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**'There was never man handled as I am':  
The Legacy and Significance of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, 1558-1660**

**Stephen Lamb**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Department**

**of**

**History**

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## ABSTRACT

‘There was never man handled as I am’:  
The Legacy and Significance of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, 1558-1660

Stephen Lamb

For centuries, historians and theologians have acknowledged the pre-eminent role of Thomas Cranmer in the English Reformation. However, his significance as an enduring religious influence in the century following his martyrdom has not received close investigation. This thesis traces the legacy and significance of Cranmer from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Restoration, focussing especially upon important mid-seventeenth-century religious debates. Interpretations of Cranmer during 1558-1660 provide strong indications of where English Protestantism stood theologically, and how highly many Protestants valued the reforms enacted under Cranmer and his colleagues during the reign of Edward I (1547-1553). This legacy has a significant bearing upon how one interprets English Protestantism, as it demonstrates a commitment to the Reformed theology of Cranmer’s later years and a lack of continuity with Roman Catholic antecedents. Furthermore, mid-seventeenth century interpretations of Cranmer demonstrate the importance of religious factors in the English Civil Wars. Changing interpretations of Cranmer by radical puritans and Laudians highlight the innovative nature of religious reforms leading to and during the hostilities of the 1640s, whilst the use of Cranmer by moderates within the English Church reveals a longstanding reverence for and adherence to the doctrine of the Edwardian reformers. Thus, this examination reveals the construction of Cranmer as a universally approved Protestant hero during the Elizabethan era, lasting into the 1630s. This came undone in the mid-seventeenth century, however, as debates over the eucharist, episcopacy, and liturgy forced Laudians, Presbyterians, and especially radical puritans, to re-evaluate Cranmer and the role he played in the Edwardian Reformation.

## Preface

It is upon the completion of a seemingly solitary effort such as a M.A. thesis that one comes to realise the debts owed to so many for one's academic progress. While this thesis has been a work of discovery and serendipity, and perhaps more of a pedagogical exercise than scholarly contribution, it none the less has been moulded by a great many people who deserve mention, whether for their contribution to its production, or for their contribution to my intellectual development.

Above all, I must warmly thank my supervisor, Robert Tittler, for his patience, dedication, willingness to work in new areas, and for first suggesting the topic to me one year ago. I must also thank the other two examiners of this thesis for being so much more than careful examiners. During my time at Concordia, Fred Bode has provided me with constant intellectual inspiration as well as friendship, and Shannon McSheffrey has been a model of both industry and helpfulness. In reaching this point in my academic life, I must also acknowledge the following in particular: the enormous influence of John Craig, who provided me, as a keen but largely ignorant undergraduate, with no end of help, encouragement, and inspiration; Mary Vipond, for curing my distaste for historiography and methodology; Deloris Clavero, for cultivating in me a love of literature in history; and Lawrin Armstrong, for helping me to understand the importance of epics and historical visions. My experience at Concordia has been greatly enriched by two other factors, namely, the regular stimulation of my reading group and the sense of community generated by the Graduate History Student Association, both of which I shall miss most dearly. Finally, I must offer a word of thanks to my parents, Gordon and Susan Lamb, for their steadfast support in all my endeavours.

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Dominion Day, 2001

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## Chapter 1 Introduction: An Ambiguous Legacy?

Writing in 1655, Thomas Fuller, in his *Church History*, provides one of the most sympathetic and apologetic accounts of the most famous Marian martyr.<sup>1</sup>

Fuller's discussion of Cranmer is most noteworthy for the apparent need he feels to defend the archbishop at every stage of his career, against a wide array of opponents of the reforms Cranmer brought about. When dealing with both the ordination and the execution of Cranmer, Fuller fends off accusations of opportunism and cowardice by Roman Catholic and radical puritan critics alike, the latter of whom are represented in the vituperation of William Prynne.<sup>2</sup> This is rather curious given that many sacramentalists and puritans also used Cranmer's beliefs and example to promote their particular visions of the church, be it one of ceremony or of suffering. For the former, Cranmer's role in creating the Prayer Book and his obvious support for an episcopacy made him an important figure in the drive to maintain a liturgy and prelacy against encroaching puritan reforms in the 1640s. For the latter, Cranmer's connections to European reformers and to nascent Calvinism, as well as his eucharistic views, served to buttress mid-seventeenth-century claims that Laudian reforms were threatening to overturn almost a century of proper Protestant worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Fuller, *The Church History* (London, 1655), Book V, pp. 52-53, 61-73, 90, 137-175, 196-201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, see esp. pp. 66-73.



Fuller's treatment of Cranmer provides just one example of how early modern English Protestants dealt with a religious heritage that could be problematic, but nevertheless formed an essential basis upon which to build. Fuller presents Cranmer as a key reformer who represented a model of moderation, conservatism, and compromise. However, Fuller was by no means the first English scholar to deal with the problem of how to interpret such a complex and important figure.

This study will deal with the legacy, reputation, and significance of Thomas Cranmer in the century following his martyrdom, focusing especially upon the mid-seventeenth century. Cranmer's role in the creation of the Church of England is without doubt paramount. As Archbishop of Canterbury, compiler of the Book of Common Prayer, advocate of ecclesiastical legal reform, and foremost Marian martyr, he is an unavoidable and pre-eminent figure in the early course of the Reformation. Yet, he would have become a perplexing figure to the seventeenth-century mind. It is likely that Cranmer only embraced Calvinist doctrine in the later stages of his life, and he never sought to enact reforms of church practice and government along entirely Genevan lines.<sup>3</sup> He was ultimately willing to die for his anti-Catholic beliefs, yet he was willing to see Protestants deemed too radical die for theirs. His major contribution to the Church was an English liturgy, much detested by Catholics; yet this was still a prescribed and ritualistic liturgy, greatly disliked by many puritans. He favoured a symbolic interpretation of the eucharist; however, his position on this matter

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<sup>3</sup> See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer, A Life* (New Haven, 1996), p. 428.

had changed several times during his life.<sup>4</sup> Thus, he is a figure who would have been potentially useful as well as problematic to both sides in debates over episcopacy, use of the Prayer Book, the meaning of the Lord's supper, and Arminianism.

Such debates are well known to students of seventeenth-century religious and political history. However, the significance of the sixteenth-century reformers in such debates is something that has not been explored in great depth. I propose to use Cranmer's legacy as a way of getting some bearings on such matters.

Though he is by no means the only important source of influence stemming from the sixteenth century, because of his unique significance this study will focus upon him specifically.

I plan to situate this investigation within two well established historiographical debates: the extent to which the English Protestantism represented a significant and enduring break with England's Roman Catholic past; and the extent to which long-standing religious controversies lay at the heart of hostilities leading up to and during the 1640s. It is my position that Cranmer's legacy (by which I mean not only the lasting influence of Cranmer's work, but more importantly, the perception and reputation of him as a reformer) provides a useful perspective on both of these debates.

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<sup>4</sup> In his 1551 *Answer unto a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation, Devised by Stephen Gardiner* Cranmer wrote '...papists do teach, that Christ is in the visible signs, and whether they list to call them bread and wine, or the forms of bread and wine, all is one to me; for the truth is, that he is neither corporally in the bread and wine, nor in or under the forms and figures of them, but is corporally in heaven, and spiritually in his lively members, which be his temples where he inhabiteth'; *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, John Edmund Cox, ed. (Cambridge, 1846), p. 53. Cranmer's position, however, had changed numerous times before this.

Perceptions of Cranmer's role and objectives provide helpful insight into the disposition of the Tudor and Stuart Churches relative to their Catholic and puritan opponents. This is particularly relevant to the first historiographical debate this study shall engage. Recently, several revisionists of religious history have argued that the Elizabethan Church was not a clearly Protestant institution, with the implication that mid-seventeenth-century puritanism was not reactionary.<sup>5</sup> G.W. Bernard has gone so far as to claim that the 'Elizabethan settlement' was not 'unequivocally protestant' and that both the Tudors and Stuart monarchs were far more concerned with implementing political order than Protestant religion.<sup>6</sup> There is, to be sure, much to be said for how carefully early modern English monarchs tried not to let religious disorder interfere with political stability. However, the notion that in so doing they and their subjects failed to embrace a form of religion that can be considered 'truly Protestant' becomes problematic when one looks at how writers from the Elizabethan Settlement to the mid-seventeenth century viewed their religious heritage.

When it was felt that important aspects of English Protestantism were under threat, such as Church governance or the meaning of the eucharist, concerned writers immediately launched accusations of innovation, often grounding their

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<sup>5</sup> G.W. Bernard, 'The Church of England c.1529-c.1642', *History*, 75 (Feb., 1990); Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic* (Cambridge, 1992) and 'The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered', *Past & Present*, 101 (1983), pp. 34-54; and Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), esp. Chap. VI, "'The Right Estate of the Church": Charles I, William Laud and the Reformation of the Church', pp. 275-402. A different argument for lasting Catholic influence outside the Church of England is presented by John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (London, 1975), who argues that early modern English Catholicism was distinct from its mediaeval antecedent and the work of later missionary activity.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard, 'Church of England', pp. 186, 188.

arguments upon appeals to the authority of early English reformers. This is unquestionably the case when one examines how the authority and reputation of Thomas Cranmer were invoked in mid-seventeenth-century religious debates that occurred over such issues. Participants on all sides of these debates were quick to claim affinity with the work and aspirations of Edwardian reformers. This, along with the credit given to Cranmer for reforming, not preserving, the Henrician Church, challenges the revisionist notion that the Stuart Church did not rest upon a clearly Protestant foundation that identified itself with the Edwardian Reformation. This holds true even if this vision was marked by sharp differences of opinion over worship.

One can also see the significance of Cranmer's legacy when considering the other historiographical debate that his study will engage, namely, the causes of the Civil Wars. Within the historiography of the seventeenth-century, a strong revisionist school has emerged arguing that the main factors behind the collapse of the Stuart regime were not ideological or social. Rather, most revisionists argue that the way in which Stuart government, and especially the Stuart monarchy, functioned led to a more a sudden crisis in the late 1630s resulting in the Civil Wars.<sup>7</sup> Revisionism tends to see religious disputes as more a result of

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<sup>7</sup> The issue of attaching simplistic labels to historiographical trends filled with complexities and nuances is one that historians of seventeenth-century England repeatedly lament. In the spirit of this historiography, I shall follow the lead of others and deplore the use of nominal labels before proceeding to use them to my convenience. The traditional Whig positions of S.R. Gardiner's *History of England*, Vol. 1-10 (London, 1884) and G.M. Trevelyn's *England under the Stuarts* (London, 1906) were first seriously undermined by Marxian-based and Weberian-inspired studies such as R.H. Tawney's 'The Rise of the Gentry, 1558-1640', *Economic History Review*, 11 (1941), pp. 1-38; Laurence Stone's 'The Anatomy of Elizabethan Aristocracy', *Economic History Review*, 18 (1948), and *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1965); and Christopher Hill's numerous monographs, most notably *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London, 1958). The validity of their belief in a rising gentry and declining aristocracy,

this crisis than a factor behind it. However, the concern expressed by anti-Laudians – that the work of early reformers such as Cranmer was being reversed – calls into question whether long-term religious factors can be so easily dismissed. Though many revisionists now consider Laudianism an important force in creating opposition to the political and religious elite,<sup>8</sup> the role of early reformers as rallying points in the creation of this opposition is important to bear in mind. Not only does this use of early reformers point to a large group of conforming moderates who, while not puritan, did not support Laudian

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however, was called into question by the work of Hugh Trevor-Roper, in 'The Gentry, 1540-1640', *Economic History Review Supplements*, 1(1953), who seriously challenged Tawney and Stone's thesis, and J.H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (London, 1961), who challenged their methods, and argued that an aristocratic decline was due to a loss of military control, not economic status.

