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by ALEC RYRIE

A Lutheran settlement was the natural outcome for a politically imposed Reformation such as that of Henry VIII. Some aspects of his settlement pointed in that direction, and English evangelicalism during his reign leaned more towards Lutheranism than has been hitherto appreciated. Reformed views only came to dominate the movement at the very end of the reign. This shift reflects the waning influence of German Lutheranism in England, and arguably also the influence of Lollard sacramentarianism. Henry VIII's radical attitude towards images also brought some quasi-Reformed ideas into his settlement. Most important, from 1543 onwards the regime drove Lutheran-leaning evangelicals into open opposition, forcing them towards more confrontational Reformed doctrines.

I

Consider the case of two northern European kings of the first half of the sixteenth century: Gustav Vasa of Sweden, and Henry VIII of England. Both kings maintained a ferociously tight grip on their kingdoms, yet both were constantly aware of the weaknesses of their positions; in particular of dynastic rivalries and of the ruinous cost of warfare. In the wake of the German Reformation, Protestant ideas seem to have made little impact in either realm on a popular level, but fairly soon these two kings realised the potential political advantages which the reformers' ideas offered to them. Over a period of a few years, they gradually took control of the Church in their respective kingdoms, eventually extinguishing all Roman jurisdiction, and seizing large quantities of ecclesiastical property, notably that of the monasteries. Parts of the evangelical programme were put in place; in particular, both kings licensed the use of vernacular Scripture and portions of a vernacular liturgy. A minority of the urban population in both countries came to sympathise with evangelical ideas. However, Protestant doctrine as such never appealed to the kings themselves; nor, judging by the popular rebellions which religious change sparked in both England and Sweden, did it appeal to the majority of their people.[1] The kings halted the process

[1] E. I. Kouri, 'The early Reformation in Sweden and Finland *c.* 1520–1660', in Ole

of reform, leaving many of the evangelicals' hopes unfulfilled. Both kings had appointed archbishops who were committed although moderate reformers; but while these men were allowed to remain in office, both of them were largely isolated in the last years of their masters' reigns. In neither country was there a clearly Protestant settlement of religion until the old kings eventually died, and far more vigorously evangelical regimes under their sons finally established Protestant Churches in law – with the old archbishops in the vanguard.

This striking series of parallels between the Reformations effected by Gustav Vasa and by Henry VIII is worth drawing attention to for its own sake, especially in the light of recent scholarship which has emphasised the differences between the Reformations in England and on the continent.[2] However, it also highlights a problem. If the parallels between England and Sweden were so close, why were the eventual Protestant settlements so different? The Swedish church ordinance of 1571 was Lutheran; while Edward VI's religious settlement, largely resurrected by his half-sister Elizabeth, was, for all its idiosyncrasies, firmly within the emerging Reformed tradition. This fact needs more explanation than has sometimes been thought. Apart from the Palatinate (arguably something of a special case), England was the only European territorial state to experience a politically imposed Reformation which ended in a Reformed settlement. Governments which wished to keep firm control of religious affairs generally found Lutheranism a more congenial approach, and such control was certainly a priority for England's rulers; witness the very Lutheran decision to retain the office of bishop.[3] Against this, there is a tendency in Reformation historiography to assume that by the 1540s Lutheranism was a spent force, confined to the German-speaking lands. It is indeed undeniable that from the 1540s onwards Lutheranism won over little new territory, whereas Reformed Protestantism began to advance on a number of fronts. However, Edward VI's England was no more 'new territory' for Lutheranism than was the Sweden of Gustav Vasa's heirs. Sweden drew up its church order in the 1560s, an unmistakably Calvinist decade, but despite considerable pressure from within Sweden for a Calvinist settlement – pressure to which Archbishop Laurentius Petri was by no means unsympathetic – King Johan III stuck firmly to Lutheran principles. Arguably, a similar Lutheran settlement

Peter Grell (ed.), *The Scandinavian Reformation*, Cambridge 1995, 42–69 at pp. 42–5; Michael Roberts, *The early Vasas*, Cambridge 1968, 131–8.

[2] Most notably, Christopher Haigh has argued that 'England had an ersatz Reformation, an anaemic substitute for the real thing'. This view contrasts England's orderly, politically-driven religious shifts with Germany, France, Scotland and other countries where 'the Reformation came with passion and violence': Christopher Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation revised*, Cambridge 1987, 7.

[3] See the useful discussion of this in Felicity Heal, *Of prelates and princes*, Cambridge 1980, 17–19.

would have been the most plausible endpoint of the course on which Henry VIII had set England.

However, most scholars have usually assumed that Lutheran ideas never gained more than a foothold in England. The most capable survey of English Lutheranism in recent years, by Basil Hall, saw it as a phenomenon doomed from the beginning. Hall described the earliest English evangelicals as being 'willing to accept gladly Luther's theological aid … while on the whole discarding his sacramental teaching and eventually failing to give central place to his concept of law and the dialectic of law and gospel'. No sooner did Lutheran ideas make landfall in England, Hall argued, than they were adulterated by a covenant theology which was 'very tenacious in England' and indeed 'native of the soil'.[4] This view, unfortunately, was strongly informed by William Clebsch's influential misreading of the place of law and works in the theology of William Tyndale and Robert Barnes, a misreading meticulously corrected by the recent work of Carl Trueman. Trueman has emphasised that while the early English reformers drew more heavily on Erasmian ideas than Luther did, they remained 'profoundly influenced by continental Lutheranism', and that even John Frith was deeply affected by Luther's theology of the cross. Indeed, in Trueman's terms, the soteriologies of these early English evangelicals were at least as close to Luther's as was that of Philip Melanchthon.[5] It is certainly true that the early evangelical movement in England was permeated with Lutheran texts. The leading English evangelical theologians all translated substantial extracts from Luther. More intriguingly, a range of official and semi-official documents from the 1530s drew heavily on Lutheran sources: William Marshall's English primer of 1534, the so-called Matthew Bible of 1537, the unpublished 'Thirteen Articles' and even the *Bishops' book*. Archbishop Cranmer's liturgical work continued to be informed by Lutheran sources well into the 1540s, to an extent which was to prove embarrassing in 1548.[6]

Such synergies were not enough to make England Lutheran while Henry VIII lived. As Hall has argued, the king's suspicion of Lutheranism in general, his loathing for Luther in particular and his heartfelt attachment to his own authority guaranteed that the English Church would remain beyond Wittenberg's sphere of influence. Henry's Reformation was, as Richard Rex has recently emphasised, 'its own thing,

[4] Basil Hall, 'The early rise and gradual decline of Lutheranism in England 1520–1660' (Studies in Church History: Subsidia ii, 1979), 104, 110.

[5] Carl Trueman, *Luther's legacy: salvation and English reformers, 1525–1556*, Oxford 1994, 15–16, 72–4, 83–120, 156–97, 198; cf. William A. Clebsch, *England's earliest Protestants 1520–1535*. New Haven–London 1964.

[6] Hall, 'Early rise and gradual decline of Lutheranism', 114–25; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: a life*, New Haven–London 1996, 386–91.

folly to catholics and a stumbling-block to protestants'.[7] However, when his idiosyncratic programme led him in an evangelical direction, the paths he took were – with one important exception – clearly Lutheran. He made several serious attempts to forge an alliance with the overwhelmingly Lutheran Schmalkaldic League, and Philip Melanchthon was the only continental Protestant leader for whom he seems to have had any real respect.[8] Many of the reforms his regime implemented would accord with a Lutheran agenda: the provision of vernacular Scripture, the destruction of monasticism, and even the dismantling of the doctrine of purgatory and the system of devotion that went with it. By contrast, Henry maintained an apparently lifelong loathing of those who denied the eucharistic presence.[9] Royal proclamations during the late 1530s repeatedly bracketed together Anabaptists and sacramentaries as equally evil and dangerous, the two groups who destroyed the right use of the two holiest sacraments, and who in so doing tore up the whole fabric of the society which Henry so wished to keep united.[10] The only movement beyond a Lutheran agenda that Henry VIII's regime sanctioned was a partial attack on image-worship – a revealing exception to which we shall return. Seen from certain perspectives the Henrician settlement looks less like 'Catholicism without the Pope' than like Lutheranism without justification by faith.[11] Henry certainly did not intend his heirs to embrace

[7] Hall, 'Early rise and gradual decline of Lutheranism', 108; Richard Rex, 'The crisis of obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation', *Historical Journal* xxxix (1996), 894.

[8] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 137–8. George Bernard's recent attempts to distance Henry from Melanchthon and the Schmalkaldic League do not stand up to close scrutiny. The marriage alliance of 1539–40 was with Cleves, a non-member of the League, not because Henry wished to remain semi-detached, but because there was no lady of appropriate rank available for marriage within the League proper; as Rory McEntegart puts it, 'Cleves was the next best thing'. Nor is there any evidence for the suggestion that Henry wished to meet Melanchthon because he believed that he could be converted to Henry's own views on clerical celibacy, private masses and justification: G. W. Bernard, 'The making of religious policy, 1533–1546: Henry VIII and the search for the middle way', *Historical Journal* xli (1998), 344; Rory Mc Entegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden 1531–7', unpubl. PhD diss. London 1992, 310 (forthcoming as *Henry VIII, the League of Schmalkalden and the English Reformation*, Woodbridge 2002).

