenicism did not extend to compromise on their core beliefs, in either direction. 'Anglo-Lutherans', perhaps – their doctrinal emphases were distinctly those of Lutheranism; but their political quiescence and moderated style were very un-Lutheran, and they did not acknowledge any direct connection with Luther and his circle. Yet such labels are not especially helpful. They suggest a self-conscious unity which these reformers do not appear to have had. They also suggest that this set of identities – doctrinal and political moderation – formed the essence of one breed of English reformism. This is not the case, for two reasons. First, this was not so much a subset of English evangelicalism as its public face, the face it wore for preaching and publishing. As we shall see, in other, less visible settings, different patterns of reformist behaviour were being set, and different battles were being fought. Secondly, this variant of evangelicalism was not so much a party as a process. It was intimately tied to a particular set of political circumstances. In the early 1540s sacramentarian views were utterly rejected by the regime, but many of the other doctrines preached by evangelicals were accepted or afforded a degree of toleration. Heresy prosecutions were usually half-hearted and frequently negotiated with their targets. In such circumstances we might expect a moderate, non-confrontational evangelicalism to flourish. Rather than postulating a short-lived Anglo-Lutheran movement, we might instead think of an Anglo-Lutheran *moment*. This was a strain of evangelicalism whose time had come; and its time was to pass, almost as quickly. As political events moved on so these reformers would be carried with them. Moreover, even in the early 1540s, there were internal tensions within this kind of reformism which were signs of less compromising times to come.

THE COMMONWEALTH

These conformist evangelicals were moderate in their doctrinal and political ambitions, but they pursued them with genuine commitment. These were not merely fair-weather reformers. At times, on some subjects, they were willing to abandon their characteristic caution, or felt obliged to do so. One such subject was the free availability of the English Bible.[125] Another was the broader issue of the welfare of the commonwealth. This was the set of problems that was once called the Condition of England Question, and

[125] See below, pp. 250–4.

which would nowadays be called social policy. A number of these reformers held and expressed forthright views on social questions, and were not afraid to criticise the status quo in doing so. This thread of social radicalism in their thought linked them to the exiles and some of their doctrinally radical allies. Evangelicals of all stripes were broadly agreed in their view of the commonwealth, and this agreement is the earliest sign of the mainstream of English evangelicalism expressing public discontent with the rule of Henry VIII. It was a symptom of the instability of evangelical moderation, and a catalyst for more confrontational attitudes to come.

The 'commonwealth men' are a now somewhat discredited staple of mid-Tudor history. In the reign of Edward VI, so the argument went, a coherent body of authors and preachers set forward a robust criticism of existing social and economic structures, which arose from a consistent and consistently radical programme for the renewal of society along Gospel lines. This thesis was subjected to a typically meticulous mauling by Geoffrey Elton in 1979 and has never fully recovered. Recent attempts to rescue something from the wreckage have been a good deal more cautious. It is clear that a great many writers did address such themes, especially in the early years of Edward's reign, and indeed that Protector Somerset dallied with the language and ideas of the 'commonwealth' to a dangerous extent. It is equally clear that such social criticism was uncoordinated, naive and idealistic, as considerations of genre should lead us to expect. Preachers such as Hugh Latimer preached sermons; they did not present balanced policy papers. There was, indeed, no 'commonwealth party'. However, the hope for reform of the commonwealth interacted with the hope for reform of religion in a way that many contemporaries found compelling.[126]

It has also long been recognised that this evangelical interest in the state of the commonwealth stretches back into the last years of Henry VIII's reign. One of the set texts of the 'commonwealth men' was written in 1542, and republished in 1548: Henry Brinklow's *The complaynt of Roderyck Mors*. But the breadth of interest in 'commonwealth' questions in Henry's last years has not been fully appreciated. Moreover, such blunt social views were being expressed not only by religious radicals such as Brinklow, but by individuals who were much more softly spoken on doctrinal and political matters. Brinklow's two surviving polemics dealt principally with social matters; a third, lost text probably did the same. He may also have been the author