The 'revisionist' argument, playing down the social and religious causes and the long-term origins of the 'Great Rebellion' / 'Civil War(s)' / 'Revolution(s)' of the mid-seventeenth century has been spearheaded by Conrad Russell; see the introduction to Conrad Russell, ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (London, 1972). Russell was one of the first to argue strongly that first Whig and then Marxist historians worked within an 'assumption of inevitability' (p. 5) when interpreting the Civil Wars. In light of the fact that social and economic investigations do not show an ideologically unified, rising gentry, Russell suggests that any social conflict was likely the result of 'long-term institutional, and short-term political' factors (p. 11) The chief cause, though, was the conflict amongst Charles' three kingdoms; see also Russell's *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991); and *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990). John Morrill's *The Revolt of the Provinces* (London, 1976) offers another revisionist perspective, suggesting that while religious causation was a factor, the majority of English people wished to avoid war and did not have the ideological conviction to fight for radical changes. For further discussion of these historiographical shifts see Lawrence Stone, ed., *The Causes of the English Revolution* (New York, 1972), especially Stone's introduction; J.H. Hexter, 'Power Struggle, Parliament, and Liberty in Early Stuart England', *Journal of Modern History*, 50 (1978), pp. 1-50; and Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Basingstoke, 1998, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987); Peter Lake, 'Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635', *Past & Present*, 114 (1987), pp. 32-76; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge, 1995); Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War*. A recent anti-revisionist perspective, arguing that the nature of the Caroline monarchy and Charles' religious aims, and not Arminianism, sparked an ideological conflict leading to war, is provided by Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford, 1992).

objectives; it also stresses the fact that reactions to Laudianism were triggered by long-standing commitments to the aims of early reformers.

I propose to use Cranmer's legacy as a bridge between the two historiographical debates at hand. Not only does his legacy strongly support the idea of a Church soundly committed to a Protestant break with Rome, as established under his archbishopric during Edward's reign; it also suggests that concern over religious innovation instigated by Laudians was indeed a contributing factor to the hostilities leading to the Civil Wars. To shed light upon these matters, it is therefore necessary to determine how various factions drew upon Cranmer for support, or why they did not, and to determine whether he was generally regarded as a figure who established a significant break with England's Catholic past or as a reluctant reformer who helped to preserve continuity.

In the recent historiography of the Reformation, the idea of continuity has become an increasingly popular notion. Emphasis has been placed upon the extent to which the Reformation did not incite change, either doctrinally, in church practices, or in social attitudes.<sup>9</sup> Not only has the radicalism of English Protestantism been played down, but the period during which Protestantism was generally embraced has been moved forward, well into the Elizabethan years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic* and G.W. Bernard, 'The Church of England c.1529-c.1642'.

<sup>10</sup> The argument for a 'slow' Reformation has been most convincingly established by Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967). For a review of the historiographical progression towards a consensus of a 'slow reformation' see Christopher Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', *The Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), pp. 995-1007.

This view has begun to have a bearing upon the historiography of the Civil Wars. An argument for the continuity of the English Church is congenial to the view that the Civil Wars were not primarily the result of religious tensions. In a recent historiographical review, Nicholas Tyacke suggests that the perspective which sees the Church experiencing little discontinuity has

received powerful reinforcement from certain revisionist historians, who discern congruence between the alleged moderation of Anglicanism and their own commitment to a consensual model of English politics in the decades before the Civil War.<sup>11</sup>

Tyacke sees the argument for a tradition of moderation and continuity within the Church creating 'a new historiographical alliance' between 'those concerned primarily to defend a particular [Anglo-Catholic] reading of English religious history and others who emphasize the play of the contingent and unforeseen in explaining the crisis of 1640-1642'.<sup>12</sup> In short, if the Church had always been more 'Catholic' in its ideology, and not of a Calvinist bent up to the 1630s, then opposition to Laudian reforms could not have been widely opposed by claims that such reforms went against the traditional beliefs of the Church of England. Tyacke considers historians such as G.W. Bernard, Kevin Sharpe, and Peter White to be particularly receptive to this view. Together, their views support the idea that a Church of England marked by continuity and compromise left little

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<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, 'Anglican Attitudes: Some Recent Writings on English Religious History, from the Reformation to the Civil War', *Journal of British Studies*, 35 (April 1996), p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

room for ideological and religious disputes to spill over into a parliamentary crisis leading to Civil War.<sup>13</sup>

In order for this 'new historiographical alliance' to work, however, one must adhere to two very contentious views: first, the Church established under Edward and Elizabeth did not carry a firmly grounded set of Reformed / Calvinist beliefs into the Stuart era; and secondly, the main factors behind the outbreak of hostilities in 1642 did not include fears of a Reformed / Calvinist tradition being upset. I would argue that seventeenth-century interpretations of Cranmer pose problems for both these views. One can see much evidence in seventeenth-century debates that Cranmer's espousal of Reformed views posed a serious obstacle for those who wished to introduce more ceremony into the Church and to change the communion service so as to emphasize sacramental efficacy. While Cranmer's obvious support of the episcopacy and his role in the creation of the Prayer Book proved problematic for more puritanical elements within the Church, his eucharistic theology and Prayer Book service nevertheless stand out as a significant dilemma for those who wished to emphasize the ceremonial aspects of church practice. For such people, typified by William Laud, the Protestant course set by Cranmer appears especially problematic because the observances prescribed by his Prayer Book emphasize a symbolic interpretation of the sacraments. If one is to accept a view of the Reformation that plays down its radicalism, one is thus left dealing with the

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<sup>13</sup> Tyacke sees their perspective as particularly problematic to his own thesis that the 'rise of Arminianism' was a primary factor behind the outbreak of hostilities. See Tyacke, 'The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered', *Past & Present*, 115 (1987), pp. 201-217; and Peter Lake, 'Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635'.



legacy of a figure who created a rather radical break with the pre-Reformation Church. When approaching the issue of whether religious factors led to the Civil Wars, we see that the question of how people in the 1630s viewed Laudian reforms relative to their interpretation of their religious heritage becomes paramount.

The argument about the extent to which the Church of England became, and how long it remained, truly Protestant has been long debated. In an historiographical review rather similar to Tyacke's, Diarmaid MacCulloch discusses the basis for claims that the Church never underwent a thorough Reformation.<sup>14</sup> He argues that Anglo-Catholics aiming to discredit the wholehearted, Protestant reforms made under Edward and Elizabeth have created a 'myth of the Reformation'. Anglo-Catholics have ignored the important contributions made by sixteenth-century reformers in favour of a view that the Church of England had always sought a conciliatory, ecumenical position towards Rome, in spite of the fact that 'ecclesiastical giants of the Reformation' such as Cranmer, Parker, and Grindal 'have embarrassed the Anglo-Catholic historiographical tradition'.<sup>15</sup> MacCulloch also argues that Anglo-Catholic historiography, especially as it originated in the nineteenth century, had important predecessors in the mid-seventeenth century. However, he provides far less detail about the nature of this seventeenth-century revisionism. Though

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<sup>14</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Myth of the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (no. 1, 1991), pp. 1-19.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

he suggests that mid-seventeenth-century sacramentalists also wished to play down the significance of the Edwardian reformers, he recognizes that there is much left to be discovered about how this process of seventeenth-century revision transpired. For instance, did seventeenth-century theologians understand Cranmer to be a figure in support of a Reformed settlement, reconciliation with Rome, or a supposed '*via media*'?

This is an especially pertinent question, as Tyacke notes that his opponents' case rests upon the assumption that there was little dogmatic Calvinist force in the Church of England to be challenged by the Laudian reforms of the 1630s. Tyacke also sees the aims of Laud and those labelled Arminians as being in sharp contradiction to the views of most English clergy in the time of Edward, Elizabeth, and the first two decades of James I.<sup>16</sup> Bernard himself readily admits that 'if the church of England is to be understood, all early seventeenth-century developments must be firmly set in the context of the principal landmarks of the sixteenth century'.<sup>17</sup> More to the point, I would argue that one must examine seventeenth-century developments with an eye to how contemporaries viewed sixteenth-century developments in relation to their own theological convictions. Throughout the seventeenth century one finds an enormous respect for the reforms brought about by Edwardian and early Elizabethan reformers, and for the Elizabethan settlement. In mid-seventeenth-century writings that deal with the Edwardian reformers, two important issues stand out for those dissatisfied

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<sup>16</sup> Tyacke, 'Anglican Attitudes', pp. 144-145.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard, 'Church of England', p. 184.

with the current state of the Church. On the one hand, there was the issue for radical puritans such as Milton and Prynne of what to do about the legacy of respected church reformers and exemplary martyrs who nevertheless supported the existence of an episcopacy and Prayer Book liturgy. On the other hand, there was an issue for Arminians over how to perceive respected church founders who were obviously Reformed in their theology, with little or no amicability towards the Catholic Church. I would suggest that amongst the sixteenth-century reformers in question, none would have posed a bigger problem than Thomas Cranmer.

To date, there has been some notable work on the legacy of Cranmer as a reformer, martyr, and liturgist, but despite the many biographies on Cranmer, little work of any depth has been done on his significance as a religious influence in the century between his martyrdom and the Commonwealth.<sup>18</sup> The only study to approach this topic is the epilogue to Diarmaid MacCulloch's authoritative biography, *Thomas Cranmer, a Life*.<sup>19</sup> In this epilogue, MacCulloch captures nicely the ambiguous nature of Cranmer's legacy, but does not discuss in great depth how various factions within seventeenth-century England perceived him. While MacCulloch provides some very useful starting points by pointing out some of Cranmer's proponents and detractors, his discussion is cursory (it is, after all, an epilogue), and does not say much about

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Newman Brooks, *Cranmer in Context: Documents from the English Reformation* (Minneapolis, 1989), contains some discussion of the reaction to Cranmer's martyrdom, but only a scattering of interesting quotations for the period from Elizabeth's succession onwards.