[9] The only proviso which can be set against this is Cranmer's tale that in August 1546 Henry suggested to the French ambassador that the mass be abolished in both realms as part of a general alliance. However, even granting the pre-eminent importance which diplomacy had for Henry, it is not clear how seriously a second-hand report of an off-the-cuff suggestion by a sick man at the end of a substantial banquet should be taken, much less whether his reported remarks demonstrate a willingness to abandon the Real Presence as well as the sacrifice of the mass. The event may be no more than an example of Henry's unwieldy sense of humour; and he may have been teasing the archbishop as much as the ambassador: John Foxe, *The ecclesiasticall history, contayning the actes and monuments* ... , London 1583 (*RSTC* 11225), 1245; cf. J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, London 1968, 472–8.

[10] See, for example, *Tudor royal proclamations 1485–1558*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, New Haven–London 1964, 227, 270–3, 280.

[11] An idea which was first expressed to me in these terms by Peter Marshall.

full-blooded Lutheranism; nevertheless, his legacy made that a plausible, even a likely, outcome.

In the event, however, before the old king had been dead for twelve months it was clear that the evangelical clique at the heart of the new regime intended to push matters much further. Cranmer had recently moved towards an aggressively Reformed doctrine of the eucharist, and unlike his Swedish counterpart he found that his political allies in both the Somerset and Northumberland regimes were willing to follow him down this road. Of course, many different elements lay behind this shift, not least the internal politics of the Edwardian regimes, which lie beyond the scope of this article. However, while it would be possible to imagine counterfactual scenarios in which those regimes eventually delivered a quasi-Lutheran settlement, it is clear that sympathy for Reformed ideas had come to a certain dominance within the broader English evangelical movement by the time of Henry VIII's death. This article will argue that this Reformed dominance was late in coming; that until shortly before the king's death the dominant strain of English evangelicalism was broadly Lutheran in its doctrine and non-confrontational in its politics.[12] Such reformers were hardly in tune with Henry VIII's Reformation, but there were sufficient traces of their ideas in the regime's religious policies for them to convince themselves that the king was on their side. The article will also trace how, by the close of the reign, this moderate evangelical consensus came to be overtaken by a more aggressive reformism linked to the Reformed tradition. Just as the evangelical minority within England had acquired sufficient momentum to become, by the late 1540s, the leading contender for England's future religious identity, the rising star which other hopefuls had to defeat; so, by 1546, the radical, Reformed minority within evangelicalism had acquired sufficient momentum to seize the reins of the movement.

[12] These terms are not, of course, those used by contemporaries. As much recent scholarship has emphasised, the ill-defined nature of religious divisions in the early Reformation makes problematic the use of any terminology to identify religious factions. Following what is becoming the standard practice, I here use 'evangelical' and 'reformer' to describe those whom later generations would call Protestant, and 'conservative' to describe those whom later generations would call Catholic; although these terms are themselves problematic. Likewise, 'Lutheran' and 'Reformed' are here used in a very vague sense. Such vagueness is not only unavoidable, but even appropriate, given the absence of clear confessional identities at this period. However, while the terms are unavoidably anachronistic, they may serve to represent a real division within English evangelicalism: a division which was centred around, but not limited to, the fault-line of the eucharistic presence: Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The reign of Henry VIII*, Basingstoke 1995, 168–9; Eric W. Ives, 'Anne Boleyn and the early Reformation in England: the contemporary evidence', *Historical Journal* xxxvii (1994), 393–5.

II

If some of Henry VIII's religious policies bear a familial resemblance to Lutheranism, some of the most prominent evangelicals who served him fall much more clearly into that category. Archbishop Cranmer carefully maintained a eucharistic doctrine which rejected transubstantiation without denying the objective presence of Christ in the elements, and only moved away from this position around the time of Henry VIII's death. Cranmer and his less cautious episcopal colleague Hugh Latimer were willing to take part in the condemnation of John Lambert for the denial of the Real Presence in 1538.[13] Two of the other leading evangelical influences in England in the 1530s, Robert Barnes and the Scot Alexander Alesius, were both Lutheran almost in a confessional sense. Lutheran ideas were the orthodoxy of establishment evangelicalism in the late 1530s. Rory McEntegart, in one of the most important recent studies of the politics of this period, has emphasised that 'during the 1530s there was, in fact, no contradiction at all in being an evangelical and still opposing denial of the real presence'. McEntegart goes on to describe Thomas Cromwell himself as a Lutheran. However, McEntegart maintains that such Lutheranism was limited to a 'small group of people around the king', with the broader evangelical movement already being drawn towards the Reformed ideas symbolised by rejection of the Real Presence.[14] This is certainly what later Protestant generations would have had us believe. Contemporary evidence, however, suggests otherwise.

Almost immediately after Cromwell's execution, his former client William Gray published a ballad in an attempt to counter the vilification of his fallen master. Gray was forced to concede that Cromwell had suffered justly as a traitor, but refused to accept that he had been a heretic. Gray was proud to proclaim that

> The sacrament of the aulter, that is most hyest
> Crumwell beleued it to be the very body of Chriest.[15]

It is hard to doubt that this claim is true. Less than a year earlier George Constantine, an evangelical priest who was a veteran of the underground book trade of the late 1520s and a former inmate of Thomas More's prisons, 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.[16] Another of Cromwell's

[13] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 153, 234, 334–4.
[14] McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden', 293–7, 348.
[15] William Gray, *A balade agaynst malycyous sclaunderers*, London 1540 (*RSTC* 1323.5).
[16] 'Memorial from George Constantine to Thomas Lord Cromwell', *Archæologia* xxiii (1831), 77.

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, but not on the Real Presence; he was also accused, although probably falsely, of preaching that Christ took no flesh from the Virgin. In 1539 he 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 reu*er*ence & 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'.[17] In other words, 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. Blunt and aggressive language of this kind was not incompatible with doctrinal moderation.[18]

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 well outside that circle and long after Cromwell's death. The most prominent member of this group was the evangelical propagandist Thomas Becon. Becon was the evangelical publishing phenomenon of the early 1540s: in less than two years, he wrote nine full-length books, as well as a long preface to 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 Becon had not been forced into premature retirement in that year.[19] In later years he moved towards the Reformed view of the sacraments which had by then become the English Protestant orthodoxy. As a consequence, when the folio edition of his works was printed in 1560–4 he removed embarrassing phrases such as 'the sacrament of the

[17] PRO, SP 1/152 fo. 1v (*Letters and papers, foreign & domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, ed. James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, London 1862–1932 [cited hereinafter as *LP*] xiv/1, 1053); BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra E.v fo. 397r (*LP* ix. 230). For the dating of this document see G. R. Elton, *Policy and police: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell*, Cambridge 1972, 163.

[18] Cf. John Cardmaker, the vicar of St Bride's Fleet Street, London, who was arrested in July 1540 for preaching that 'it is as profitable to a man to heare Masse, and see the Sacrament, as to kysse Iudas mouth, whyche kyssed Christ our Sauiour'. While inflammatory, this statement appears to be a backhanded affirmation of the Real Presence, suggesting that indirect contact with Christ in the sacrament through a priest is no more valuable than indirect contact with Christ in his natural body through Judas would have been: Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, 1205; PRO, SP 1/243 fo. 64r (*LP* Addenda, 1463).

[19] *RSTC*; Guildhall Library, London, MS 9531/12, fos 45r, 92r–v.

altar' from his earlier books. It was, of course, the folio edition which formed the basis for the Parker Society's editions of Becon's works, through which most modern readers have come to know him.[20] The success of Becon's doctrinal readjustment is symbolic of the extent to which modern scholarship has viewed Henrician evangelicals through an Edwardian and Elizabethan prism. In the early 1540s, however, Becon was happily referring 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 also implied that he supported the traditional practice of fasting before receiving the sacrament. He was clearly willing to accept the mass as it was used in the Henrician Church, urging his readers 'to be present at y^{e} ministracio*n* of the moost blessed Sacrament of the altare Christes very body and bloud'. By contrast, he was bitter in his attacks on 'the Anabaptistes, Sacrame*n*taries & other Phanaticall & frentyke Spirites which haue vayne visions inue*n*ted 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 of the cult of saints, of prayer for the dead and of clerical celibacy 'vntruylie', but the worst fault that could be found with his preaching on the sacrament was that 'men were offended with me'.[21]

Many others whose evangelical credentials are not in doubt can also be found using resolutely realist language about the eucharist in the 1540s. One anonymous late Henrician writer, laying out principles for scriptural interpretation which were otherwise thoroughly inimical to traditional religion, insisted that the Real Presence should be maintained because the plain words of Scripture, 'Hoc est corpus meum', admitted no other interpretation.[22] Becon's friend Robert Wisdom, one of the most popular evangelical preachers in London, stated explicitly 'that the Lorde Iesus giveth at all tables of his holie sowper to all that receiue yt his very bodie and bloude'. The 1539 Act of Six Articles, which laid down such

[20] 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': *The early works of Thomas Becon*, ed. John Ayre (Parker Society, 1843), p. xviii.