[126] The best recent treatment of this question is in Davies, *Religion of the Word*, 140–76. See also G. R. Elton, 'Reform and the "commonwealth-men" of Edward VI's reign', in *The English Commonwealth*, ed. P. Clark, A. Smith and N. Tyacke (Leicester, 1979), 23–38; Ethan Shagan, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 rebellions: new sources and new perspectives', *English Historical Review* 114 (1999), 34–63; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant* (1999), 122–6.

of another social polemic, *A supplication of the poor commons*, which was printed anonymously in 1546, the year after his death. But more conformist evangelicals wrote on such topics as well. Richard Tracy followed his careful defence of justification by faith with *A supplycacion to our moste soueraigne lorde kynge Henry the eyght* in 1544. A number of Becon's works touched on social issues, in particular his *New pollecye of warre* and *Inuectyue agenst the moost wicked vyce of swearing*. Richard Grafton's household manual *A glasse for housholders* also included a good deal of forthright social commentary. Numerous other authors and preachers, including such prominent figures as Robert Barnes and Robert Wisdom, emphasised 'commonwealth' ideas. Robert Crowley's verse commentary on the book of Joel was not published until 1547 (or perhaps not even 1567), but was written during the last year of Henry VIII's life and pays close attention to social questions.[127] In particular, one unpublished text is worth mentioning: an untitled supplication addressed to the king and written during the period 1543–6, which lays out comprehensive and ambitious plans for the reform of the commonwealth and does so from a distinctly yet cautiously evangelical perspective. It was written by an anonymous Londoner whom I have come to think of as the London Commonwealthman.[128]

Much of the social agenda which these authors and preachers were pressing was uncontroversial in its ambitions, although hardly realistic. The Christian obligation to care for the poor was a constant theme.[129] Becon's description of the ideal evangelical home had the text 'Break thy bread to the poor' inscribed above the dining table. He returned repeatedly to his insistence that 'the poore peple ought to be better prouyded for'.[130] *A glasse for housholders* also urged almsgiving on its readers as a form of true worship of God.[131] This much is mere platitude, but most 1540s evangelicals were also willing to point the finger of blame for failure on this score. Brinklow's attacks on the rich were uncompromising: 'their heades are so geuen to seke their awne particular welthes', he wrote, that they ignored their duties to the poor. And he warned the rich that their goods would be witnesses against them on the day of judgement.[132] Yet *A glasse for housholders* was if anything blunter, stating that 'greate riches can neyther be eyther gotten or els kepte without synne'. Crowley argued that during times of dearth the wealthy must use their goods for the welfare of the poor, even to the extent

[127] Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*. The earliest surviving (near) complete text is the 1567 edition, but several uncut sheets apparently printed in 1547 survive. The text itself refers to Henry VIII as the reigning king (sig. E2^{r}).

[128] BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv. [129] Davies, *Religion of the Word*, 162–7.

[130] Becon, *Christmas bankette*, sigs. A7^{v}–8^{r} (cf. Isaiah 58:7); Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, sig. B3^{v}; Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sig. G4^{r}.

[131] *Glasse for housholders*, sigs. A7^{v}–8^{r}.

[132] Brinklow, *Lamentacion of a Christian*, A2^{v}, B3^{r}.

of impoverishing themselves.[133] And even Becon was ready to threaten the rich with the fires of hell if they failed to use their wealth for others, spelling out their duties at some length and quoting the fearsome story of the rich man and Lazarus. All too many of the gentry, in his view, were hoarders of grain and avaricious collectors of lands and titles.[134] Robert Wisdom was scathing towards those who

> pilleth the pore and scrapeth them even to the bones; their pride and ambytion; their excesse and vayne apparell; their banketting and dronkenshippe till every place be full of vomyt; their vayne buildinges as though thei wolde liue here ever; their layinge howse to house and cowpling feld to fealde till pore men be eaten owt of the contraye; their engrossinge of fermes some man xx^{ti} in to his handes; their raysing of rents vnto the vtter empoverishinge of the pore.[135]

This was more than platitude.