<sup>19</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Cranmer*. This epilogue appears in a very slightly modified form in 'Cranmer's Ambiguous Legacy', *History Today*, 46 (6, 1996), pp. 23-31.

how Cranmer was viewed in debates over church government or the abolition of the Prayer Book. Concerning the latter he notes that 'Judith Maltby's [then] forthcoming *Prayer Book and People*... will provide valuable further detail on attitudes to the Edwardian martyrs in the 1640s'.<sup>20</sup>

Maltby's monograph, detailing the impact of the enduring appeal of Cranmer's Prayer Book, does provide some valuable detail on how petitioners drew upon the legacy of the Marian bishop-martyrs to support the retention of the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>21</sup> However, apart from parliamentary petitions and the writings of Thomas Aston, she examines no seventeenth-century sources in depth when dealing with this topic. After noting that 'by the early 1640s, the archbishop was invoked by all interest groups seeking to undo the works of the next archbishop of Canterbury to suffer public execution', she refers the reader to the final chapter of MacCulloch's biography.<sup>22</sup> This cross-referencing between two admittedly limited sources on this topic indicates a need to explore the sources much more thoroughly, and to evaluate how and why various writers treated Cranmer differently. This need becomes even more obvious when one looks at the other two sources of historiography that deal with Cranmer's legacy: martyrology and liturgy.

When studying the impact of martyrology upon the course of the Reformation in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England one runs

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<sup>20</sup> MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 627n.

<sup>21</sup> Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

into the seemingly overwhelming influence of John Foxe. It is certainly not possible in a study such as this one to address the many ways in which Foxe shaped Elizabethan and Stuart Protestant outlooks, yet it will be necessary to deal with his impact as it relates to interpretations of Cranmer. A good overview of the long-term significance of Marian martyrs such as Cranmer is provided in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, edited by David Loades.<sup>23</sup> However, a closer examination of how Foxe and other martyrologists shaped both conformist and puritan outlooks can be found in John R. Knott's *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*.<sup>24</sup> Knott stresses repeatedly that Foxe's heroes helped to confirm the validity of the Elizabethan establishment but also motivated those who wished to attack it, by providing compelling examples of resistance to ungodly practices. When discussing the late sixteenth century he notes

Apologists for the church could and readily did claim kinship with the Marian prelate martyrs themselves, as a means of validating the ecclesiastical system they defended against Separatist attacks. ... Yet the Separatists also had to distance themselves from the religious practices of those martyrs, especially in their use of the Book of Common Prayer, the work of that preeminent martyr Thomas Cranmer.<sup>25</sup>

Knott argues that in the seventeenth century the 'legacy of Foxe became increasingly problematic' as 'reaction to the Marian bishops was to become a key index of changing attitudes towards episcopacy', with 'moderate Anglicans'

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<sup>23</sup> David Loades, ed., *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Aldershot, 1997). See especially Loades' introduction and Damian Nussbaum, 'Appropriated Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of *Acts and Monuments*', pp. 178-191.

<sup>24</sup> Knott, John R., *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

using their legacy to buttress claims for the retention of the episcopacy. Though Knott captures nicely the dilemma faced by radical puritans who could not appropriate the Marian martyrs' suffering without ignoring their theology, he neither explores the basis of the 'moderate Anglicans'' claims nor inquires into how both Laudians and Presbyterians wrestled with the fact that many of their proposals had been rejected outright by Cranmer and his colleagues. Still, the reasons behind how various seventeenth-century factions interpreted and re-interpreted Cranmer's legacy would provide much information about how English people of this era viewed their Protestant heritage.<sup>26</sup>

A less direct way in which historians and theologians have traced Cranmer's legacy is through studies of the Prayer Book and liturgical writings in England. The most recent of these to focus upon the century following Cranmer's death is, as mentioned above, Maltby's *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*. This is an especially useful study for the way in which Maltby connects her study of the Prayer Book's enduring popularity to the historiography of the development of English Protestantism, but it is limited in its use of sources when dealing with Cranmer's legacy directly.

Apart from this, one finds a vast body of literature dealing with ecclesiastical history, some of it written from a denominational perspective.<sup>27</sup> Carl S. Meyer's

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<sup>26</sup> A.G. Dickens and J.M. Tonkin, in *The Reformation in Historical Thought* (Oxford, 1985), make a similar observation to Knott's, focusing upon the manner in which the Marian prelate martyrs by necessity fell out of favour with radical puritans, most notably Milton. However, they also do not address the question of how Cranmer was used by competing factions in seventeenth-century England.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, *Cranmer, Primate of all England – Catalogue of a Quincentenary Exhibition at the British Library* (Cambridge, 1989); Introduced by P.N. Brooks with a forward

very short monograph *Cranmer's Legacy* provides a brief overview of the importance of Cranmer's prologue to the 1540 English Bible, his catechism, his homilies, and, most notably, the Book of Common Prayer and Forty-two Articles.<sup>28</sup> Meyer's study, though, employs the term 'legacy' only to mean influence, and does not address the issue of how future generations regarded him and how perceptions of him changed. More insightful, though not much more recent, is an essay by F.E. Brightman and K.D Mackenzie entitled 'The History of the Book of Common Prayer down to 1662'.<sup>29</sup> While not examining Cranmer specifically, this essay provides the reader with a succinct survey of the Book of Common Prayer's proponents and opponents at key points in the Book's history, such as the Hampton Court Conference and the introduction of the Prayer Book into Scotland in 1637.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the secondary literature on Cranmer yields numerous unanswered questions about his pre-Restoration legacy. How did perceptions of Cranmer change and why? To whom did Cranmer prove most useful? What does the use made of Cranmer's authority tell us about competing positions within the Church of England? Furthermore, what would such answers tell us about the

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by the Archbishop of Canterbury, this work contains some interesting posthumous portrayals of Cranmer, but consists mainly of short descriptions of Cranmer's importance to the Reformation and a series of what appear to be museum captions describing illustrations or periods of Cranmer's life.

<sup>28</sup> Carl Stamm Meyer, *Cranmer's Legacy* (n.p., 1956).

<sup>29</sup> Frank Edward Brightman and Kenneth Donald Mackenzie, 'The History of the Book of Common Prayer down to 1662', in W.K. Lowther Clarke and Charles Harris, eds., *Liturgy and Worship: a Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion* (London, 1959).

<sup>30</sup> See also Edward Cardwell, *A History of Conferences and other Proceedings Connected with the Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford, 1861).

nature of English Protestantism and role of religion in the hostilities of the 1640s? These are questions that need to be asked of the Edwardian reformers in general, and even of the early Elizabethans. However, Cranmer, above others, seems best to represent the dilemma a variety of factions felt when dealing with their religious heritage.

Beginning with the significance of Cranmer's martyrdom, Chapter Two will survey opinion about Cranmer in England up to the 1630s. I shall examine first at how a reputation of respectability, theological orthodoxy, and liturgical appreciation was created around Cranmer in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. In such a survey, the role of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* must obviously play an important part, though religious treatises will also be important in establishing the fact that Cranmer's reforms were seen to have enduring validity. Following Cranmer's martyrdom, a fervent and European-wide debate broke out over his actions in his last days, and the Protestant side of this debate largely decided the nature of his early legacy. After discussing how early Elizabethans struggled to preserve his work, and how later Elizabethans employed him as an apologist of their settlement, I shall conclude by demonstrating how a general impression of Cranmer as a sincere and godly reformer is borne out in early Stuart literary sources.

Although Cranmer's legacy is a fairly straightforward matter in the Elizabethan and early Stuart eras, when one moves into the mid-seventeenth century there is considerably more ambiguity. The simple reason for this is the nature of religious debates. Cranmer's work as archbishop first became an issue



in debates surrounding the communion service, and more specifically, the communion table, the subject of Chapter Three. This controversy appears to have pitted Laudians against almost every other religious position within the Church, and the debate between Peter Heylyn and John Williams captures perfectly the respective positions of Laudians and moderates relative to Cranmer. The moderate position is particularly insightful, as it demonstrates how concerned conformists were to show how closely allied Cranmer's views were with those of Continental reformers, as well as their own. Moreover, this controversy demonstrates the difficulty that both Laudians and radical puritans had in dealing with an historical figure who was an important part of their heritage but problematic to their theologies.

Problems that these two factions, as well as mainstream Presbyterians, had with Cranmer became even more apparent in the debate over episcopacy that raged in the 1640s. Chapter Four will explore how Presbyterians encountered a backlash against their proposals for church government that was strongly grounded upon the reputation of 'model' prelate martyrs such as Cranmer. Of particular interest is the widespread resistance to Parliament's proposals early in the debate from a number of localities. What is especially noteworthy about this moderate position, as typified by Thomas Aston, is how it levelled charges of innovation against both papists and Presbyterians, indicating the presence of a large proportion of the population who wished to conserve the Church as it had been under Cranmer, and were willing to defend it, at least with their voices. This debate is also very significant for the position taken by radical puritans, in

which Cranmer, for the first time, received a thorough degrading at the hands of English Protestants.

The difficulty that Presbyterians and radical puritans had in embracing Cranmer as a model figure recurs in the mid-seventeenth-century debate over liturgy, the focus of Chapter Five. In this debate, we see once again the level of support that existed for Cranmer's work amongst the laity. However, support for Cranmer in this debate was less direct. For supporters of the Book of Common Prayer, Cranmer's signature was much less important than his role in securing the approval of Reformed theologians. This trend, observable in the debate over the eucharist, indicates a lowering in Cranmer's reputation as a theologian, and bears some likely connection to the attacks he received in the mid-seventeenth century at the hands of radical puritans.

I shall conclude by discussing how Cranmer's role as a father of English Protestantism casts him in a special light. It appears clear that until the mid-seventeenth century Cranmer's pre-eminent reforming role, sealed with the blood of martyrdom, left him immune from personal criticism, and left fairly secure the beliefs and practices he endorsed and established. However, this was to change as it became increasingly obvious that the Church practices he established were not tenable to those of either Presbyterian or Arminian persuasions. As a result, he ceased to be an authority whom puritans could draw upon as a model reformer. Furthermore, his doctrines were to be somewhat avoided by a Restoration Anglican Church that wished to disassociate itself from more ardent Calvinism. Although the Restoration Church reintroduced his

Prayer Book, Cranmer himself could not be used as a model Anglican in the same way that he made a model Protestant in the Tudor and early Stuart eras. I shall thus conclude that with the unsuccessful moderate Fuller's *Church History*, we see the final defence of Cranmer that seeks to engage the seventeenth-century debates that directly concerned his legacy.

Finally, it is necessary to address the issue of terminology. English religious history is already plagued by numerous debates over what terms such as 'Anglican', 'p/Puritan', 'c/Catholic', 'conformist', 'high / low church', 'Arminian', 'recusant', 'papist', etc., mean.<sup>31</sup> This problem is intensified when dealing with a century of time, during which definitions are bound to change. Furthermore, one finds that mid-seventeenth century social and political divisions often did not relate consistently to religious divisions. When examining divisions over issues such as Church government, loyalty to the king, toleration, the franchise, or freedom of speech one can find members of almost any religious faction coming down on either side.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, one must also consider the numerous individuals who wavered, especially in their political alliance, as parliament became increasingly anti-monarchical.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, Carl Bangs, "'All the Best Bishoprics and Deaneries": the Enigma of Arminian Politics', *Church History*, 42 (1, 1973), pp. 5-16; Patrick Collinson, 'A Comment: Concerning the Name Puritan', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (no. 4, 1980), pp. 483-488; Peter Lake, 'Defining Puritanism – again?', in F. Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo American Faith* (Boston, Mass., 1993), pp. 1-19.

<sup>32</sup> Take, for instance, one of the primary figures of this study, William Prynne, who could be alternatively described as a puritan, Presbyterian, radical, loyalist, and supporter of a unified Church. See William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London, 1963).