[21] Thomas Becon, *A potacion or drinkynge for this holi time of lent*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1749), sigs K4v–L4v; *A newe pathway vnto praier, ful of much godly frute and christen knowledge*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1734), sigs L 1r–2r; *Dauids harpe ful of moost delectable armony, newely strynged and set in tune*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1717), sig. K4v; Guildhall, MS 9531/12, fo. 44v.

[22] PRO, SP 6/3 no. 20, p. 158 (*LP* xiv/1, 376); cf. *The ende of this brefe postyl, vpon the Epystles and Gospelles of all the Sondayes in the yeare*, London 1543 (*RSTC* 2972.7), fos 160r–1r; Richard Taverner, *A catechisme or institution of the Christen religion*, London 1539 (*RSTC* 23709), sigs K4v–6r.

draconian penalties for the denial of transubstantiation, had of course provided a strong incentive for evangelicals both to stick to such opinions, and to affirm them publicly. However, these statements cannot easily be dismissed as politic conformity, for plenty of reformers moved on from affirmations of the Real Presence to denunciations of other aspects of the mass, and so placed themselves on the wrong side of the law in any case. Wisdom 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 Christ*e*s souper' as they did, for in the mass Christ's institution had been replaced with 'an Ordinau*n*ce of their awne Imagination'. He argued on these grounds that the traditionalists were the true sacramentaries – a term he evidently still saw as insulting.[23] Richard Tracy made a similar point once Henry VIII was safely dead, affirming that all those who receive the sacrament 'eate Chrystes flesshe, and drynk hys bloude', but adding: 'Note well Chryste*n* Reader, whether our clargy be not most detestable sacrame*n*taryes, w^{e} take awaye christes woordes of Instytucyo*n*, of y^{e} sacrame*n*te of hys body and bloude'.[24] Wisdom and Tracy's dislike of the mass was by no means incompatible with their commitment to the Real Presence. The doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass was inimical to the Protestant doctrine of justification, and was rejected by Lutheran and Reformed alike; 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 usual caution he did not explicitly connect this to the mass.[25] 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 thank*e*s geving'. With characteristic precision, Crome did not extend his attack to the Real Presence.[26]

The eucharistic presence was a dangerous topic for evangelicals, and most of these moderates either left it alone or affirmed the Real Presence only in vague terms. However, several did attempt to articulate more complex viewpoints, denying transubstantiation but refusing to go as far as the 'real absence' of the Zürich theologians or even as the more

[23] Emmanuel College, Cambridge, MS 261, fo. 121r–v.

[24] Richard Tracy, *A bryef & short declaracyon made, wherby eue*[*ry*] *chrysten man maye knowe, what is a sacrament*, London 1548 (*RSTC* 24162), sigs A 3r, B 6v.

[25] Thomas Becon, *Newes out of heauen*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1739), sigs F8v–G1r.

[26] BL, MS Harleian 425, fo. 66r; *Narratives of the days of the Reformation*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden 1st ser. lxxvii, 1859), 71.

moderate Reformed doctrines which suggested a presence contingent on the faith of the recipient. The author of one treatise on this subject affirmed an objective, corporeal 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 adapted a favourite conservative argument to his own use, suggesting that to affirm transubstantiation is to deny that Christ has the power to maintain two substances together, and thus to blaspheme.[27] Another anonymous treatise suggested that Christ's presence in the eucharist might be better described as 'sup*er*natural & sup*er*corporall' than as natural and corporeal.[28] One Coventry heretic was apparently ready to accept the Real Presence within the context of a celebration of mass but was unhappy with the reservation of the sacrament, asserting that 'the bodie of o^{r} lorde Ih*e*su Christ is not now in the Canapee or pixe ou*er* the high aulter, ther, It is not ther at eu*er*y tyme but at the tyme of consecracion therof by a p*re*ist beying at masse'.[29] A similar wish to steer a middle course may lie behind the remark of Thomas Trentham, a London pinner, that the sacrament 'was a very good thing but it was not as men toke yt, very god'.[30] There seems no reason to doubt that these attempts to find a compromise were sincere; the regime certainly had little interest in differentiating between those who, by rejecting transubstantiation, had already crossed the bounds of acceptability. 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'. Conservatives, however, were not interested in such fine distinctions: the chronicler Charles Wriothesley simply noted that Mekins died for heresy against the sacrament.[31]

In this midst of this determined moderation, the gospel which these reformers preached was that of justification by faith alone. Becon's first book, *Newes out of heauen*, was essentially an extended exposition of the doctrine, although he used the associated jargon sparingly. In most of his subsequent books he returned to the subject, tackling it from several different angles. Dozens of other evangelical authors and preachers shared

[27] BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra E. v, fos 179r–183v (*LP* xiv/1, 1067).

[28] PRO, SP 1/153, fo. 23r (*LP* xiv/1, 1066).

[29] PRO, KB 9/129, fo. 5r (*LP* xvii. 537).

[30] PRO, SP 1/243 fo. 73r (*LP* Addenda, 1463). Such sentiments are of course more likely to represent deep residual loyalty to the sacrament than theologically informed attempts to reach compromise. However, similar loyalties, on this and other subjects, were powerful influences on reformist movements across Europe.

[31] Charles Wriothesley, *A chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors*, i, ed. William D. Hamilton (Camden 2nd ser. xi, 1875), 126; *Epistolae Tigurinae de rebus potissimum ad ecclesiae Anglicanae reformationem pertinentes* (Parker Society, 1848), 147 (my translation).

this overriding concern. Richard Taverner's collection of homilies on the liturgical epistles and gospels repeatedly emphasises the importance of faith; a similar if less sophisticated collection put in print by Richard Grafton in 1540–3 repeats the Protestant view of justification *ad nauseam*.[32] The Scottish evangelical Alexander Seton felt sufficiently strongly about the doctrine that a 1541 sermon at Paul's Cross, arguing a conservative position on this point, goaded him to reply; he assembled a gathered congregation at St Antholin's church the same afternoon to denounce the preacher and to expound predestination and the inability of good works to aid one's salvation.[33] Robert Wisdom, too, was troubled for a sermon in which he preached 'howe vnp*er*fecte all o^{r} rightwisnes is, and … moved all men to sett hand vpon the rightwisnes of faith'.[34] The charges of heresy made against Kentish reformers in 1543 suggest that the doctrine was widely preached; an agent of 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, & co*n*fessed his fawte, saying Peccavi, as he went vnto the preists, he had not been da*m*ned'.[35] Indeed, Cranmer himself, the most prominent Lutheran of them all, was passionately convinced of the Protestant doctrine of justification, opposing the treatment of the doctrine in the *King's book* to the last and remaining quietly but unshakeably convinced that salvation was through faith alone and by grace alone.[36] This was, of course, common ground to all Protestants. These reformers, however, are set apart by their unrelenting emphasis on the doctrine. Paradoxically, it was that emphasis which allowed them to approach a range of other, potentially contentious, issues with moderation. On their central doctrine, they could be openly polemical, as in Richard Tracy's tract *The profe and declaration of thys proposition: fayth only iustifieth*.[37] But with that key proposition granted, and so with the ceremonial of the Henrician Church stripped of its power to save, these authors were willing to accept that ceremonial as a matter indifferent, and even, if necessary, to swallow their objections to the mass.

Ranged against this group, which might loosely be called the Lutheran party, was a body of evangelicals who owed more to the Reformed theologians of Switzerland and southern Germany – as well as to those theologians' earliest English interpreter, John Frith. If the question of

[32] Richard Taverner, *The Epistles and Gospelles with a brief postyl vpon the same from Aduent tyll Lowe sonday*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 2967.3); *The ende of this brefe postyl*.

[33] Alexander Seton and William Tolwin, *The declaracion made at Poules Crosse in the Cytye of London, the fourth sonday of Aduent*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 22249.5), sigs A2r–3v.

[34] BL, MS Harleian 425, fo. 4r.

[35] Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 128, p. 29 (*LP* xviii/2, 546, p. 299).

[36] *The letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. James Arthur Muller, Cambridge 1933, 336; MacCulloch, Cranmer, 338–47.

[37] Richard Tracy, *The profe and declaration of thys proposition: fayth only justifieth*, London 1543 (*RSTC* 24164).

justification was the centre of the Lutheran party's thought, there can be no question that for this 'Reformed' group, the central issue – indeed almost the only issue – was the mass. In his 1541 treatise on the sacraments, the veteran evangelical theologian George Joye asserted that the eucharist is a symbol of the crucifixion, in which Christ's body is 'eat*en* & dronken by faith, & not w^{t} our bodely tethe & flesshely mouthes'.[38] John Bale argued in 1544 that 'if anye thynge vndre the heauens hath nede of reformacyon' it was the mass.[39] If these reformers mentioned the issue of justification – which they did rarely – it was usually done in order to make more provocative points. George 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'.[40] More commonly, the Reformed writers pointed out that justification by faith was incompatible with the sacrifice of the mass, using the (comparatively) uncontroversial doctrine of justification as a bridge to more far-reaching attacks on traditional belief and practice.