A similarly robust attitude towards the wealthy runs through evangelical commentary on broader social morals. Fashionable and expensive clothing was a favourite target. Becon compared tailors inventing new fashions to Satan inventing new ways to tempt the faithful. Tracy's complaint was that expensive clothes were beggaring people – especially, this married layman emphasised, women's clothes. Robert Wisdom was particularly offended by the purchase of luxurious clothes for images, while the poor were naked – a theme on which Becon also touched. The London Commonwealthman renewed the old call for sumptuary laws to be enforced. He, too, was particularly concerned about women's fashions.[136] Other favourite themes were the scourge of profanity[137] and the perceived irresponsibility of wealthy parents towards their children. Miles Coverdale's popular translation of Heinrich Bullinger's work on matrimony included stern denunciations of parents who were unwilling to educate their children, and especially of the practice of wet-nursing. *A glasse for housholders* includes a long section on childrearing, and devotes even more attention to the evils of wet-nursing.[138] A further moral failure which excited evangelical comment was the treatment of prisoners. In 1542 Wisdom urged his congregation to visit and care for those in prison. While evangelicals who might themselves face arrest clearly had a

[133] Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sigs. A8^{v}–B1^{v}.

[134] *Glasse for housholders*, sig. A4^{v}; Becon, *Pleasaunt newe Nosegay*, sigs. M2^{v}–3^{r} (cf. Luke 16:19–31); Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. N 2^{v}; Becon, *New pollecye of warre*, sigs. H2^{v}–4^{r}.

[135] ECL MS 261 fo. 118^{v}.

[136] Becon, *Pleasaunt newe Nosegay*, sigs. E2^{v}–3^{r}; Tracy, *Supplycacion to Henry the eyght*, sigs. D1^{v}–2^{r}; ECL MS 261 fo. 110^{r}; Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. R2^{r}; BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv fo. 20^{r-v}.

[137] See above, pp. 76–7.

[138] Bullinger, *Christen state of Matrimonye*, fos. 68^{v}–71^{v}; *Glasse for housholders*, sigs. D5^{r}–F8^{v}.

vested interest in this traditional work of mercy, deeper principles were also at work. Wisdom himself, when a curate in Oxford in the mid-1530s, had won widespread admiration by ministering to the sick during an epidemic, apparently with little regard for his own safety.[139] In 1546, Richard Cox, an academic who was normally careful about expressing his evangelical views, urged Sir William Paget with quite uncharacteristic passion to see to the provision of good counsel and pastoral care for prisoners, and denounced the 'wolves of the world' who preferred enriching themselves to following Christ's commands in this way.[140] Even otherwise moderate reformers understood these questions to have an apocalyptic significance. Richard Grafton saw the Turks' military victories as a judgement on 'our synfull lyuynge'. When Becon spoke of England's need for repentance, it was these social ills that he had at the forefront of his mind. The use of profane oaths, he wrote, was so widespread that it alone was 'ynough to bryng final destruccion to thys Realme'. Indeed, he claimed that England's immorality 'is an euident token that the great & terrible daye of iudgement is at hande'.[141] Crowley agreed that the oppression of the poor was one of the signs of the last days, and lamented that even in those last days worldliness would continue:

> Some shall plante vines,
> And some presse wines,
> And some shall marry wiues:
> And some shall bie,
> To gaine therby,
> But few shall mende their liues.[142]

So far, these denunciations are preachers' generalisations, forthright and dramatic while avoiding any criticisms or proposals that were too specific. Yet evangelicals with an interest in these matters also made specific proposals for changes to established laws and practices. Brinklow denounced the increase of rents and the spread of enclosure.[143] The London Commonwealthman laid out a detailed programme of economic reform. He called for all enclosures made during the previous twenty years to be revoked and for a triennial national survey of rents to prevent increases. Land which was left untended was to be confiscated and the wealthy were to be barred from any farming activity other than the breeding of horses. Both the export