<sup>33</sup> For more on how individuals of all persuasions were hesitant to make their political allegiance known, see John Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces* (London, 1976).

For these reasons, when discussing Cranmer's legacy, I shall try to avoid political and social labels wherever possible and discuss issues relative to certain religious 'positions', as observable in the seventeenth century. Because some of these positions did not exist, existed in a different form, or existed *avant la lettre* in the sixteenth century, the titles accorded certain positions in Chapter Two will be somewhat different. When dealing with the seventeenth century, the main positions with which I shall deal will be termed 'radical puritan', 'Presbyterian', 'Laudian', 'moderate', and 'Catholic'.

Both 'radical puritan' and 'Presbyterian' refer to those who supported the teachings of Calvin, favoured a symbolic interpretation of the eucharist with a service performed upon a table, wished to abolish the episcopacy, and wished to replace the Prayer Book liturgy with a service emphasizing the sermon and largely devoid of ceremonial elements. The outlook of Presbyterians is easy to summarize if one uses the Westminster Confession as a rough guide to their beliefs. However, it is admittedly difficult to distinguish this from more radical forms of puritanism in earlier years.

The term 'radical puritan' is more problematic. 'Radical' is a relative term, and I intend to use it to describe those puritans whose ideologies diverged considerably from those of the parliamentary establishment of 1640-1649 and the Westminster Assembly of 1643 onwards. In the context of this study, it will refer especially to those Protestants who believed that England had never undergone a true reformation to begin with, and who did not look back to the Edwardian Reformation as a genuine starting point for Christian reform,

associating themselves more with a tradition of godly resistance instead. Using this as a functional definition, one must bear in mind that such a group would contain people of widely divergent perspectives, but there is little other way to categorize those whose views were neither conformist nor whole-heartedly Presbyterian.

With the term 'Laudian' I shall describe those who supported the reforms of Archbishop William Laud, commonly labelled as 'Arminian' by their opponents. Though the term 'Arminian' refers more strictly to Jacobus Arminius' belief that Christ's atonement is unlimited, it, along with 'Laudian', became more commonly associated with attempts to introduce more ceremony into the Church in the 1630s. For my purposes, I shall use the term Laudian to mean support of an episcopacy, a highly ceremonial liturgical service emphasizing the role of the priest, the necessity of good works for salvation, and a eucharist service upon an altar, usually with a view to promoting a belief in the 'real presence'.

The term 'moderate' is perhaps the most vague, yet perhaps also the most important. For my purposes it will refer those who supported the Protestant order of service and church government set down in the Elizabethan Settlement and modified only very slightly in the Hampton Court Conference. Practically speaking, this meant support for an episcopacy and Prayer Book, eucharistic and soteriological beliefs that resembled Calvinist theology, and a desire to see little new ceremony introduced into the Church. Though this is a position similar to those often labelled as 'Anglican' or 'conformist', I have chosen the term

'moderate' because of the anachronistic nature of 'Anglican', and because this category includes many who were not willing to conform either to Laudian or Presbyterian initiatives.

'Catholic' is probably the easiest to define for my purposes. By it, I mean simply the teachings of the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church. In the English context it is important not to confuse this with Laudianism which, despite the views of its opponents, did not support widespread use of a Latin mass, transubstantiation, a belief in purgatory, or the authority of the Pope as the supreme head of the Church. It is thus important to bear in mind that those subscribing to positions described as 'Laudian', 'Arminian', 'High Church', or 'Sacramentalist' were not necessarily upper case 'C' Catholics, despite possible outward affinities with Roman Catholicism and a desire for ecumenism.

Finally, a word should be said about my use of the term 'Protestant'. Broadly speaking, I shall employ it to describe Western European Christians who supported the early- to mid-sixteenth-century movement to reject the supremacy and orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic Church. But one should bear in mind that amongst such a group there was widespread division over what it meant to be a true believer, with English puritans, for instance, often accusing Laudians of harbouring Catholic beliefs. Moreover, it is necessary, especially in light of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglo-Catholic claims, to recognize that the commitment of some to this breach with Rome was much greater than for others. For this reason, it is at times necessary to distinguish between those

Protestants who demonstrated a sound commitment to rejecting Roman orthodoxy and those whose commitment to such rejection was questionable.

Applying such labels to the sources with which this study deals is, of course, not always possible. The sources that deal with Cranmer's legacy in the century following his martyrdom are diverse and chronologically scattered, with a conspicuously large proportion to be found in mid-seventeenth century tracts. For the purpose of concentrating upon religious debates, most notably those concerning the eucharist and episcopacy, I shall deal most heavily with religious tracts. However, Cranmer's place in such sources as early modern historiography, martyrology, artwork, stage plays, petitions, parliamentary proclamations and debates, and liturgical writings is also very important in establishing his depiction. I shall use such sources to help establish what the perception of him would have been amongst the general public, and to demonstrate the extent to which he was considered a consistent, admirable, and / or dynamic figure.

## Chapter 2 Creating a Protestant Hero: from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Early Stuart Era

Following the Elizabethan Settlement, Cranmer's reputation in England changed from one that was hotly debated to one of almost incontrovertible respect and appreciation. The driving force behind this was the significance placed upon his work as archbishop by church authorities. The respect garnered by Cranmer after his death was also powerfully reinforced by sources that would have caught the attention of the general public as well. Before turning to these, however, it is necessary to survey the opinions amongst church authorities that led to such universal approval of almost all that Cranmer had done.

This appreciation for Cranmer is in many respects remarkable, considering that the events surrounding his execution in 1556 led to a Europe-wide dispute. In sharp contrast to the eirenical and ecumenical path to which Cranmer had attempted to hold in his office, his martyrdom was marked by bitter allegations and vituperation. Disputes relating to Cranmer's marriages, his response to accusations of heresy, and his actions before his burning arose across England and Europe before the cinders round his stake had barely cooled.

The debate over Cranmer's martyrdom is one of the few aspects of his legacy that has been dealt with in some depth in secondary literature. Diarmaid MacCulloch estimates that for Reginald Pole,<sup>1</sup> Edmund Bonner,<sup>2</sup> and Roman

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<sup>1</sup> (1500-1558), Archbishop of Canterbury 1556-1558, and English Cardinal, Pole tried unsuccessfully reverse the church reforms enacted under Henry and Edward.



Catholic propagandists across Europe the immediate fallout of Cranmer's burning was a public relations 'fiasco', leaving authorities in England scrambling to besmirch the late archbishop in a series of rapidly printed tracts containing his recantations.<sup>3</sup> John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury,<sup>4</sup> later noted that even before his trial the Pope 'burnt that most reverend father D. Cranmer in a mummery, before he ever say him or heard him speak'.<sup>5</sup> Bishop Bonner hastily authorized an edition of Cranmer's recantations, not containing his withdrawals, to be circulated,<sup>6</sup> which Marian exiles countered by printing some of Cranmer's prison writings and other correspondence.<sup>7</sup> Most useful to the Catholic position were perhaps the many damaging allegations about Cranmer's career to come out of his Oxford disputation and trial. Cranmer had been forced to face up to issues such as his infidelity to the Pope and to his archiepiscopal oaths, his questionable marriages, his ambivalent eucharist doctrines, and even his role in

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<sup>2</sup> (1500?-1569), Bishop of London under Mary, Bonner recanted many of his beliefs following the Elizabethan succession and was generally regarded by Protestants as Mary's foremost persecutor.

<sup>3</sup> MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 606-607.

<sup>4</sup> Jewel (1522-1571) was deprived of his fellowship following Mary's succession, and upon his return from Frankfurt, was given his see. He attempted through his writings to provide a moderate Calvinist influence.

<sup>5</sup> John Jewel, 'A Replie unto M. Hardings Answer [1564]', in John Ayre, ed., *The Works of John Jewel* (Cambridge, 1845), Pt. 2, p. 629.

<sup>6</sup> *All the Submyssyons, and recantations of Thomas Cranmer, late Archebyshop of Canterburye* (London, 1556) in *Early English Books, 1475-1640, selected from Pollard and Redgrave's Short Title Catalogue* (STC) (Ann Arbor, 1972): number 1556.

<sup>7</sup> 'The copy of certain letters sent to the quene, and also to doctour Martin and doctour Storye, by T. Cranmer' (Emden, 1556) STC 5999; Cf. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 608. In 1557 Exiles published *Cranmer's Defensio Verae et Catholicae Doctrinae de Sacramento* (Emden, 1557) STC: 6005.

the burning of John Lambert<sup>8</sup> in 1538 (for views, some of which became scarcely distinguishable from Cranmer's), as twenty years of dirty laundry was paraded before him for all Oxford to see.<sup>9</sup>

An example of an attempt to disgrace Cranmer based upon his role in the Henrician Church can be seen in the writings of Nicolas Harpsfield,<sup>10</sup> Archdeacon of Canterbury under Mary. Writing shortly after Cranmer's death, Harpsfield brought up the issue of Cranmer's first marriage to a 'wanton maid', remarked upon his second wife whom he 'carried about with him (like a worthy Archbishop) ...in a chest', and characterized Cranmer as an archbishop who 'wist not nor cared what he did so [long as] he might serve the king's pleasure'.<sup>11</sup> To this Harpsfield adds that Henry conferred upon Cranmer the archbishopric at a bear-baiting, remarking that 'surely he was the first of all Bishops of Canterbury ...that either gave such a filthy precedent and example or sowed such pestilent doctrine'.<sup>12</sup> As someone he regarded as much worse than Wolsey, Harpsfield also considered it appropriate that Cranmer had suffered a much worse end.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Alias Nicholas, Lambert greatly upset more careful reformers by pushing sensitive issues and Reformed theology at inopportune times.

<sup>9</sup> For the fullest accounts of Cranmer's disputation and trial at Oxford see D.M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (New York, 1970), pp. 167-233; and MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 554-605.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Harpsfield (1519?-1575), theologian, fled England in 1550, but in 1554 replaced Thomas Cranmer's brother Edmund as Archdeacon of Canterbury. In 1559 he was committed to the Tower, where he remained until his death.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Harpsfield, *The Pretended Divorce between Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon*, Nicholas Pocock, ed. (London, 1877), pp. 289-290.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

Elizabeth's succession put an end to such rhetoric, though Parliament, in the first year of her reign, still saw some debate over the validity of the reforms Cranmer had attempted. One of the last disputes in which Cranmer was soundly criticized by an ecclesiastical authority in England occurred during debate over the re-enacted English liturgy, immediately following the succession of Elizabeth. For the group of formerly underground Protestants and returning Marian exiles who took control of the Church in the wake of Elizabeth's succession, it was imperative that the doctrine and order of service contained in the Prayer Book of 1552 be reintroduced. To their chagrin, alterations made in this later edition to Cranmer's Prayer Book of 1549 and his earlier positions provided the Protestants' opponents with opportunities to make charges of inconsistency.