Unlike the Lutheran party, these authors consciously maintained a continental allegiance. Henry Brinklow, the London radical, prayed in 1542 that the eucharist would be reformed and purified, 'euen as it is vsed all ready in dyuers Cytyes of Germanye, as Zurich, Basyll and Straszburg'.[41] Bale, faced with a conservative polemicist who denounced Melanchthon, Oecolampadius and Zwingli in one breath, was determined to separate them out: however much respect he might have for Melanchthon, the Swiss theologians 'were auncy*en*t men whan Melanchton was but a chylde, & were promoters of the Lordes veryte whan he knewe nothynge of yt'.[42] This unwillingness to be associated with continental Lutheranism was matched by a contempt for those moderate evangelicals who were prepared to accept the Henrician settlement. Bale made clear his disgust for those writers who 'walkynge vndre the pretence of the gospell … do all they ca*n* to hyde the fythye [*sic*] partes of that monstrouse madama, that rose couloured whore of Babylon'.[43] Bale's friend William Turner, one of the most influential polemicists of the

[38] George Joye, *A frutefull treatis of baptyme and the lordis souper*, Antwerp 1541 (*RSTC* 24217), sig. B3r–v.

[39] John Bale, *The epistle exhortatorye of an Englyshe Christiane unto his derely beloued contraye of Englande*, Antwerp 1544 (*RSTC* 1291), fo. 20v.

[40] George Joye, *The exposicion of Daniel the prophet*, Antwerp 1545 (*RSTC* 14823), fo. 34r; Romans x. 9.

[41] Henry Brinklow, *The lamentacion of a Christian, against the Citie of London*, Bonn 1542 (*RSTC* 3764), sig. A 8v.

[42] John Bale, *A mysterye of inyquyte contayned within the heretycall genealogye of Ponce Pantolabus*, Antwerp 1545 (*RSTC* 1303), fo. 24v.

[43] John Bale, *A dysclosyng or openynge of the manne of synne*, Antwerp 1543 (*RSTC* 1309), fo. 6v.

Reformed party, denounced those bishops who, despite their known evangelical sympathies, 'ar be cummed slepyng dogges that dar not bark, and more fit to flatter than to teache goddes word'.[44] The Lutherans' tendency to tread softly was repugnant to these reformers, who were inclined to deploy confrontational Biblical texts such as Elijah's condemnation of those who 'halte on both sydes'.[45] In other words, the rhetoric of the Reformed evangelicals serves merely to confirm the extent to which the reformist movement was divided.

The conservative opponents of evangelical reform were aware of this division. They also appear to have felt that the Lutheran party's moderation presented a more insidious threat than did the outspoken ferocity of the Reformed group. Across Europe religious conservatives feared that the doctrine of justification by faith amounted to a licence to sin without regard to the consequences, and that as such it might have a wide appeal. By the 1540s, conservatives in England were conceding that this was actually happening. Bishop Gardiner believed that those who preached justification by faith were popular, and blamed this on their irresponsible refusal 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 cle*n*seth all'.[46] The conservative polemicist John Standish treated most evangelical doctrine as self-evidently wrong, but when he came to justification by faith he had to admit that it was popular, arguing that 'it is co*m*monly sayde no venym or poyson is wurse or more pestylent the*n* that whiche to the tast semyth swete and dilycious'.[47] Some conservatives, indeed, tried to tackle this problem by exploiting the opportunities which the reformers' divided house offered to them. They aimed to prise Lutherans away from the evangelical movement altogether by associating justification by faith with more radical doctrines, in particular with the denial of the Real Presence. For example, a printed poem from around 1540 (of which only a fragment survives) warns against the novel ideas of the evangelicals:

> 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.

[44] William Turner, *The huntyng and fyndyng out of the Romishe fox*, Bonn 1543 (*RSTC* 24353), sig. E8v.

[45] For example, George Joye, *George Ioye confuteth*, *Winchesters false articles*, Antwerp 1543 (*RSTC* 14826), fo. 4r; Anne Askew and John Bale, *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe*, *latelye martyred in Smythfelde*, Wesel 1547 (*RSTC* 850), fo. 19r–v; cf. I Kings xviii. 21.

[46] Stephen Gardiner, *A detection of the deuils sophistrie*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 11591), fo. 114v.

[47] John Standish, *A lytle treatise composyd by Iohan Standysshe … against the protestacion of Robert Barnes at the tyme of his death*, London 1540 (*RSTC* 23209), sig. C2r.

But who so dothe, confessyon dispyse
The sacrament of the aultre, setteth as lytell pryse.[48]

This author, then, despite his clear hostility to all doctrinal innovation, recognises that attacks on auricular confession which are grounded in the Protestant doctrine of justification may well appeal to his readers. However, he also assumes that the same readers will find attacks on the mass repugnant, and so he attempts to discredit the one by association with the other. Discrediting moderate beliefs through association with radical ones is, of course, an old trick; but as here, it can only work when it is false, that is, when most moderates are in fact unwilling 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'.[49] Gardiner and Zwingli may seem an unlikely pair of allies. In fact, however, they shared an interest in partitioning the doctrinal territory which the Lutheran group occupied. In due course, this was precisely what happened, and as a consequence the English Reformation has come to be viewed through the lenses of opposing confessional accounts which united to exclude the possibility of any religious stances other than their own. In the early 1540s, however, it was the Lutheran party which appeared to have the upper hand within the evangelical movement: a dominance which was no less real for being extremely short-lived.

By the time of Henry VIII's death the balance of power within evangelicalism had shifted decisively. In the final burst of religious confrontation of Henry's reign, in the summer of 1546, reformers and conservatives alike focused on the issue of the mass to the exclusion of all else. That crisis was sparked by the Lutheran-leaning preacher Edward Crome, who in April and again in May preached against the sacrifice of the mass, but carefully avoided the issue of the eucharistic presence.[50] That issue, however, quickly became the centre of the storm, and the two most prominent reformist martyrs of that summer, Anne Askew and John Lassells, both died principally for their sacramentarian views. Askew's accounts of her interrogations suggest that other doctrinal questions were hardly mentioned. For most of the others troubled in that year, the eucharistic presence was also the dominant or only issue. In the heat of the crisis, former Lutherans joined the ranks of the sacramentaries. Nicholas Shaxton left his unofficial cure in Suffolk for London, apparently with the deliberate intention of publicly denouncing the regime: he preached of the eucharist that 'His natural body is not therein, but it is a sign and a

[48] [*A*] *good lesson for yonge men*, London 1540 (*RSTC* 15525), sig. A2v.
[49] *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, 335.
[50] BL, MS Harleian 425, fos 65v–6r.

memorial of his body crucified for us'.[51] English conservatives certainly detected a shift within reformism in 1546, to which they responded with an unprecedented burst of vernacular printed polemic. Four tracts in defence of the mass appeared in print in 1546; three of these were chiefly or solely concerned with the Real Presence, and went through five editions between them in the year. The linchpin of this campaign was a sustained and powerful defence of the Real Presence by Stephen Gardiner, the bishop of Winchester.[52] He was, however, powerless to stop the shift in evangelicalism's centre of gravity. It was during 1546 or early 1547, while Gardiner was publicly confronting the sacramentaries, that Nicholas Ridley privately persuaded Archbishop Cranmer to adopt sacramentarian views himself.[53]

III

The remainder of this article will suggest three partial explanations for this apparent shift, this marginalisation of Lutheranism and absorption of Swiss ideas into the evangelical mainstream. The first cause to look for when investigating such shifts must, of course, be contact between English and continental evangelicals. From this perspective, it is surely significant that after 1540 direct contacts between England and Lutheran Germany were effectively ended. Perhaps the only Englishman of the period with a clear and direct allegiance to the Wittenberg theologians was Robert Barnes; in 1540 he was put to death in London. The other main voice of Lutheranism in England, Alexander Alesius, had fled to the continent the year before. After the disaster of the Cleves marriage, Henry VIII and the Schmalkaldic League withdrew in mutual disgust from attempts to forge an alliance, although the possibility of such a pact did resurface in 1545–6. In addition, the king's admiration for Philip Melanchthon was severely dented when Melanchthon wrote a treatise denouncing the Six Articles. The regime's reaction to this document can be gauged from an incident in December 1540, when a manuscript translation of the letter appeared in East Anglia; the privy council treated it as a matter of exceptional gravity and conducted a sustained and thorough investigation.[54] Of course, the semi-official contacts which Archbishop Cranmer had nurtured with the Reformed theologians had also run into the sand by 1540, but unofficially these contacts seem to have been more enduring. A

[51] *LP*, xxi/1, 1383.49.

[52] William Peryn, *Thre godlye and notable sermons, of the sacrament of the aulter*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 19785.5, 19786); Richard Smith, *The assertion and defence of the sacramente of the aulter*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 22815), and *A defence of the blessed masse, and the sacrifice therof*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 22820, 22820a); Gardiner, *A detection of the deuils sophistrie*.

[53] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 354–5.