[139] ECL MS 261 fo. 115^{r-v}; PRO SP 1/123 fo. 145^{r} (*LP* XII (ii) 374).
[140] PRO SP 1/225 fo. 202^{r} (*LP* XXI (ii) 282).
[141] Geoffroy, *Order of the great Turckes courte*, sig. *3^{r}; Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. A7^{r-v}; Becon, *Inuectyue agenst swearing*, fo. 6^{r}; Bullinger, ed. Becon, *Golden boke of christen matrimonye*, sig. A6^{r}.
[142] Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sigs. A2^{v}–3^{v}, F2^{v}; cf. Luke 17:26–9.
[143] Brinklow, *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors*, sigs. A6^{v}–B3^{r}, B5^{r}–6^{v}.

of unworked goods, and the import of any goods to which there was a domestically produced alternative, were to be banned.[144] The legal system was always a favourite target. An evangelical treatise on the reform of the common law from this period, probably written by Richard Morison, both deprecates the greed and ignorance of lawyers and sets about suggesting remedies.[145] For Becon, lawyers were 'gaping wolfes' more interested in prolonging cases and lining their pockets than in justice. John Bale had earlier described lawyers as profiting from the corruption of the Church.[146] The anonymous set of postils published by Richard Grafton took a different tack, picking up the Pauline warning against Christians taking one another to law.[147] The most thorough attack on the legal system, however, came from Brinklow. He demanded a comprehensive overhaul of English law, of which the most radical elements were his call for a stipendiary Bar and judiciary, and his argument that the two houses of parliament should be merged. He also directly attacked some of the Henrician legal innovations, notably the seizure of first-fruits from the clergy and the 'cruelnesse and suttyltes' of the Court of Augmentations.[148] Most dangerously, he challenged the new doctrine that statute law was absolute – a challenge in which he was joined by Robert Crowley and the courtier-poet William Palmer.[149]

However, the social problem which most alarmed evangelicals was sexual immorality. This subject had a polemical edge to it, since reformers were keen to depict clerical celibacy as a cloak for sexual misconduct of all kinds, and some of them – notably John Bale – made little effort to conceal their prurience. However, they were aware that the sexual conduct of the laity was hardly exemplary either. Becon denounced with some vigour the popular view that faithfulness to one's wife was unmanly, and lamented that 'honeste wyues syt at home and allmoost perish for honger but harlottes are sumptuously fed wyth al kynde of deyntyes'. Worse still, not all wives were such paragons; and loose-living men were also willing to wink at their wives' indiscretions.[150] An early pamphlet by George Joye gave a confessional twist to these claims. He suggested (most implausibly) that the Six Articles' bar on clerical marriage was the result of a plot by married nobles, who wished to separate priests' wives from their husbands in order to lure them into harlotry.[151] Again, almost all the reformers who wrote on

[144] BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv fos. 17^{v}, 19^{v}–20^{r}.
[145] BL Cotton MS Faustina C.ii fos. 5–22. I owe this reference to John Jackson.
[146] Becon, *New pollecye of warre*, sigs. H1^{v}–2^{r}; Bale, *King Iohan*, lines 1263–4.
[147] *Brefe Postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles*, fo. 105^{v}; I Corinthians 6:1–8.
[148] Brinklow, *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors*, esp. sigs. A6^{v}, C3^{v}–4^{v}, E1^{r}–2^{r}.
[149] *Ibid.*, sig. D5^{v}; Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sig. G4^{r-v}; TCC MS R3.33 fo. 109^{r}.
[150] Bullinger, ed. Becon, *Golden boke of christen matrimonye*, sigs. A4^{v}–7^{v}.
[151] Joye, *Defence of the mariage of preistes*, sig. A4^{r-v}.