One such opponent, John Feckenham, dispossessed Abbot of Westminster, made extensive use of Cranmer's and fellow martyr Nicholas Ridley's apparent doctrinal reversals in a speech to the Parliament of 1559.<sup>14</sup> In his 1559 speech on the Uniformity Bill Feckenham distinguished between 'two sundry kindes of religion', and cited the issue of transubstantiation as a major divide between the two.<sup>15</sup> He highlights the confused nature of Protestant objections to this doctrine, in contrast to consistent descriptions of transubstantiation in the Catholic church.

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<sup>14</sup> T.E. Hartley, ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, Vol. 1 (Leicester, 1981), pp. 27-32. Cf. Edward Cardwell, *A History of Conferences and other Proceedings Connected with the Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford, 1861), pp. 34-41. For a discussion of the doctrinal shifts observable in Cranmer and Ridley on the issue of the eucharist see MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 379.

<sup>15</sup> John Feckenham, 'Oration against the Bill for the Liturgy', in Hartley, *ibid.*, p. 30.

After reviewing the contradictory opinions found amongst European reformers on this matter, Feckenham turns to contradictions found in the theologies of Cranmer and Ridley. Of Cranmer he remarks that 'in one year ... he dothe most constantlye affirme and defend the reall presense of Christ's bodye'. However, 'verie shortlye after he did set forthe an other boke, wherin he did most shamefullie denye the same, falsifinge bothe the scriptures and doctors'.<sup>16</sup>

Feckenham then uses Cranmer's turnabout to argue for the invalidity of Protestantism as a whole:

the dealyng therof being so uncertaine, bothe by the Germanyne and Englishe wryters, and one of them ageinst another, your honors may be well assured, that this religion ... can be no constant and stayde religion, and therefore of your honors not to be receyved.<sup>17</sup>

Roman Catholics were not the only ones eager to create a lasting impression of Cranmer in the English mindset. Peter N. Brooks notes that to counter the Catholic image of a scandalous, obsequious, 'doubting Thomas', Protestants were quick to find and to publish evidence of an archbishop who 'did his best in trying circumstances to uphold the doctrine of the "godly prince" set forth by the apostle Paul'.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned above, Marian exiles made an immediate and diligent effort to publish evidence from Cranmer's writings that would demonstrate his theological orthodoxy and consistency. This work was continued after Mary's death by Protestants who eagerly collected the correspondence and other writings of Cranmer that could demonstrate that his

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Brooks, *Cranmer in Context*, pp. 117-118, 120-121.

alleged floundering before his death stemmed more from uncertainty over how to react to ungodly rule than from cowardice or theological faltering.<sup>19</sup>

Amongst other things, they found it important to demonstrate the unfair nature of Cranmer's trial and execution. In a 1560 tract containing the correspondence and debate between John Jewel and Henry Cole,<sup>20</sup> Jewel, referring to Cole's role in Cranmer's execution, asks

What law had ye to ascite a man to appear, peremptorie, at Rome, within fourscore days, and yet that notwithstanding to keep him still in prison in Oxford; and afterward for not appearing at his day at Rome to condemn him there as obstanate?

Or what law had ye to put the same man to death, against the express words of your own law, after he had subscribed unto you, and was found in no relapse? ...I believe, when ye have searched your books through, ye shall find ye had not so much law as they that said: Nos habemus legem, et secundum legem debet mori.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, for Jewel, who had been in Oxford during Cranmer's imprisonment, Cranmer's death constituted not only a martyrdom but also a travesty.

As one would expect, the Elizabethan Settlement was to mark a radical shift in perceptions of Edwardian reformers. Though Brooks concludes his study of Cranmer's context by writing that 'ever since his primacy, Cranmer has been judged a most controversial figure',<sup>22</sup> the Elizabethan era is more noteworthy for

<sup>19</sup> MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 608.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Cole (1500?-1580), Dean of St Paul's, had been a disputant against Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley at Oxford, and had preached at Cranmer's execution. After taking part in some disputations in 1559, he was committed to the Tower and then the Fleet.

<sup>21</sup> 'The True Copies of the Letters between ...john Bishop of Sarum and D. Cole', in *Works of Jewel*, pt. 2, p. 59. In 1555 Cranmer was served with a mandate from Rome rather than an English See, which included the rather ridiculous requirement that he appear in Rome within 80 days. See MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 574.

<sup>22</sup> Brooks, *Cranmer in Context*, p. 117.

consistent praise of Cranmer than for controversy over his actions. With Protestants quickly gaining the upper hand, the English appear to have coalesced round an image of their late archbishop that was not only hagiographic, but also highly appreciative of his vital contribution. Cranmer was not only a martyr for the newly re-established Church of England, but the progenitor of orthodox teaching and the reformed liturgy. Without a doubt this image, especially the hagiographic side, was due to Foxe; however, much of it was also the work of Foxe's fellow exiles.

After the Elizabethan succession and the 1559 debates at Westminster over articles of religion, Protestants succeeded in establishing Cranmer's place as an esteemed reformer worthy to have suffered martyrdom for their Church. This was done by referring to him as a theological authority, arguing that the work he started marked a point from which reform should be continued, and carefully collecting his works. Writing in 1562, the former Marian exile James Pilkington, the influential Bishop of Durham, argued that finally the time was nigh to make good on Cranmer's original intentions:

When God stirred up our kings as chief in the realm, and Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, with others, for matters in religion, to drive the buyers and sellers of masses, pardons, trentals, &c. out of God's house, which they had made a den of thieves, was not this in all our mouths: It is not yet time to build God's house, the people cannot bear it; we fear strange princes and rebellion – as though God were content to suffer idolatry for a time...<sup>23</sup>

In light of their present circumstances, Pilkington argues, it is most certainly time to stop stalling the construction of the house for which Cranmer had lain so

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<sup>23</sup> James Pilkington, 'Exposition Upon the Prophet Aggeus', in James Scholefield, ed., *The Works of James Pilkington, B.D.* (Cambridge, 1842), p. 37.

much groundwork. In a later work, when discussing the error of believing the eucharist to be a present-day sacrifice, he refers 'all men to the fifth and last book that the blessed souls now living with God, bishops Cranmer and Ridley, wrote of the sacrament, whose bodies they cruelly tormented therefore'.<sup>24</sup>

One can find another example of Cranmer's importance for early Elizabethan Protestants in correspondence exchanged between Archbishop Matthew Parker and Principle Secretary William Cecil in August 1563. Here, England's highest ecclesiastical and governmental authorities collaborated to collect the writings of a much-revered Cranmer, which they considered invaluable. Writing to Cecil about the discovery of certain letters and 'great notable written books of my predecessor Dr Cranmer', Parker requested from Cecil authorization to search the home of an anonymous owner in hopes of recovering them.<sup>25</sup> To this Cecil replied immediately: 'I am glad that you have heard of such hid treasures, as I take the books of the holy archbishop Cranmer to be; I have late recovered of his written books five or six'.<sup>26</sup> Several weeks later Parker wrote again to Cecil requesting a letter from the Privy Council to persuade a certain Dr Nevison to

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<sup>24</sup> Pilkington, 'Confutation of an Addition', *ibid.*, p. 547. Pilkington was referring specifically to Book V, 'Of the Oblation and Sacrifice of Christ', of Cranmer's, *An Answer to a Crafty and Sophistical Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner* (London, 1551), in *Works*, Vol. I, pp. 344-367.

<sup>25</sup> 'Archbishop Parker to Sir William Cecil, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1563', in John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Matthew Parker* (Cambridge, 1853), p. 186.

<sup>26</sup> 'Sir William Cecil to Archbishop Parker, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1563, *ibid.*, p. 187.

relinquish writings of Cranmer that he allegedly possessed.<sup>27</sup> Later, Parker would request Cranmer's secretary to produce a narrative of his life.<sup>28</sup>

Much of the work of recovery that centred round Cranmer culminated in Miles Coverdale's *Letters of the Martyrs*, a work that included three letters from Cranmer to Queen Mary, several to lawyers, one to the Lords of the Council, and one to a fellow martyr, Mistress Wilkinson.<sup>29</sup> Such concern over the recovery of Cranmer's works, whether for their value in religious instruction or for their worth in defending Cranmer against possible allegations, demonstrates a grave concern amongst England's highest lay and clerical authorities that their forerunner's achievements not go to waste.

By far the most ambitious and important endeavour to perpetuate the memory of Cranmer and his colleagues (not to mention every English, and a scattering of significant non-English, martyrs) was Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. The forerunner to *Acts and Monuments*, *Commentarii rerum in ecclesia gestarum* was published by Foxe in exile in 1554 before Cranmer had occasion to enter Foxe's annals as a martyr. The lives of Cranmer and his fellow Marian martyrs were first described in the 1559 edition, *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum*, but it was not until 1563 that English people were able to read a full account of Cranmer's life

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<sup>27</sup> 'Archbishop Parker to Sir William Cecil, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1563', *ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>28</sup> See John Gough Nichols, ed., *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation* (London, 1859), pp. 234-237. Nichols, based upon the correspondence and writings of Cranmer's secretary Ralph Morice, argues that between the first (1563) and second (1570) editions of *Acts and Monuments* (Nichols incorrectly cites 1576 as the date of the second edition) Morice delivered an account of Cranmer's life to Parker.

<sup>29</sup> Miles Coverdale, *Letters of the Martyrs* (London, 1564), in Edmund Cox, ed., *The Works of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge, 1846), Pt. 2, pp. 442-456.



and sufferings in *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes....* This account, which would become an important source of reference on Cranmer, was revised in the 1570 edition, and reprinted in the 1576, 1583, 1589 (abridged), 1596, 1610, 1632, and 1641 editions.<sup>30</sup>

The 1563 edition of *Acts and Monuments* contains very little about Cranmer's early life, and, after providing some brief information about his work under Henry, concentrates upon Cranmer's trial, and reprints his letters to Mary. One of Foxe's primary sources for this account is likely an undated manuscript entitled 'The Lyfe and Death of Thomas Cranmer, Late Archebushope of Caunterbury', by an unknown author.<sup>31</sup> Foxe is candid about Cranmer's theological transformations, noting that in Henry's day 'the byshop of Canterburye was not then well instructed in the doctrine of the sacrament, because there is graunted [in the Bishop's Book, which Cranmer endorsed] a real presence'.<sup>32</sup> However, there are a number of important issues, such as Cranmer's marriages, archiepiscopal oaths, and his role in Henry's divorce, which are glossed over in this edition.

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<sup>30</sup> For a complete list of the various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of *Acts and Monuments*, and a catalogue of extant copies, see David Newcombe, 'Appendix: A Finding List of Extant Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Editions of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*', in Loades, ed., *Foxe and the English Reformation*, pp. 306-330. As my primary focus is the mid-seventeenth century, all quotations, unless stated otherwise, are taken from the 1641 edition, in *Early English Books, 1640-1700, selected from Donald Wing's Short-title catalogue* (Wing) (Ann Arbor, 1961): number F2035.

<sup>31</sup> Reprinted in *Narratives*. Nichols notes that historian and antiquarian John Strype, writing in 1697, believed one of the authors of this manuscript (written in two distinct hands) to be either Thomas Becon or John Scory. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 633-636 suggests 1556-1558 as a likely time for its composition, and Stephen Nevison (the subject of Parker and Cecil's correspondence) as a likely author.

<sup>32</sup> Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1563 ed., p. 1472.