[54] *Proceedings and ordinances of the privy council of England*, ed. Harris Nicolas, London 1837, vii. 97–107.

handful of evangelicals went into continental exile during the 1540s (records survive of some thirty-five people, although there were presumably more), and the majority of this group spent some or all of their time in Strasbourg, Zürich and other Reformed cities.[55] This is in itself striking, given that the Lutheran lands were so much more easily accessible from England; it is certain that some of the exiles who seem to have been based principally in Lutheran (and, indeed, Catholic) territories, such as John Bale, belonged to the Reformed party. Such connections are hardly statistically significant, but they may go some way to explain why the polemicists of the Reformed camp were far more willing to own their continental allegiances than was the Lutheran party.

There was, however, a third body of reformist thought feeding into the English situation in addition to Lutheran and Reformed ideas, namely the amorphous native body of heresies which we know as Lollardy. It is, of course, notoriously difficult to establish any firm connections between this body of belief and the wider evangelical movement.[56] However, while attempts to find Lollard influences behind the leading English evangelical theologians remain unconvincing,[57] the scraps of evidence we have suggest that any boundaries between the two traditions quickly dissolved. Even in the 1520s Lollard conventicles were showing an interest in the continental Reformation.[58] Old Lollards in London can be found picking up novel doctrines such as justification by faith, as Susan Brigden has shown.[59] The new printed Bibles were particularly attractive to Lollards. The tale of Robert Barnes providing two of the Steeple Bumpstead Lollards with a Tyndale New Testament is laden with symbolic importance and has passed into historiographical folklore, but the Lollards of Colchester and Braintree were also using printed New Testaments by 1527.[60] In 1532 one Buckinghamshire Lollard whose heretical career stretched back over twenty years was accused of heresy for

[55] Most of these are known principally from their correspondence with Heinrich Bullinger, printed in *Epistolae Tigurinae* and also (in an unreliable translation) in *Original letters relative to the English Reformation*, 2 vols, ed. Hastings Robinson (Parker Society, 1846).

[56] The most comprehensive attempt to do so in recent years, by John F. Davis, is gravely undermined by superficial treatment of the evidence and by theological imprecision; Richard Rex has dismissed with some vigour the possibility of such connections having any real influence. This sceptical approach, however, appears to stretch the limited evidence as much as does the opposite view: John F. Davis, *Heresy and Reformation in the south-east of England, 1520–1559*, London 1983; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, Basingstoke 1993, 137–8.

[57] As argued, for example, by Donald Dean Smeeton, *Lollard themes in the Reformation theology of Willaim Tyndale*, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1986.

[58] Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, 985.

[59] Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, Oxford 1989, 276.

[60] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical memorials, relating chiefly to religion and the reformation of it*, Oxford 1822, i/2, 54–5; James E. Oxley, *The Reformation in Essex to the death of Mary*, Manchester 1965, 8–9.

the fourth time, but this time he was found to own a number of printed books including an English New Testament and Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christen man*.[61] Evangelicals were if anything more eager to adopt the Lollard tradition for themselves and turn it to their own ends. Luther had the Lollard *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* put into print in 1528, claiming its author as a forerunner of his Reformation; English evangelicals were equally keen to appropriate the legitimacy which Lollardy's history could give to the new religion, and a series of Lollard texts was put into print by evangelical editors.[62] These works were, of course, adjusted to fit evangelical doctrinal sensitivities; for example, when John Gough printed an edition of the prologue to the Wycliffite Bible in 1540, he replaced a reference to salvation being 'for oure goode deedis' with the assertion that it was 'onely by the precyous bloud of Iesu chryst, and not by oure synfull workes'.[63] Nevertheless, evangelical respect for the Lollard tradition seems to have been deep and genuine. Wyclif himself was described by Tyndale as England's Jonah, whose message, had it been believed, might have averted the calamities of the fifteenth century. Bale saw Wyclif as 'a true Apostle of Christ' and considered writing a book about him; cataloguing Wyclif's works was apparently one of Bale's earliest bibliographical projects.[64] Nor was this simply lip-service. Bale's *Image of both churches* drew deeply on Lollard ideas, such as the *ecclesia malignantium* ('church of malignants') and the view that the millennium had already ended.[65] The polemicist George Joye and the court reformer John Lassells both made use of a Lollard reading of the book of Daniel, which identified the god worshipped by AntiChrist, 'Maosym', with the mass.[66]

There can be no doubt that by 1540 the Lollard and evangelical traditions had become thoroughly mixed up together. There can also be

[61] Margaret Bowker, *The Henrician Reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland 1521–47*, Cambridge 1981, 145–6.

[62] Katharine R. Firth, *The apocalyptic tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645*, Oxford 1979, 12; Margaret Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation', *History* xlix (1964) 156–7; Alec Ryrie, 'The problem of legitimacy and precedent in English Protestantism, 1539–47', in Bruce Gordon (ed.), *Protestant history and identity in sixteenth-century Europe*, Aldershot 1996, i. 78–92 at pp. 79–80.

[63] D. S. Dunnan, 'A note on John Gough's *The dore of holy scripture*', *Notes and Queries* ccxxxiv (1989), 309–10.

[64] Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation', 152; Bale, *Mysterye of inyquyte*, fo. 10r–v; Anne Askew and John Bale, *The first examinacyon of Anne Askew, latelye martyred in Smythfelde*, Wesel 1546 (*RSTC* 848), fo. 6r.

[65] Richard Bauckham, *Tudor apocalypse: sixteenth century apocalypticism, millenarianism and the English Reformation*, Oxford 1978, 28, 57–8.

[66] Joye, *Daniel*, fo. 225v; John Lassells, *Uvicklieffes wicket: faythfully ouerseene and corrected: hereunto is added an epistle to the reader: with the protestation of J. Lassels late burned in Smythfelde*, London 1548? (*RSTC* 25591), sigs A3r, C1v; Andrew Hope, 'The lady and the bailiff: Lollardy among the gentry in Yorkist and early Tudor England', in Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (eds), *Lollardy and the gentry in the later Middle Ages*, Stroud–New York 1997, 261; cf. Daniel xi. 38.

no doubt that the evangelicals were the dominant partner; but if Lollardy was a small fish, evangelicalism was, as the 'revisionist' historians have reminded us, a small pond. In some cases Lollard and evangelical ideas became sufficiently enmeshed that the attempt to apply one or other label to an individual is meaningless. Modern scholars cannot agree whether even Thomas Bilney, the most prominent early reformist martyr, came from a Lollard or an evangelical stable.[67] Anne Askew's evangelical credentials are beyond dispute, but when she attempted to equivocate her beliefs under examination, by meeting questions with questions or by simply quoting biblical texts and refusing to elaborate on them, she was using well-established Lollard techniques; Anne Hudson has commented that some of the exchanges which Askew records could have occurred a century before.[68] The Kentish clergyman Thomas Dawby affirmed the clearly Protestant line that 'Christes passion is alone sufficient for all oure synnes', but was also accused of the much more Lollard view that 'o^{r} Ladie was no better than an other woman and … [that] she was but a sacke to put christe in'.[69] Lollard influence on early 1540s heresy cannot be proven, of its nature, but it is the most plausible explanation for much of what we can see.

This is of interest not merely as an epilogue to the history of Lollardy. If Lollard ideas pervaded parts of the reformist movement in this period, it may help to explain part of the shape that that movement took; for the aspect of the Lollard tradition which provoked perhaps the most interest from evangelicals was its sacramentarianism. As Richard Hilles correctly observed, John Wyclif's eucharistic doctrine was subtle and in Protestant terms moderate, but subsequent Lollard eucharistic ideas had moved towards rationalistic and often crude rejections of any concept of a bodily presence as inherently ridiculous. The racy polemic on the subject in works such as the pseudonymous tract *Wyclif's wicket* was adopted eagerly by reformist authors. In 1540, in a treatise called *The Lordis flayle*, the former Essex Augustinian Thomas Solme praised Zwingli in the course of

[67] Diarmaid MacCulloch suggests that Bilney might be a 'rare escapee from the proletarian ghetto of Tudor Lollardy', while Richard Rex has more recently insisted that 'the organising concepts of Bilney's theological critique are manifestly evangelical': Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, Oxford 1986, 150–5; Richard Rex, 'The early impact of Reformation theology at Cambridge University, 1521–1547', *Reformation and Renaissance Review* ii (1999), 50–1.

[68] Anne Hudson, *The premature Reformation*, Oxford 1988, 157–60, 502.

[69] Corpus Christi Coll., MS 128, p. 82 (*LP* xviii/2, 546, p. 315). Such Christological speculation was, of course, linked to Anabaptism as well as Lollardy, and indeed it is no surprise that England's most famous Anabaptist, Joan Bocher, seems to have started her heretical career as a Lollard. If there is a difference between the Lollard and Anabaptist uses of this idea, it is a subtle one: Lollards began with deprecation of the Virgin and allowed that to dictate their Christology, while Anabaptists had more serious theological reservations about traditional understandings of the Incarnation: John F. Davis, 'Joan of Kent, Lollardy and the English Reformation', this JOURNAL xxxiii (1982), 225–33.

a thoroughly Swiss exposition of the Ten Commandments, but also plagiarised sections of the *Wicket*. Joye echoed the *Wicket's* language; even one Lutheran-leaning author, unfortunately anonymous, borrowed its terminology for attacks on transubstantiation. The conservative Richard Smith saw the *Wicket*'s arguments as part of the standard reformist armoury.[70] The *Wicket* itself was finally printed in the critical year of 1546, in two editions. Although Lollard influence cannot be quantified, it is clear that in this and other areas the radical doctrines and blunt style of Lollardy were in many ways inimical to the theological and political priorities of the Lutheran party, and far closer to the approach of those evangelicals who had adopted Reformed views. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Lollardy was eating away at English Lutheranism from within.