sexual morals had concrete remedies to suggest. Aside from the legalisation of clerical marriage – which no one could safely advocate within England after 1539 – two main proposals were put forward. First, the death penalty should be imposed for adultery, although some evangelicals conceded that this should only be for the second offence.[152] Secondly, prostitution should be both outlawed and vigorously prosecuted. Evangelicals were aware of the traditional view that prostitution should be permitted as a social safety-valve, but treated it with contempt.[153] The former demand was a gruesome pipe dream, but the Southwark stews were indeed closed by royal order in the spring of 1546. This may have had as much to do with levels of syphilis as with any moral concern, and one sour evangelical grumbled later that it had merely scattered prostitution across the country. However, the proclamation was couched in strongly moralistic terms, lamenting that prostitution kindled God's wrath and corrupted the commonwealth.[154] Evangelicals could be forgiven for believing that they had won the argument.

Few of these issues were directly connected to doctrinal questions, and they may seem relatively uncontroversial. Certainly, a number of religious conservatives agreed with their evangelical opponents on many of these points. In the same year as Becon denounced those who preferred drinking to attending church, Edmund Bonner, the bishop of London, was taking practical steps to control this problem, by ensuring that alehouses closed for the duration of divine service.[155] In 1544 the conservative preacher William Chedsay doubted the legality of prostitution and attacked the miserliness of the rich. In a passage glistening with irony, he praised the charity of landowners, whose love was so great that they wished to bring as many lands as they could into their embrace. Another conservative preacher, John Feckenham, denounced the payment of first-fruits and called for tithes to be reformed. A more prominent traditionalist, Richard Smith, went so far as to argue that tithes were only due to clergy who were resident and ministered to their flocks.[156]

[152] Bullinger, *Christen state of Matrimonye*, fo. 35^{v}; Bullinger, ed. Becon, *Golden boke of christen matrimonye*, sig. B7^{r-v}; BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv fo. 20^{v}; Davies, *Religion of the Word*, 153.

[153] Bale, *Christen exhortacion vnto customable swearers*, fo. 3^{r}; Bullinger, *Christen state of Matrimonye*, fos. 33^{v}–4^{r}; Turner, *Huntyng and fyndyng out of the Romishe fox*, sigs. F1^{r}–2^{v}.

[154] TRP, 365–6; Whitney R. D. Jones, *William Turner*, 155; Elis Gruffyd, ed. and tr. M. Bryn Davies, 'Boulogne and Calais from 1545 to 1550', *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fouad I University, Cairo* 12 (1950), 13–14.

[155] Bonner Register fo. 40^{r}.

[156] Chedsay and Scott, *Two notable sermones*, sigs. D8^{v}–E2^{r}, E5^{r-v}; PRO SP 1/228 fos. 55^{v}–6^{r} (*LP* XXI (ii) 710); Richard Smith, *A godly and faythfull Retraction made and published at Paules crosse in London* (RSTC 22822: 1547), sig. B2^{r}.