By contrast, the account of Cranmer in the 1570 and later editions is much longer, more apologetic and devotes much more space to Cranmer's earlier life, especially the care and thought behind his role in Henry's divorce.<sup>33</sup> Foxe is careful to point out that Cranmer came to his office 'not by flatterie, not by bribes, nor by any other unlawfull meanes'.<sup>34</sup> When dealing with Cranmer's life as archbishop, this account also takes a much different approach to that of 1563. Rather than providing a chronology of Cranmer's service, it endeavours to 'try him' by the rule for bishops set forth in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. This allows Foxe to discuss Cranmer's life anecdotally, as he provides examples of how Cranmer lived up to all St Paul's prerequisites, while avoiding more potentially embarrassing episodes. The reasons for these changes to the 1570 edition no doubt have much to do with the fact that new evidence had come to light,<sup>35</sup> as well as the fact that Foxe intended for it to be a considerable expansion.<sup>36</sup> It is also possible that the contentions of men like Harpsfield and Feckenham, especially concerning Cranmer's early life, had something to do with it. Nevertheless, with the 1570 edition being ordered by the Privy Council to be placed in every cathedral church, and with many more parishes following suit

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<sup>33</sup> Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1570 ed., STC: 11223.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1641 ed., Vol. 3, p. 636.

<sup>35</sup> [Ralph Morice], 'Anecdotes and Character of Archbishop Cranmer' (undated MS.), in Nichols, *Narratives*, pp. 238-275. Nichols argues that this MS by Cranmer's secretary, belonging to Parker 'at whose request it was evidently written' contains many phrases used by Foxe, 'to whom Parker must have communicated it, previously to the publication of the second English edition' (*Narratives*, p. 234).

<sup>36</sup> See Susan Felch, 'Shaping the Reader in the *Acts and Monuments*', in Loades, ed., *Foxe and the English Reformation*, pp. 52-65.

voluntarily, it was Foxe's portrayal of Cranmer that worked its way into the hearts and minds of the English people.

A different form of recovery occurred over proposals to modify canon law in 1571. Already in 1536, Parliament, with Henry's approval, had enacted legislation authorizing an overhaul of canon law, but this did not come to fruition during his reign.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the reign of Edward, attempts were made to complete this project, culminating in the *Reformatio legum ecclesiasticarum*. This was an attempt, headed by Cranmer, to draft a new set of canons that would retain the episcopal structure of the Church under a Protestant rubric.<sup>38</sup> Though this did not pass through Parliament by 1553, largely because of disputes over prelatial authority, the *Reformatio* was reintroduced in 1571. This proposal, like its antecedents, stalled, perhaps because higher issues were on the agenda or perhaps because of the caution of the recently excommunicated Elizabeth.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the preservation of the original manuscripts of the *Reformatio*, which involved Foxe and Cranmer's son-in-law Thomas Norton, indicates a continuous effort to complete what the editor of the most recent edition of the *Reformatio* calls a document that was 'conceived within the framework of the Cranmerian Reformation' and meant to be an accompaniment to his liturgy and doctrinal articles.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Gerald Bray, ed., *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. xli, clv-clvi.

<sup>38</sup> See MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 500-504.

<sup>39</sup> Bray, *Tudor Church Reform*, pp. lxxvi-cvi.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. clv.

Evidence of the importance of the recovery of Cranmer's works, and their significance as a model of orthodoxy, is also apparent in the writings of Archbishop Parker's successor, John Whitgift. Responding to Thomas Cartwright's *Admonition to Parliament* in 1574, Whitgift wrote a tract defending the communion service laid down in the Elizabethan Prayer Book, arguing that it did Cranmer no injury. He advises Cartwright to look up the writings of

worthy Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, which he writeth of the sacrament; where he answering the objections of the papists out of Chrysostom, touching transubstantiation, handleth this argument at large, and setteth it out by many examples ...that you may see your lack of discretion in finding fault where none is.<sup>41</sup>

Concerning the charge that the Prayer Book itself 'maintaineth an unlearned, or (as they term it) a reading ministry', Whitgift feels that Cartwright is similarly mistaken. He argues that the practices set fourth in the present Book of Common Prayer concur with Reformed theology and therefore the 'book itself needeth no other kind of confutation'.<sup>42</sup>

Cranmer's arguments could also be used to counter Catholic claims, as evident in the 1582 printing of *A Confutation of unwritten verities*, an anti-papal work credited to Cranmer.<sup>43</sup> This work, supposedly produced by Cranmer in 1547, attempts to uphold scripture above all earthly authorities. Though

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<sup>41</sup> John Whitgift, 'The Defence of the answer to the Admonition', in John Ayre, ed., *The Works of John Whitgift* (Cambridge, 1851), pp. 66. Cartwright, in his *Second replie against Dr Whitgift* (in two parts, London, 1575 (STC: 4714) and 1577 (STC: 4715)) had rested his case against episcopal orders largely on the claims of 'godly men of our times' such as Calvin, Beza, Martyr, Bucer, and Zwingli, but did not employ any of their English contemporaries such as Cranmer.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> [Thomas Cranmer?], *A Confutation of unwritten verities* (London, 1582) STC: 5992.

Cranmer's authorship is only partial, it does contain citations drawn from Cranmer's commonplace books.<sup>44</sup> Even if it is a work of considerable redaction, or authored by a pseudo-Cranmer, it still illustrates a continuing appreciation for Cranmer's stress upon scriptural authority.

Cranmer's theology, as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer, has also been noted as an important influence upon and support to Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. In his introduction to Book V of Hooker's mammoth work, John E. Booty suggests that while 'it was not customary for an English apologist to refer frequently to English reformers such as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Jewel ... Hooker was well read in their works'.<sup>45</sup> Cranmer's Prayer Book was especially important because 'in Book V Hooker is defending the Book of Common Prayer, not as it was used in the late-sixteenth century, but rather as Cranmer had intended it to be used'.<sup>46</sup> Specifically, Hooker was arguing against objections to the weekly eucharist both by believers in transubstantiation (who feared possible damnation because of inadequate preparation of the sacrament) and puritans, who preferred to emphasize other parts of the service.<sup>47</sup> It is noteworthy that Hooker would look back to Cranmer for a moderate course between Geneva and Rome, as he saw Cranmer's

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<sup>44</sup> See J.E. Cox, *Works of Cranmer*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>45</sup> John E. Booty, 'Introduction, Book V', in W. Speed Hill, ed., *Richard Hooker: Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1993), pp. 194-195.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

prescription for the church service as a means to stress ceremonial significance without overemphasizing sacramental efficacy.

We can see a final example of the appreciation felt during the Elizabethan era for Cranmer's work in the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Arguably the last chance for the aims of decades of Elizabethan puritanism to be realised,<sup>48</sup> this conference is perhaps best noted for its lack of compromise over the English liturgy.<sup>49</sup> It is also noteworthy for how little discussion arose over the English reformers who introduced the Prayer Book service, which many puritans so greatly despised. This is not too surprising, considering that Edwardian reformers played a central role in the tradition of martyrdom that largely underlay English puritanism. Though discontent with the Book of Common Prayer was a hallmark of the conference, lingering dissatisfaction with an English liturgy was by no means indicative of dissatisfaction with Cranmer. This helps explain the fact that while Catholics attacked Cranmer's integrity during the parliamentary debates over the liturgy in 1599, puritans at the Hampton Court Conference did not. In fact, reference to Cranmer and his colleagues by Matthew Hutton, Archbishop of York, highlighted the ingratitude towards Cranmer of puritan aims. Writing to Church of England divines prior to the conference, he remarks of Prayer Book opponents:

these men, though they make small accompt of the bishops now lyving in this church, yet (methinks) should reverence reverend Archbishop Cranmer, learned Bishop Ridley, and grave Bishop Latymer, who at one time yielded their bodies

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<sup>48</sup> See Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 448-467.

<sup>49</sup> William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference ...at Hampton Court, January 14, 1603* [1604, modern dating] (London, 1604).

to be burnt, for the defence of that book, and the gospel professed in the Church of England, in the time of vertuous King Edward the Sixth.<sup>50</sup>

References to Cranmer are much more difficult to find in the first three decades of the Stuart era. Obviously, one would expect such references to thin out after his death; however, this does not explain the notable increase in references to him in the mid-seventeenth century. One likely explanation is that the type of religious disputes that arose under Archbishops Richard Bancroft (1583-1604) and George Abbot (1604-1633) was considerably different from those which arose under Laud. Cranmer's work and writings did not offer much fuel for either side in debates over issues such as predestination or Sabbath observance. The eucharist and liturgy, and other issues pertaining to the church service, on the other hand, had a direct bearing upon how one interpreted Cranmer. It is therefore not surprising that we find far more concern over his role in the creation of the Church of England during and after Laud's archiepiscopal tenure than in the several decades preceding.

It is possible to gain some understanding of Cranmer's reputation during the early Stuart era from his treatment in non-polemical sources designed to reach a more popular audience. References to him in Parliament or at Hampton Court, not to mention in private correspondence, obviously would not have been widely known, and references to him in religious tracts would have been limited to their readership. Reprints in 1610 and 1632 of *Acts and Monuments*, with its gripping

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<sup>50</sup> Matthew Hutton, '...touching upon certain matters, like to be brought in question before the King's most excellent Majesty, at the Conference at Court', in Edward Cardwell, ed., *A History of Conferences and other Proceedings connected with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford, 1861), p. 155.

woodcuts, were widely read and would have offered a seemingly authoritative account of a Cranmer. Sixteenth-century woodcuts from other sources also provided a lasting impression of Cranmer that survived into the seventeenth century. Most notable were several woodcuts accompanying the 1539 English Bible (often referred to as ‘Cranmer’s Bible’) in which Cranmer is seen receiving the Bible at the right hand of King Henry. This scene is repeated in the woodcut ‘The Pope suppressed by K. Henry the eight’ in *Acts and Monuments*, and on the frontispiece of Christopher Lever’s 1627 tract *The History of the Defendors*.<sup>51</sup> In this woodcut, Cranmer, ahead of Thomas Cromwell in a queue at Henry’s right side, calmly receives the Bible as a seated Henry triumphantly rests his feet upon the back of the fallen Pope Clement VII, much to the chagrin of Reginald Pole and a pack of ill-mannered friars.

Yet, the most important pictorial representations of Cranmer were undoubtedly the two woodcuts of his last days from *Acts and Monuments*, the first, of him being pulled down from his podium under the direction of Henry Cole following his trial, and the second, of him burning at the stake at Oxford, with his right hand stretched out into the flames. Such woodcuts, especially to illiterate and semi-literate viewers, no doubt formed an enormously powerful impression of the faith of their spiritual fathers. Combined with his moving

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<sup>51</sup> Christopher Lever, *The History of the Defendors of the Catholique Faith* (London, 1627). This work focuses upon the Tudor monarchs, and only mentions Cranmer in as far as he serves as an example of Mary’s cruelty.



account, one can see how Foxe managed to construct such a seminal portrayal of Cranmer.<sup>52</sup>

However, references to Cranmer in two other types of sources, stage plays and ballads, provide a more accurate depiction of his reputation in early Stuart England. Most importantly, sources such as stage plays dealing with recent history reaffirmed existing perceptions about historical figures, in much the same way as cinema and television do today. Stage plays, from the standpoint of the writer, shed light upon the resources at the disposal of a playwright who desired to reach into England's past for examples that could have both pedagogical and entertainment value. Moreover, they show how playwrights interpreted the information available from such resources to create a sense of shared common experience. For many viewers, such plays may also have provided a rare lesson in their recent history. By this time, Cranmer had recently departed living memory, and such lessons would have formed the basis for much of what thousands of theatregoers knew about him, especially those less familiar with the events of the Reformation. From the three Stuart plays that used Cranmer as a dramatic persona, it is clear that he was regarded as a considerable asset to and example of England's Protestant heritage.