IV

A second approach to the problem of the eclipse of Lutheranism starts from the oddity in Henry VIII's otherwise broadly Lutheran reform programme; the partial attack on images which he sanctioned, and which he continued to pursue even after Cromwell's fall. At times the king seemed to veer towards the Reformed suspicion that images were inherently dangerous. His zeal for reform in this area, for example as expressed after the northern progress of 1541, seems to have been genuine. Richard Rex has argued that Henry's peculiar policy of destroying and desecrating venerated images, but only venerated images, can be understood in terms of his developing self-image as a king in the Old Testament mould.[71] Be that as it may, the policy meant that some Reformed ideas were brought into the Henrician settlement from the beginning. This is most visible in the matter of the Ten Commandments. Renumbering the Commandments in order to treat the prohibition of graven images as a Commandment in its own right was symbolic of the Reformed tradition's profound suspicion towards any religious use of material objects. This renumbering, first explicitly used in Zürich in 1534, was introduced into England in the following year and was adopted for the *Bishops' book* in 1537. By 1539 even the conservative Cuthbert Tunstall had accepted it, and in the 1540s it was all but universal. Thomas Becon, despite his quasi-Lutheran views, retained it; so did the *King's book*, although it adopted the bizarre expedient of rewriting the second

[70] Thomas Solme, *Here begynnyth a traetys callyde the Lordis flayle*, Antwerp 1540 (*RSTC* 22897), sigs C2r, C5v; Joye, *Daniel*, fo. 104v; BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra E.v, fos 180r, 182r (*LP* xiv/1, 1067); Smith, *Assertion and defence*, fos 122v, 164 [1]v; *Wycklyffes wycket: whyche he made in Kyng Rycards dayes the second*, London? 1546 (*RSTC* 25590), sigs A6v, 8r–v.

[71] *LP* xvi. 1262; Rex, *Henry VIII*, 98–9, 173–4. On the intellectual background of sixteenth-century iconoclasm see Margaret Aston, *England's iconoclasts*, Oxford 1988.

commandment to fit official policy more closely.[72] Only two English-language printed texts surviving from the 1540s retain the traditional numbering; both are works with a continental Lutheran provenance.[73] The radical attitude towards images which the renumbered Commandments represents introduced a destabilising element into English evangelicalism. To view images as idols, as blasphemous offences before God rather than as a distraction and an irrelevance, was to stand at the top of a slippery theological slope. The distinction between images which were abused and those which were not was difficult to define and enforce on the ground, and this was a gap which evangelicals were quick to exploit. In the diocese of Canterbury, Cranmer's commissary Christopher Nevinson used this ambiguity to pursue a ruthless iconoclastic campaign.[74] More important, however, any evangelical who learned that showing reverence in the presence of physical objects was dangerous was quickly confronted with the most widespread form of such reverence, namely adoration of the Host during the mass. For conservatives, of course, such adoration was qualitatively different from the *dulia* shown towards images, but for all its theological clarity this distinction was hard to maintain in practice. The radical authors vigorously exploited this issue, making mock of the contortions of official policy and of the hypocrisy with which they believed it was riddled; once again, it seems likely that they were helped by the enthusiastic iconoclastic tradition within Lollardy. The regime's suspicion of images gave a rare shot of legitimacy to radical reformers, and opened up a clear path to Reformed ideas.

V

The final suggestion as to how the Reformed party came to have the upper hand is a more general point, and it turns on the nature of government policy in the years after Cromwell's fall. There has been little consensus in recent scholarship as to whether there was a fully-fledged Counter-Reformation in the early 1540s, with the reformers in retreat until a last-minute *coup* which, against all expectation, left the dying king

[72] Ibid. 371–92; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 192; Cuthbert Tunstall, *A sermon of Cuthbert byshop of Duresme, made vpon Palme sondaye laste past*, London 1539 (*RSTC* 24322a), sig. E5r–v; Thomas Becon, *An inuectyue agenst the moste wicked & detestable vice of swearing*, London 1543 (*RSTC* 1731), fo. 14v; *A necessary doctrine and ervdition for any christen man, sette furthe by the kynges maiestie* [the 'King's book'], London 1543 (*RSTC* 5168), fos 45r–69v.

[73] These were *An instruction for chyldren*, London 1543 (*RSTC* 14106.2), sigs A1v–5v, and Robert Legate (ed.), *A breife catechisme and dialogue betwene the husbande and his wyfe*, Antwerp 1545 (*RSTC* 4979.3), sig. A8r.

[74] Corpus Christi Coll., MS 128, pp. 7, 13, 58, 77 (*LP* xviii/2, 546, pp. 291, 294, 309, 313).

in their hands; or whether this was a period in which the reformers were husbanding their resources, holding their own politically, and waiting with justified optimism for the world to turn their way.[75] This historiographical division is matched by the divided opinions of reformers at the time.

Most of the evangelicals of the Lutheran party were political moderates, unwilling to force a confrontation with the king; they were more inclined to work to reform his imperfect Church from within than to condemn it from exile. However, their loyalty, while considerable, was not unshakeable. Their sanguine attitude towards the regime was underpinned by one central part of the Henrician settlement: whatever else remained to be reformed, the English Bible was set forth freely. To the Lutheran reformers, this demonstrated that Henry's Church remained committed, however half-heartedly, to the evangelical cause. Becon's proof of his assertion that 'all false Religion is exterped' was that 'the moost sacred Byble is freely permytted to be red of euery man in the Englysh tonge'. The restoration of Scripture, he wrote, was the foremost reason to praise God and the king. Becon still had Erasmus' and Tyndale's faith in the power of unvarnished Scripture to transform the common people: 'euen y^{e} very ydiot', he wrote, 'maye nowe become learned in the kyngdom of God'. Other moderate reformers, such as Wisdom, joined Becon in seeing vernacular Scripture as a solvent which, if left to work unhindered, would be enough to bring down the whole edifice of papistry. A tract ascribed to Richard Morison called Scripture the 'one thy*n*g … that we neede to o^{r} lyfe, to o^{r} iustification, to Christen freedom'.[76] Cranmer himself was moved to a rare expression of unmitigated delight by the royal grant of permission to publish an English Bible, seeing it as the greatest achievement of Henry's Reformation.[77] Richard Taverner spoke for many when he stated that 'your highnes neuer did thing more acceptable to god, more profitable to y^{e} aduau*n*cemen*t* of true christianitie … then when your maiestie lycenced and wylled the moost sacred Byble conteynyng the vnspotted and lyuely worde of God to be in the Englysh

[75] For the former view see Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations*, Oxford 1993, 152–67; Rex, *Henry VIII*, 144–5. For the latter see David Starkey, *The reign of Henry VIII: personalities and politics*, London 1985, 133–7, 142–4, 156–9; Eamon Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, New Haven–London 1992, 424–47.

[76] Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs R5r, R7r; *Potacion … for this holi time of lent*, sig. E6r; *A pleasaunt newe nosegay, full of many godly and swete floures*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1742), sigs A2r–3v; Emmanuel Coll., MS 261, fo. 100r; BL, MS Royal 17.B.xxxv, fo. 6r; MS Harleian, 423 fo. 14r; cf. Thomas Becon, *A Christmas bankette garnyshed with many pleasaunt and deynty disshes*, London 1542 (*RSTC* 1715), sig. G3v; *Newes out of heauen*, sig. A5v; *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs B1v–2r. This was no doubt an over-optimistic view, but there are occasional signs of the effect that the reformers predicted, as with the conservative parish clerk of Hastings who was so disturbed by his discovery that some of the Apostles had been married that he demanded that the Bible be burned: PRO, E 36/120, fo. 8r–v (*LP* xiv/2, 301).

[77] BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra E. v, fo. 348r.

tong set forth'.[78] It followed that attempts to keep Scripture from the people roused fierce opposition even from the Lutheran group. To restrict access to Scripture, insisted Cranmer's *protégé* Michael Drum, was 'to pluck Christ*es* wourds and the holy gost from the people'. This was one of the few subjects that could provoke open anger in Becon, who went so far as to identify denying Scripture to the faithful with the sin against the Holy Spirit. He denounced as 'Antechristes' and 'wicked Papistes' those who would 'to y^{e} vttermoost of theyr power plucke men from redynge the moost sacred Byble'.[79] The English Bible was the point at which willingness to compromise stopped.