Such cross-party agreement does not, however, mean that these sentiments were uncontroversial. The regime's own view was very different. Official publications during this period gave little space to the plight of the poor. Where it was mentioned, the flavour of the discussion was far less charitable. Poverty was blamed not on the greed of the rich but on 'sturdy beggars', the able-bodied who chose to beg because they were too lazy to work.[157] Or holy days were blamed, for limiting the amount of work which the poor were permitted to engage in.[158] Henry VIII himself was very keen that poverty should be blamed principally on the poor. His manuscript amendments to the *Bishops' Book* emphasised the need to compel sturdy beggars to work, and he replaced a passage emphasising that our daily bread is a gift from God with an address to 'the tru labouryng man', who will attain prosperity and salvation through hard work. Indeed, some of his amendments might, to the unkind eye, suggest a tender conscience. The king who had dissolved the monasteries, imposed questionable taxes and forced a number of leading clergy into damaging exchanges of property qualified the commandment not to covet one's neighbour's goods. His rewritten version stipulated that one should not do so 'wrongfully or vniustely'. Faced with a later passage which claimed that attempting to obtain another's property was a violation of the commandment, Henry added that this was only the case if it was done 'withowght due recompence'.[159] It was in keeping with this spirit that, when John Pylbarough paraphrased the *Magnificat* in his panegyric to the king, he entirely omitted the central verses which preach justice for the poor and vengeance on the mighty.[160] Those who took a different view of these matters had to watch their step. Richard Smith was made to recant his views on tithes shortly after Henry's death. It was said that he had denied that tithes might legitimately be impropriate to lay persons, and that this was 'seditious and sclaunderous to the kynges maiesties procedinges'.[161] Evangelicals were in a somewhat more exposed position. Brinklow and Tracy published their social polemics abroad, either pseudonymously or anonymously. The London Commonwealthman rather naively submitted his to the king instead; and so, although it was clearly written with publication in mind, the manuscript simply disappeared into the royal library. The much more cautious Becon was permitted to publish, for a while at least, but even he insisted on going out of his way to deny that he was advocating the communion of goods.[162]

[157] *King's Book*, fos. 65^{r-v}. [158] PRO SP 1/143 fo. 202^{v} (*LP* XIV (i) 402).

[159] Bodleian Library, 4° Rawlinson 245, fos. 54^{v}, 77^{r}, 85^{r}–7^{r}. These attempts to rewrite Scripture drew a tart rebuke from Cranmer, who insisted that even if compensation was made the commandment had still been broken. Cranmer, *Letters*, 100, 106.

[160] Pylbarough, *Commemoration*, sig. C3^{v}; cf. Luke 1:51–3.

[161] Richard Smith, *Godly and faythfull Retraction*, sig. B2^{r}.

[162] Becon, *Potacion for lent*, sig. G4^{r}.

Even on the comparatively safe subjects of charity, social morals and the legal system, then, evangelicals with an interest in the commonwealth found themselves pulling away from the regime. In addition, however, the 'commonwealth' agenda led these authors into positions critical of the English Church itself. The Church's structure, its wealth and the ways in which it used them offended even otherwise moderate reformers. Moreover, such matters led directly to conflict with a regime which had its own reasons for taking a close interest in Church property. Henry VIII's known willingness to seize ecclesiastical wealth for his own ends gave this issue its sharp edge, because while evangelicals were usually content to see the Church stripped of its property, their ideas about what should be done with it differed dramatically from the king's.

Simple denunciations of ecclesiastical wealth were controversial but straightforward enough. Bale declared that the clergy had no interest in using their riches for the benefit of the commonwealth, but rather in toadying to 'great lordes and ladyes . . . & soche as hath fat benefices'.[163] Brinklow used the language of sturdy beggars – 'lusty Lubbers' in his version – but applied it to chantry priests, who should labour for their livings while their stipends should go to the poor. The author of *A supplication of the poor commons* – perhaps, again, Brinklow – inveighed against the financial burden the clergy laid on the poor with real bitterness. 'They commaunde vs to buylde them goodly churches with hyghe steaples, & greate belles to ryng oure pence into theyr purses when our frendes be dead.'[164] George Joye used the gospel story of the rich young ruler who was reluctant to give his wealth to the poor to mock his particular hate-figure, Stephen Gardiner: 'I dare say he wold skratche his head twyse (as did this riche man) ere he sold his bisshopryke & had geuen it to the pore.' Joye and Becon both cited the Pauline injunction – 'whoso labore not, let him not eat' – to argue that non-preaching clergy should be deprived of their incomes.[165]

However, the Supreme Head of the Church of England could not easily be excluded from these criticisms. Richard Tracy's attack on clerical pluralism drove him to confront the state of affairs which the king had authorised. His first swipe was at court chaplains, who supported themselves from benefices they never visited. 'Haue not Kynges and other rulers sufficyent to endowe their chapelaynes?', he wondered. He moved on to attack the statute of 1529 which permitted such men to be non-resident. Eventually, as well as calling on the king to reform such matters, he insisted that in the meantime he strip

[163] Bale, *Epistle exhortatorye*, fos. 21^{v}–2^{r}.