Samuel Rowley's *When you see me, you know me* (1605), William Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (1615), and Thomas Drue's *The life of the Dutchess of Suffolke* (1631?) all contain remarkably consistent portrayals of Cranmer,

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<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of the pictorial impact of *Acts and Monuments* see Margaret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram, 'The Iconography of the *Acts and Monuments*', in Loades, ed., *Foxe and the English Reformation*, pp. 66-142.

despite their different foci and styles.<sup>53</sup> In all three, Cranmer plays a supplementary character who represents an archetypal Tudor reformer and martyr. His portrayal is marked above all by loyalty, both to King and Church, and by victimization, as he continually faces the subversion of papists.

The first of these plays was one of Rowley's earlier efforts, and is one of two extant plays written by him. Believed to be an influence upon Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*,<sup>54</sup> it provides a burlesque, light-hearted, and completely anachronistic depiction of events in the last years of the Henry's reign. Rowley contrasts the earnest and loyal Cranmer, a tutor to Prince Edward,<sup>55</sup> with the avaricious and career-minded Cardinal Wolsey and the treacherous, plotting papists Bonner and Gardiner.<sup>56</sup> Rowley depicts Cranmer's greatest contribution to his country as being the dispenser of true religion to the young Prince Edward, whom he steers clear of such superstitious doctrines as purgatory and papal authority. For his troubles, he incurs the insatiable wrath of Bonner and Gardiner, and along with Queen Katherine, is arraigned on charges of heresy. However, the noble and bold Prince Edward persuades his mercurial father that

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<sup>53</sup> Samuel Rowley, *When you see me, You know me* (London, 1605), STC: 21417; William Shakespeare, *King Henry the Eighth*, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Ware, Herts., 1996); [Thomas Drue?], *The Life of the Dutchess of Suffolke* (London, 1631), STC: 7242.

<sup>54</sup> See F.P. Wilson, 'Introduction' to reprint of *When you see me, You know me* (London, 1952). *When you see me* is the only extant play of which Rowley's authorship is certain. For a discussion of Rowley's possible involvement in other literary endeavours see H. Dugdale Sykes, *The Authorship of 'The Taming of a Shrew,' 'The Famous Victories of Henry V' and the Additions to Marlowe's 'Faustus'* (Oxford, 1920).

<sup>55</sup> Cranmer had overseen the appointment of Edward's tutors. See MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 325-326.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Gardiner (1483-1555), Bishop of Winchester, engaged in several disputes with Cranmer and was regarded as second only to Bonner amongst Marian persecutors.

this must not be the case, and Cranmer is duly exonerated, leaving his accusers to suffer the scorn of their king. As a loving Protestant, Cranmer seeks no revenge against his adversaries, whom Rowley leaves to wallow in their humiliation.

Shakespeare's (and his likely collaborator John Fletcher's) Cranmer, like Rowley's, is an undeveloped, flat character who tries to strike a balance between loyalty to heavenly and earthly authorities. However, in Shakespeare's much more serious look at an earlier period in Henry's reign, Cranmer's role is less that of a participant in the spread of Protestantism and more one of a foreshadower of an age to come.<sup>57</sup> Like Rowley, Shakespeare portrays a Cranmer who has struck the right balance between loyalty and shrewdness, as he manages to placate the king while attending to his religious duties. In *Henry VIII* he also falls victim to a seditious plot of Gardiner and Bonner to arraign him on false charges. In Shakespeare's account Cranmer needs no prince to safeguard his return to royal favour, as his reputation, devotion, and the king's pity at his maltreatment ensure a sympathetic ear at court. For his troubles, Cranmer receives the honour of christening the infant Elizabeth, and of prophesying a glorious future for both her and England.

Shakespeare most certainly derived most of the events in *Henry VIII* that involve Cranmer from Foxe. Though Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* form the

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<sup>57</sup> Alan R. Young, 'Shakespeare's Henry VIII and the Theme of Consciousness', *English Studies in Canada*, 7 (1981), p. 24 suggests that Shakespeare's prologue, containing the words 'I come no more to make you laugh: things now, / That bear a weighty and serious brow ... we now present' is a deliberate comment on Rowley's flippancy. Noted for its pageantry, *Henry VIII* was likely written to celebrate the marriage of James I's daughter Elizabeth.

basis for much of Shakespeare's histories, including *Henry VIII*,<sup>58</sup> scene V, centred upon Cranmer's arraignment and trial before the King, follows exactly the account of Gardiner's accusations in *Acts and Monuments*.<sup>59</sup> One of the last anecdotes Foxe recorded concerns Gardiner's attempt to impeach Cranmer following Cranmer's resistance to the six articles. The King, after consulting with Cranmer, gave him his ring as a safeguard, which Cranmer later produced at his hearing. Shakespeare recreates this account, right down to the ring, with the one addition of Bonner, who serves to enhance the sense of papist virulence surrounding Henry's court. Foxe's account of Cranmer would have been an especially helpful source to Shakespeare, who needed incidents from the 1530s, and wished to avoid incidents that would create an unflattering impression of Henry.

Foxe's account also underlies the portrayal of Cranmer in Thomas Drue's *The Dutchess of Suffolke* (1631). Here, Cranmer's role is strictly ancillary, as his sole purpose is to demonstrate the truth and fervour of Protestants faced with the cruelty of Bonner and Gardiner. Drue depicts Cranmer in one brief scene in Oxford where he calls out encouragement and renounces his recantation as Ridley and Latimer are being led to the stake. This scene has little to do with the rest of the plot, in which the Duchess and her household attempt to elude Catholic persecutors by fleeing to Europe. Rather, in its depiction of the most

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<sup>58</sup> See Richard Hosley, *Shakespeare's Holinshed* (New York, 1968), esp. pp. 272-311; and Allardyce and Josephine Nicoll, eds., *Holinshed's Chronicle, as Used in Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1963), pp. 177-206.

<sup>59</sup> Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, Vol. 3, pp. 641-643.

famous Marian burnings, it reinforces both the Duchess' peril and the strength of Protestant conviction.

This play's depiction of Cranmer is most noteworthy for the obvious antecedents upon which it is based. This scene, one of the few in the play that bears some semblance to historical fact, mirrors almost exactly Foxe's 1563 woodcut, 'The Burning of Ridley and Latimer', though Drue's dialogue does offer some embellishment.<sup>60</sup> Both the woodcut and the play portray Cranmer, conveniently perched atop the tower where he is being held prisoner, shouting out 'O Lord strengthen them'. Drue elaborates upon this scene somewhat in his play; as Ridley and Latimer turn round, Cranmer shouts further encouragement to his hapless friends, and requests to share in their fate. When questioned by Bonner how he could make such a decision, Cranmer responds 'to turn to vertue never comes too late', and he pledges that at his martyrdom he will first put his right hand (which signed his recantation) into the flames 'as an assured signe, / Heerafter of my constant Martyrdome'.<sup>61</sup>

The other, more direct antecedent for Drue's play was a 1602 ballad, reprinted in 1624, entitled 'The most Rare and excellent History Of the Dutchess of Suffolke's Calamity'.<sup>62</sup> As with Drue's account, the heroism of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer merely sets a scene of terror and heroism from which the

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<sup>60</sup> This woodcut appeared in the 1563 and each subsequent edition of *Acts and Monuments*.

<sup>61</sup> *The Life of the Dutchess of Suffolke*, part G3.

<sup>62</sup> [Thomas Delaney?], 'The most Rare and excellent History, Of the Dutchess of Suffolke's Calamity' (London, 1624), STC 6557.8. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 94-95, notes that this was one of a series of ballads licensed in 1624, though it was first adapted from *Acts and Monuments* by Thomas Delaney in 1602.

Duchess escapes. After the first verse cites England's sin as the cause of Edward's untimely death, the second concludes 'Then Cranmer, Ridley, and the rest, / Were burning in the fire, that Christ profest'. Like Drue's play, this ballad uses the example of the Oxford martyrs to showcase the extent of the persecution under Mary, and as a symbol of how far the tide had turned against godly leaders during her brief reign.

Amongst the common characteristics of Cranmer that one finds in these accounts, the quality of loyalty is paramount, whether it is loyalty to his king, his student Edward, his faith, or a careful combination of the three. All three plays also stress the sincerity that is such a notable hallmark of Foxe's account, with Shakespeare and Drue especially deriving their portrayals directly from *Acts and Monuments*. These plays no doubt helped to ingrain this image of a worthy reformer and martyr into many minds. More importantly, though, the fact that Stuart playwrights maintained the respect for Cranmer demonstrated by Foxe, and the appreciation for his work exhibited by Elizabethan churchmen, is indicative of the enduring success of the attempt in the decades following his martyrdom to create a Protestant hero figure.

As we approach the legacy of Cranmer in the era of Laudian reforms, we can see how an image of a wise and consistent Archbishop had been entrenched in the English mindset. It is important to note that this did not merely happen on an academic level, especially when one considers the groundswell of resentment that would occur at attempts to change the church service that Cranmer had instituted. The significance of this legacy lies above all in the fact that its

proliferation made it much more difficult for anyone, Laudian or puritan, to attack the positions for which Cranmer and his fellow reformers stood, or to alter the policies that he had enacted. However, as religious disputes from the 1630s were aggravated in the turbulent circumstances of the 1640s, and as opponents of the Church practices became increasingly vocal in their objections, Cranmer's legacy as a Protestant hero was to come under much closer scrutiny.