This meant that, for all their moderation, the Lutherans were on a collision course with Henry VIII's regime. Henry's commitment to the authority of Scripture is not in doubt, but nor is his fear that unfettered access to the English Bible could lead to social upheaval.[80] The 1538 Injunctions, which commanded that the Bible should be placed in parish churches, also included a stern warning that its readers should 'avoid all contention and altercation therein, and … use an honest sobriety in the inquisition of the true sense of the same, and refer the explication of obscure places to men of higher judgement in Scripture'. For the next five years the regime continued to warn that royal permission to read the Bible was conditional on its being used rightly.[81] Perhaps surprisingly, these warnings were not acted on until 1543, although the abortive attempt to have the Great Bible revised in a conservative direction in 1542 probably reflected the same concern.[82] In 1543, however, the Act for the Advancement of True Religion laid down, notoriously, that men of the degree of yeoman or below, and women outside of the nobility and gentry, were no longer to be permitted to read the English Bible; moreover, only licensed preachers were to be allowed to read aloud from the Bible in any assembly, and those forbidden access to Scripture were also forbidden to 'dispute or argue, to debate discusse or expound' it.[83] There is very little evidence for the act's being enforced, but its importance was (as it was presumably intended to be) symbolic.[84] It provoked fury from evangelicals

[78] Richard Taverner (ed.), *The most sacred Bible, whiche is the holy Scripture*, London 1539 (*RSTC* 2067), fo. iir.

[79] Corpus Christi Coll., MS 128, pp. 49, 82 (*LP* xviii/2, 546, pp. 306, 315); Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs R7v; *Nosegay*, sig. A6r–v; *A new yeares gyfte more precious than golde*, London 1543 (*RSTC* 1738), sig. F1r.

[80] Rex, 'The crisis of obedience', 889–92, and *Henry VIII*, 173–4.

[81] Gerald Bray (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation*, Cambridge 1994, 180; *Tudor royal proclamations*, 284, 297; Guildhall, MS 9531/12, fo. 27r.

[82] David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Brittanniae et Hiberniae*, n.p. 1737, iii. 860–1; cf. Glyn Redworth, *In defence of the Church Catholic: the life of Stephen Gardiner*, Oxford 1990, 159–63.

[83] 34° & 35° Henry VIII. c. 1.

[84] No records of any prosecutions under the act survive. One London evangelical, however, alleged that conservatives used the act as a pretext to remove Bibles from

of every kind. It is entirely predictable that the Reformed group, always more robust in their opposition, should be outraged; however, they were joined by previously cautious Lutherans. Wisdom argued that kings had no authority to remove Scripture, comparing the act to Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard. He denounced the bishops as 'very antichrist*es*, and wolfes devouringe the shepe of Christe', and clearly felt that his eyes had been opened by the restriction of the Bible: he wrote that 'men shall never more be deceyved by yo^{u}, nor studye who ys Antichriste nor who are his me*m*bares but when so ever thei loke vpon this horrible facte thei shall see yt more clearer then light'. He ended with a ringing declaration of the authority of Scripture. In doing so, he denounced those who argued that 'The bishops haue decreed this ergo noman maye saye ageinst it. The olde fathers taught this, ergo it is trewe.' Some of the more daring members of the Lutheran party might have expressed similar sentiments before 1543, but now Wisdom added a third, far starker rejection, of those who believed that 'this is the king*es* boke, ergo he is an heritike that saith ageinst it'.[85] Forced to choose between king and Bible, Wisdom and others knew where their final loyalties lay.

Moreover, while the restrictions on Bible-reading were particularly damaging, they cannot be seen in isolation from the rest of the events of 1543. It was a year of political and religious crisis, and arguably one of the key turning-points of the reign. The stage was set by the Anglo-Imperial treaty of February, which made the king eager to embrace the religious conservatism that might please his ally; the central drama was a drawn-out plot against Archbishop Cranmer and his evangelical allies at court, in which evidence of their support for heretics in Kent and at the Chapel Royal in Windsor was gathered in an attempt to discredit them before the king. Alongside this, in May 1543 the long-awaited official doctrinal formulary, the so-called *King's book*, was published. Despite the best efforts of the embattled archbishop, the doctrine it contained was – with one important exception – unremittingly conservative. The Act for the Advancement of True Religion simply played a supporting role in this conservative resurgence, since it was merely the penal act which enforced the *King's book*. The book was as severe a blow to the Lutherans as the act; in particular, its explicit rejection of the Protestant understanding of justification made it obtuse for reformers to continue to pretend that the silence of the Six Articles on this subject betokened any actual ambiguity on the regime's part. The Lutheran party had been willing to accept a slow pace of reform, if necessary a glacially slow pace, in the name of good

churches, and there is a well-known case of a Gloucestershire shepherd who lamented that he was now barred from reading Scripture: BL, MS Royal 17.B.xxxv, fo. 8r–v; John Fines, 'A biographical register of early English Protestants and others opposed to the Roman Catholic Church 1525–58', pt II (unpublished), *s.v.* Robert Williams.

[85] Emmanuel Coll., MS 261, fos 111v–13v, 127r; cf. I Kings xxi. 1–14.

order; but the reversal of reform, which was what happened for the first time in May 1543, was another matter entirely. The result was that the fragility of their alliance with the state was pitilessly exposed.

If the act and the *King's book* undermined the Lutherans' position, another aspect of the crisis of the 1543 inflicted far more immediate damage. The quasi-Lutheran publications of the early 1540s had been tolerated by the regime; a list of prohibited books drawn up by Bishop Bonner in 1542 included none of them. The Act for the Advancement of True Religion, however, dramatically reduced the legal space within which the authors and publishers of religious books could operate, laying down ferocious penalties for offenders; and these provisions, at least, were more than symbolic. In the spring of 1543 the regime closed down the evangelical presses. Seven London printers and two booksellers were imprisoned, including most of the evangelicals in the London trade. John Gough, although not imprisoned, was questioned by the privy council and released on recognisance; another twenty-five booksellers were also questioned. In other words, most of London's most active printers and a fair quorum of its booksellers were brought before the council. All were required to provide details of all books which they had bought and sold in the past three years, and to give any information they might have regarding the traffic in imported heretical books.[86] In truth, many of those arrested had only the faintest connection with reformist books; this was not a precise operation but a thoroughgoing purge. Its effects were dramatic. Domestic evangelical printing ceased. Only a handful of evangelical works survive which were printed in England between 1543 and 1547; most of them depended for their publication on powerful reformist patrons, and all of them are painfully moderate.[87] At much the same time, Thomas Becon and Robert Wisdom were arrested. They were apparently held in prison for at least three months, perhaps longer; both signed recantations in May, and in July they recanted publicly and abjectly, Becon destroying copies of his own books before the crowd at Paul's Cross. The Lutherans' most prolific author and one of their most influential preachers had been humiliated and silenced.[88]

Even the most moderate evangelicals felt the events of 1543 as a catastrophe, a series of defeats which forced them into open opposition to the regime. There is, however, another story to be told. Despite their

[86] *Acts of the privy council of England*, ed. John R. Dasent, London 1890, i. 107, 115, 117, 120–1, 125, 129.

[87] William Hughe, *The troubled mans medicine*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 13910); Desiderius Erasmus, *A very pleasaunt and fruitful diologe called the Epicure*, trans. Philip Gerrard, London 1545 (*RSTC* 10460); Arthur Kelton, *A commendacion / Of welshmen*, London 1546 (*RSTC* 14919); *Here after foloweth twoo fruitfull and godly praiers*, London 1545 (*RSTC* 20197.3).

[88] Guildhall, MS 9531/12, fos 44r–5v; Emmanuel Coll., MS 261, fo. 88r; Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, 142–3.

growing alienation from the regime, the reformers won a series of small but significant victories after 1543; and paradoxically, this was to weaken the Lutherans' position still further. Although the immediate impact of the crisis of 1543 on evangelicalism was disastrous, in the central confrontation the reformers were victorious. Cranmer survived the plots against him, and was left more secure than he had been; the evangelicals in the king's privy chamber, too, were protected from their enemies. The only evangelical casualties were a priest of colourful sacramentarian views, and a tailor and a singing-man from Windsor. By contrast, the conservatives lost two important figures (John London, the zealous heresy-hunter, and Germain Gardiner, the bishop's nephew and secretary), and Stephen Gardiner himself was left under a cloud.[89] There are records of almost no prosecutions for reformist activity during the year 1544.[90]

Indeed, the regime, having shattered the Lutherans' trust and silenced their voices, began cautiously to fulfil their hopes. Even the *King's book* was not unremittingly conservative: the final section, on prayer for the dead, reduced the doctrine of Purgatory from a great system of devotion to a somewhat threadbare theological principle. This dismissive approach to the doctrine that had been at the heart of late medieval piety was reinforced by the 1545 statute permitting dissolution of the chantries; the act was certainly not motivated by evangelical zeal, but nor was it informed by any respect for the chantries' purpose.[91] Likewise, in 1544, the new English litany introduced the vernacular into worship for the first time, and all but excised the traditional piety of prayer to the saints from one of the parts of the liturgy to which it had been central. It was an innovation which met with conservative anger, but by October 1545 the king ordered that it should replace the old processional entirely, both in peacetime and wartime. The litany was republished the following year within the newly authorised King's Primer; the primer took the process further, as many of the other remnants of traditional piety had been stripped from it.[92] These tangible advances form part of a general sense of

[89] The best recent account of these events is in MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, ch. viii.