[164] Brinklow, *Lamentacion of a Christian*, sig. B1^{v}; Brinklow?, *Supplication of the poore Commons*, sig. B3^{r}.

[165] Joye, *George Ioye confuteth Winchesters false Articles*, fo. 12^{r}; Joye, *Daniel*, fo. 67^{r}; Becon, *New pollecye of warre*, sig. H 7^{v}; Luke 18:18–23; II Thessalonians 3:10.

such idle and useless clergy of their lands.[166] *A supplication of the poor Commons* made a similar point in more intemperate language, and directly blamed the king. Crowley again singled out royal chaplains, but widened his attack to include the nobility and the magistrates who permitted such abuses.[167] The payment of tithes to a non-preaching ministry was another particularly sore point, although not all reformers agreed on how tithes ought to be reformed.[168] Yet the regime was quite uncompromising. In 1539, even a modest attempt to ameliorate the effects of lay impropriations of tithes on clerical incomes was blocked in parliament.[169] Evangelical attitudes hardened in return. Richard Cox's correspondence with William Paget in 1546 included a remarkably unguarded attack on impropriations, which he argued were irreversibly destroying any chance of a godly preaching and pastoral ministry across large parts of England. 'Wo be to the beginner, wo bee to the Continuers, wo be to the Aiders, and Abetters', Cox wrote, knowing that this attack must embrace the king as well as his councillors.[170] It was a truism amongst evangelicals of every stripe that ecclesiastical wealth could have only one justification: the support of a preaching ministry. However, as George Constantine complained in 1539, 'in all our visitations we have had no thin[g]e reformed but our purses'.[171] Wealth that should have been supporting preachers or being taken from the Church for other godly ends was instead being spent on war and on supporting the kind of clergyman whom Archbishop Cranmer called a 'good viander'.[172] The result was a dangerous erosion of evangelical goodwill towards the regime.

Some reformers moved from these general expressions of alarm to policy suggestions that were more detailed and, consequently, more politically delicate. The London Commonwealthman's proposed solution to the ills of the commonwealth was a campaign of mass deprivation of the clergy, with the wilfully ignorant to be pensioned on a pittance and the well-meaning to be restored once they had acquired sufficient education. The large number of vacant benefices that would result were to be leased to laymen who would be required to use the revenues to maintain the chancel, provide hospitality and to host visiting preachers. And as the keystone of this programme, the bishoprics were to be dissolved and the cathedrals refounded as preaching centres. This was sugared with a bribe to the king. The dissolution of the twenty-seven bishoprics and their cathedrals should, he claimed with back-of-envelope insouciance, raise £27,000 for the Crown. The mass deprivations

[166] Tracy, *Supplycacion to Henry the eyght*, sigs. A8^{r}–B1^{r}, C3^{r-v}.
[167] Brinklow?, *Supplication of the poore Commons*, sig. B5^{r}; Crowley, *The opening of the woordes of the prophet Joell*, sigs. B5^{r}–C3^{v}.
[168] ECL MS 261 fo. 111^{r}; Tracy, *Supplycacion to Henry the eyght*, sigs. E6^{v}–7^{r}; Gough (ed.), *Dore of holy scripture*, sigs. C4^{r}, 7^{v}; Brinklow?, *Supplication of the poore Commons*, sigs. A 8^{r}–B 2^{v}.
[169] Lehmberg, *Later Parliaments*, 63.
[170] PRO SP 1/225 fo. 202^{v} (*LP* XXI (ii) 282).
[171] Constantine, 'Memorial', 59.
[172] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 264.