[90] I have only been able to find four cases: Robert Singleton was executed in March 1544 on a somewhat mysterious charge of treason; Anne Askew apparently had a confrontation of some kind with the clergy of Lincoln Cathedral during the year; John Coyte, a curate at St Martin's Ironmonger Lane, London, was charged with refusing to hear confessions or to use processions, but apparently defended himself successfully; and Hugh Eton, a hosier of St Bride Fleet Street, was convicted of mocking the mass: Brigden, *London*, 371, 400; John Fines, *Register*, pt I, Sutton Courtenay Press 1985, *s.v.* John Coyte; Askew and Bale, *The first examinacyon*, fos 32v–3r; Anthony à Wood, *Athenae oxonienses*, Oxford 1691 (Wing W3382), 56; *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, 244; Corporation of London Record Office, MS Repertory 11, fo. 35v.

[91] 37° Hen. VIII. c. 4.

[92] *An exhortation vnto prayer … to be read to the people in euery church afore processyons*, London 1544 (*RSTC* 10620); Guildhall, MS 9531/12, fos 72r–v, 82v–3r; PRO, SP 1/203, fos 86r–9r (*LP* XX/1, 1118); Duffy, *The stripping of the altars*, 446–7.

rising strength and confidence amongst reformers close to the regime in the last years of the reign. In 1544 the Act of Six Articles was amended, stripping its penal code of much of its power, with royal support and in the teeth of conservative opposition. Another parliamentary battle was won in 1545. A bill against heresy and heretical books was introduced into the Lords on 27 November, but assent was only given after considerable debate and five readings; the bill was then voted down in the Commons, and 'albeit it was at the beginning sett earnestly forward', it was said that the king had been willing to let it fall.[93] Soon afterwards, another major confrontation, over the fate of the universities, ended in a spectacular victory.[94] An attempt to have a further swathe of traditional ceremonial prohibited in January 1546 failed, so it seemed, only because of Gardiner's intervention. The view from the court was that the reformers had the wind behind them; that conservatives could be confronted and defeated. Such a mood of confidence may, as Diarmaid MacCulloch has suggested, have been reinforced by the apparent escape of one prominent evangelical, Anne Askew, from prosecution in March 1546.[95] Equally important, by 1546 evangelical confidence was blending with a febrile public mood. The French war had turned sour and it was unclear how it would end. Nearly £200,000 of taxes were collected during the year. By the summer, food prices had risen sharply. The regime was jumpy about the circulation of rumours and political prophecies. Over it all hung the unmentionable but increasingly clear fact that the king was not a healthy man.[96]

There were, then, two simultaneous and opposite developments. First, there was, especially after 1543, a perceived hardening of the regime's attitude towards reformers, represented by the Act for the Advancement of True Religion, the *King's book* and the suppression of the legitimate trade in evangelical books. Secondly, there was, especially after 1543, a continuation of the process of reform, marked by a series of successful confrontations with conservatives within the regime. These two developments served as a pincer making the Lutheran position less and less tenable. The events of 1543 forced many of the Lutheran group into

[93] 35° Henry VIII c. 5; MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 328; *Journal of the House of Lords*, i. 269–72; PRO, SP 1/212, fo. 112v (*LP* xx/2, 1030.2).

[94] Alan Kreider, *English chantries: the road to dissolution*, Cambridge, Mass.–London 1979, 179–80; Jane Dawson, 'The foundation of Christ Church, Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge in 1546', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* lvii (1984), 208–15.

[95] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 352. It is not, however, clear that Askew's first arrest and release took place in 1546 rather than 1545: *The examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine Beilin, Oxford 1996, pp. xx–xxii.

[96] Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, 163; Stanford E. Lehmberg, *The later parliaments of Henry VIII 1536–1547*, Cambridge 1977, 220; Corporation of London Record Office, MS Repertory 11, fos 195v, 215r–v; PRO, SP 1/220, fos 60r–9r (*LP* xxi/1, 1027); Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 484–8.

varying degrees of open opposition to the regime, but the continued process of reform after 1543 made such opposition problematic. Justification by faith alone was at the heart of the Lutheran agenda, and in the 1520s, when heresy had been a learned man's game, such an abstract doctrine could serve as an evangelical rallying cry. Inevitably, however, as the reformist movement grew it came, as had its Lollard fellow-travellers, to concentrate its fire on the practices of the Church which represented doctrinal error; such criticisms were altogether more concrete. While the preaching of justification was popular, its impact seems to have been greatest when it was tied to concrete practices or ceremonies. Its intangibility made it usefully vague for reformers who were trying to avoid confrontation; however, for the more vigorous business of open opposition, unmistakable visible symbols were needed. In the 1530s there had been no shortage of such symbols, and so evangelicals had attacked pilgrimages, prayers for the dead and the use of images, working to reform the Church's doctrine from the points at which that doctrine touched the believer's life. By 1546 this had largely been achieved. Although much of the doctrine of the old faith remained in place, the practices to which evangelicals objected were mostly gone, visibly in retreat, or irrelevant to most of their audience. The Six Articles had downgraded the importance of auricular confession,[97] the *King's book* had emasculated prayer for the dead. Clerical celibacy remained unreformed but, by its nature, was a practice which could rouse little ire amongst the laity. Monasticism was gone; pilgrimages had been prohibited; the monopoly on Latin in worship had finally been broken. The use of images had been curtailed, and this, together with the litany, the new primer and the restrictions on saints' days, had begun to erode the cult of the saints. Even the partial restrictions on the English Bible were not being enforced. Evangelicals demanded further reformation of all these matters, of course, but they were no longer questions of black and white, with which the rhetoric of opposition could fully engage. One flagship issue only remained wholly unreformed: the mass.[98]

A loathing of the mass was common to all reformers, whether their theological leanings were Lutheran, Reformed or Lollard. However, the Lutheran line, attacking the sacrifice of the mass while maintaining a belief in the Real Presence, was a far more abstract and carefully balanced argument than the blunt Reformed denial of Christ's physical presence. The vulnerability of the 'Lutherans'' position became clear in April 1546, when Crome chose publicly to confront the regime by denouncing the sacrifice of the mass. It is perhaps unsurprising that in the precarious situation of that spring a newly confident evangelicalism provoked such a

[97] MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 252–3.
[98] In 1544 Bale singled this out as the last and greatest abuse: *Epistle exhortatorye*, fo. 19v.

crisis, or that it did so by challenging the mass. Crome was, of course, able to tread the narrow Lutheran line in his attack, refusing to be drawn into the issue of the eucharistic presence. However, as a doctor of theology, reputed to be one of the best preachers in London, he was hardly representative. His defiance served as the trigger for a more general confrontation, fired as much by the determination of the conservatives at court to seize power as by evangelical hopes and fears. In that confrontation, the key point at issue quickly became the eucharistic presence. Details survive regarding the offences for which eight of the reformist martyrs of that summer were convicted; in all eight cases, denial of the Real Presence was at the heart of the matter.[99] Dozens more evangelicals faced prosecution as sacramentaries, while only a handful apparently followed Crome's line. Crome's own carefully balanced argument was less important than his tacit acknowledgement that, willy-nilly, the mass had become the battleground.

By the close of the reign the Lutheran party had been forced into a thoroughly uncomfortable position. By banning their Bibles and denouncing their central doctrine, justification by faith alone, the regime had driven many of these reformers into outright opposition; at the same time, the continuing process of official reform had forced these unwilling combatants to focus their opposition around the mass, the last great abuse. In so doing, they found themselves on a battleground which was not of their choosing, on which those who sympathised with the more uncompromising line deriving from Reformed and Lollard thought had a natural advantage. The theological issue of the sacrifice of the mass was swept away as the battle polarised over the Real Presence. The events of 1546 made the middle ground yet more difficult to hold. Crome's initial defiance, his eventual recantation and, most powerfully of all, the courage of the martyrs of that summer left the Lutherans' habit of compromise with the regime badly discredited; in any case, the sudden ferocity of the conservative attack left scant room in which such compromises could be made. As a result, the English Lutheran tradition that might have been, already wounded from 1543, was brought to an end in 1546. It was first alienated from the regime, and then outflanked by a motley alliance of evangelicals linked to the emerging Reformed tradition with Lollard iconoclasts and sacramentaries. The bridges it had tried to build were broken at both ends, and the confessional historians of both sides hastened to erase its memory. The fact of the Lutherans' demise should not,

[99] John Camper, Joan Bette and Thomas Skygges from Essex; Anne Askew, John Lassells and John Hadlam, burned together at Smithfield in July; John Kerby and Roger Clarke from Suffolk: *Acts of the privy council*, i. 418, 464; PRO, SP 1/218 fos *139r–40r (*LP* xxi/1, 836); Askew and Bale, *The lattre examinacyon*; Lassells, *Uvicklieffes wicket … with the protestation of J. Lassels*; Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, 167–70; Foxe, *Actes and monuments*, 1231–3, 1240–1.

however, lead us to underestimate their strength while it lasted. For a brief period in the early 1540s they were the authentic voice of English reformism. It may only have been through driving them into opposition after 1543 that Henry VIII ensured that his kingdom would fall into the hands of the sacramentaries whom he so despised.