would, he guessed, yield a further £100,000 in the revenue from vacant benefices and in first-fruits. But this cannot conceal the fact that this writer was proposing the abolition of sacramental ministry across most of England. He believed it would be 'much more commodioose necessarie and profitable for the realme to haue no preestes at all, than ignoraunt and vnlearned, vicioose and of evyll conuersation'. In other words, he did not really envisage a priestly ministry at all, but was calling for a revolution in the English Church, and implicitly challenging a king who had knowingly allowed such a state of affairs to continue.[173]

Henry Brinklow's theology was more radical than this author's, but his plans for ecclesiastical wealth differ only in mood and detail. Those few differences can be accounted for by the difference between a consciously illegal polemic and a document actually presented to the king in the apparently sincere hope of redress. He was more concerned to channel the proceeds of a mass seizure of Church lands towards care for the poor and for education, and the bone he threw to the king was rather meaner than that which the London Commonwealthman offered. Brinklow suggested that the incomes of non-preaching clergy should be forfeit directly to the king, but – echoing Tyndale's ideas – proposed that the Crown should receive only half of the value of England's church plate, and a tenth or less of church lands seized. Brinklow, however, allowed his bitterness to show more plainly. He approved of the dissolution of the monasteries, but also pointed out that they had provided some alms for the poor, a degree of hospitality and some patronage of godly clergy. As a result, the dissolution had stripped many of the poorest places of England of even the little they had.[174] Few others dared express such suicidal views at the time, but this was to become the evangelical orthodoxy. In 1554, William Turner laid out an even more thoroughgoing plan for restructuring the Church, which envisaged the creation of more than 150 elected 'bishops', the suppression of cathedrals and the ending of all impropriations. In the process, he roundly criticised 'King Henry the eight, with his couetous counsell', who, through seizing monastic property rather than using it for godly ends, 'spoiled the churche and hole realme miserably after suche a fashion, that all the hole realme smarteth for it vnto this day'. He proceeded to compare Henry to Ananias, struck dead for attempting to defraud the Holy Spirit.[175] Hindsight soured even the dissolution of the monasteries.

[173] BL Royal MS 17.B.xxxv fos. 2^{v}–4^{r}, 11^{v}–12^{r}, 17^{v}.

[174] Brinklow, *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors*, sigs. $D4^{r}$–5^{r}, $E2^{r}$, $F3^{r-v}$; Brinklow, *Lamentacion of a Christian*, sig. $D7^{r-v}$.

[175] Turner, *Huntyng of the romyshe vuolfe*, sigs. $D6^{r-v}$, $E6^{v}$–$F3^{r}$; Acts 5:1–6. Cf. Anthony Gilby's similarly jaundiced view of Henry's proceedings in 1558: Anthony Gilby, 'An admonition to England and Scotland, to call them to repentance', in *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing, vol. IV (Edinburgh, 1895), 563–4.

An emphasis on the need for self-sacrificial action to secure the prosperity of the commonwealth was shared across the evangelical spectrum. It may have been an emphasis which contributed to the appeal of reformist preaching, as it was elsewhere in Europe.[176] It is certain, however, that this emphasis divided evangelicals from Henry VIII. While the leaders of evangelical opinion within England in the early 1540s were predominantly moderate in both doctrine and politics, their views on the commonwealth both united them with their more radical brethren in exile and set them at odds with the king. For most of Henry VIII's reign, this division remained largely potential – although, as we shall see in the next chapter, in one arena the regime's high promises and miserly actions collided dangerously with values which were particularly dear to evangelicals. Yet even a potential division reminds us that the moderation of evangelicalism as preached and printed in England in the 1540s was more than mere quietism or conformity. Where conviction led these reformers into a degree of confrontation with their king, they were willing to follow. This underlines the fact that their moderation, too, was as much a matter of conviction as of convenience; and suggests that their wider loyalty to the religious settlement also had its limits.

[176] Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford, 1992), 219–20.