### Chapter 3 'The most learned in this Theme of our late Divines': Cranmer and the Eucharist Debate

In the summer of 1627, the Vicar of Grantham, in the Diocese of Lincoln, moved the communion table in his parish church against the east wall, placing it 'altar-wise', in the parlance of the day. This act, soon to become common in England, was to cause no end of grief amongst his parishioners. A group of them, led by one Mr Wheately, a local alderman, questioned the vicar's authority to do this, and then proceeded to move the table back to the place where it had stood during service time since the Edwardian Reformation. Unfazed, the vicar responded that his re-positioning was in fact canonical, and that he would build an altar of stone in the place where he thought it should rightfully stand. This, in turn, prompted the alderman to lead a large company of irate parishioners on a trip to appeal to their bishop, John Williams, the future Archbishop of York. When they arrived, they complained that should the vicar continue to officiate upon this 'stone dresser' a substantial portion of the congregates would neither see nor hear him. No sooner had they begun to utter their grievances than the vicar himself turned up at the bishop's hall, equally desperate to gain a hearing. The bishop's response was to send both parties away for the night, and after consulting both Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and the works of John Jewel, he delivered a letter to the alderman. He also sent along a letter to the divines at Grantham, to help them convince their potentially maverick vicar that the placing of a table in the midst of the church



during service time was not only canonical, but practical and more symbolically relevant to his religion as well.<sup>1</sup>

This is the story of a local dispute as vividly retold a decade later by a certain ‘minister in Lincolnshire’ in an effusive 234 page book entitled *The Holy Table: Name and Thing*. In fact, its author is none other than the Bishop of Lincoln, John Williams, impersonating a common minister.<sup>2</sup> The dispute between the vicar and the alderman described within was precisely the one brewing between Williams and several other pamphleteers in 1636.<sup>3</sup> This dispute, over the naming and positioning of tables, was the most salient in a debate that went to the core of the meaning of the eucharist in the mid-seventeenth century. Along with Williams, the primary belligerents in this dispute were William Prynne, John Pocklington, and Peter Heylyn. While Pocklington and Heylyn made natural allies, Williams found himself taking a line of reasoning uncomfortably close to Prynne’s, despite their diametrically opposing views on church government. Because the arguments of these pamphleteers relied heavily upon the historical legitimacy of their positions,

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<sup>1</sup> John Williams, *The Holy Table: Name and Thing* (n.p., 1637) STC: 25724. Though Williams only licensed this book in 1637 Peter Heylyn, in the preface to *Antidotum Lincolnense* (London, 1637), notes that he had circulated copies of it already in 1636. The name of the actual vicar in question was Peter Titley; see Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 199-200.

<sup>2</sup> One must obviously question the veracity of Williams’ account of events at Grantham. However, the fact that it mentions the name of a specific alderman and was not seriously questioned by Williams’ opponents suggests that it is at least based upon an actual dispute.

<sup>3</sup> The debate over tables came to the forefront following the 1633 ruling that the table at St Gregory’s within the peculiar of St Paul’s be placed length-wise against the east wall of the chancel. Charles sided with this decision and recommended that it be followed throughout England, though the only metropolitanical order given by Laud was that tables be railed in. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity*, pp. 219-245 discusses the extent to which the order was carried out by various bishops, and notes that though Williams complied with this order, he strenuously disagreed with any references to ‘altars’.

all made frequent reference to the work of precedents set by the Edwardian reformers, including Thomas Cranmer.

The significance of the dispute, especially the term 'altar', went well beyond personal tastes in the administration of communion. On the one hand, for both moderates such as Williams as well as radicals such as William Prynne, who were afraid that Laudian (counter-) reforms were a prelude to popery, the introduction of 'altars' was seen as a necessary step on the way to belief in transubstantiation, which they scarcely distinguished from the real presence. On the other hand, for those who wished to see a more ceremonial communion service that emphasized the 'real presence', the retention of 'tables' posed several apparent problems. Sacramentalists argued that open tables encouraged a less respectful communion service and inspired less reverence for the institution of the mass. More importantly, a service upon a table helped to de-emphasize consecration, and was more congenial to a purely symbolic interpretation of the eucharist, something that Laudians were keen to avoid. Finally, proponents of altars contended that they were traditionally prescribed, that tables were only introduced at the instigation of foreign Calvinists, and that the decision of the Edwardian authorities who at first permitted them could and should be reversed for the sake of inspiring greater respect.<sup>4</sup> It is this last contention that made the role of Edwardian reformers a pivotal issue in this debate. Under Cranmer altars

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<sup>4</sup> One preacher, a certain Thomas Cheshire of Yarmouth, expressed this concern in a 1641 sermon at Paul's Cross. He remarked that he saw a woman 'dandling and dancing her child upon the Lords Holy Table; when she was gone, I ...saw a greate deale of water upon the Table; I verely think they were not teares of devotion'; quoted in Millar Maclure, *The Paul's Cross Sermons* (Toronto, 1958), p. 255.

had been torn down and proscribed, and it was in his second Book of Common Prayer that the term 'altar' had been struck out and replaced with 'table'.

For proponents of altars, Cranmer's reforms thus presented an awkward dilemma. Cranmer's own eucharistic theology was somewhat ambiguous and had changed several times during his life.<sup>5</sup> However, the fact that he left the Church with a liturgy that was most congenial to a Calvinist doctrine of the eucharist meant that supporters of Laud's position either had to re-evaluate Cranmer, attribute his actions concerning altars to something other than his theological convictions, or ignore his apparent rejection of the doctrine of the real presence in his later life altogether. Laudians did not attempt to re-evaluate the theological soundness of Cranmer's actions, likely because he was so closely associated with the martyrdom and virtue of the early Reformation. In explaining Cranmer's views of the eucharist, such polemicists looked for foreign interference in religious affairs that involved Cranmer, and attempted to gloss over Cranmer's Reformed views and focus instead upon examples from Cranmer's life that seemed to indicate a belief in the real presence.

An example of portraying Cranmer as believing in the real presence while ignoring his apparent endorsement of Reformed views can be seen in the writings of William Laud himself. In the 1638 reprint of Laud's 1622 disputation with the Jesuit John Fisher, Laud attempts to ground his belief in the real presence in the

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<sup>5</sup> MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 181-183 and 345-346 argues that is likely not until 1547 that Cranmer abandoned completely belief in the real presence.

views of the Marian martyrs, especially Cranmer's.<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy that in 1638 the increasingly unpopular Laud would republish an account from his early life in which he disputed transubstantiation and other Roman Catholic tenets against a Jesuit. Largely because of his policy on altars and other ceremonial features, Laud stood accused of harbouring papist beliefs.<sup>7</sup> The reprint of his conference with Fisher helped to make clear where Laud stood in relation both to the early church fathers and to English reformers.

When interpreting Cranmer, he draws upon some rather ambiguous words of Cranmer quoted in Foxe, to reinforce his own position denying both transubstantiation and the 'symbolic' presence. After discussing proper Protestant interpretations of the eucharist he remarks

And the Church of England is Protestant too. So Protestants of all sorts maintain a true and real presence of Christ in the Eucharist ....As for the learned of those zealous men that died in this cause in Queen Mary's days, they denied not the real presence simply taken, but as their opposites forced transubstantiation upon them, as if that and the real presence had been all one.<sup>8</sup>

Then, after touching on the Protestant martyr Frith's view he argues

Nay, Archbishop Cranmer comes more plainly and more home to it than Frith: 'For if you understand', saith he 'by this word "really", *reipsa*, that is in very deed and effectually; so Christ, by the grace and efficacy of His passion, is in deed and truly present'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> William Laud, *A relation of the Conference between William Laud and Mr Fisher the Jesuit*, C.H. Simpkinson, ed. (London, 1901). This was an account of Laud's responses to John Fisher as reported from a debate of 1 September 1622, before the king at Windsor, and printed in 1638. See Charles Carlton, *Archbishop William Laud* (London, 1987), pp. 37-40.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>8</sup> Laud, William, *A Relation of the Conference between William Laud and Mr. Fisher the Jesuit*, C.H. Simpkinson, ed. (London, 1901), p. 346.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, he addresses the problem of Cranmer's contact with Reformed theologians by adding 'And Archbishop Cranmer confesses that he was indeed of another opinion, and inclining to that of Zuinglius, till Bishop Ridley convinced his judgement, and settled him in this point'.<sup>10</sup> By presenting Cranmer as a doubtful but in the end devoted believer in the real presence, Laud is able to get around the fact that many of Cranmer's statements obviously do not endorse this position. To avoid dealing with Calvinist views espoused by Cranmer in his later life, Laud shrugs off any apparent Reformed influence upon Cranmer, and in presenting Calvinism as a temporary aberration, creates a model of English Protestantism historically detached from the more disagreeable doctrines of Calvin.<sup>11</sup>

In the pamphlet war that broke out over tables in the wake of Laud's attempt to place tables 'altar-wise' such shaky evidence did not stand up to arguments based upon Cranmer's clear rejection of altars in the early 1550s. In the opening engagement between Heylyn and Williams, Cranmer's reasons for rejecting altars thus became a central issue. In *The Holy Table*, Williams presents an interpretation of Cranmer's work and initiatives as archbishop that seriously challenges Heylyn and Pocklington's desire to reintroduce altars. He first refers to Cranmer in the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>11</sup> This account of Laud's disputation was responded to by William Prynnes' pillory-mate Henry Burton in a 405 page vituperation entitled *A Replie to a Relation of the Conference...* (n.p., 1640) STC: 4154. This work, signed 26 June, 1639, took issue with Laud's alleged misrepresentation of the martyrs Frith, Ridley, and Cranmer (along with almost everything else Laud said). Burton only elaborates upon Laud's portrayal of Frith and Ridley, though when discussing all three he flatly denies they believed in the real presence, which he considers a papal doctrine (Burton does not discuss Luther at this point). He also accuses Laud of avoiding the label 'martyr' when discussing them because this would have drawn attention to the fact that they suffered for denying the real presence (pp. 350-353).

'copy of the letter' sent by the Bishop of Lincoln to the divines at Grantham. With the true author of *The Holy Table* known, it comes as little wonder that the anonymous 'minister' writing it should remember so well the bishop's letter. However, Williams' account of the letter is somewhat different from that reprinted by Heylyn in *A Coale from the Altar* – so different, in fact, that Heylyn even included a comparison of the two in his response to *The Holy Table* entitled *Antidotum Linconiense*.<sup>12</sup> Amongst the striking differences between the two accounts of the bishop's letter is the absence of any references to Cranmer in Heylyn's (see below). Heylyn does, however, make a number of references to Cranmer in the main text of *A Coale from the Altar*, a tract that marked the opening volley in a new dispute with an old enemy.<sup>13</sup>

Heylyn no doubt felt justified in making Williams the target of his displeasure with tables. In 1631 Williams had denied Heylyn a rectory, but Heylyn, who was currying favour with both William Laud and Charles I, was appointed a prebend of Westminster Cathedral by Charles. This proved to be the beginning of a life-long rivalry. Prior to initiating a pamphlet war with his rival Williams, Heylyn gained valuable polemical training by helping to prepare the case against Prynne's *Histriomastix*, by engaging in several disputes with John Prideaux, and by writing an anti-puritan work entitled *History of the Sabbath* at the instigation of the king. An understanding of how ecclesiastical history related to contemporary conflicts

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Heylyn, *Antidotum Linconiense* (London, 1637) STC: 13267.

<sup>13</sup> The premise for this title, along with the obvious allusion to Isaiah 6, seems to be John Jewel's harsh rebuke of Henry Cole in 1560 for his role in the Marian counter-reforms, as Heylyn, like Williams, makes numerous references to Jewel. See 'The True Copies of the Letters between ...John Bishop of Sarum and D. Cole', in Jewel, *Works*.

would prove a useful means of stirring up controversy, and in 1636 Heylyn brought up the issue of Williams' 1627 letter to the Vicar of Grantham in hopes of tarnishing the bishop's image.

Heylyn begins *A Coale from the Altar* by arguing that there is no canonical regulation prescribing 'tables'. He then proceeds by arguing that in the

Acts and Monuments, we find, that not a few of those which suffered death for their opposing of the gross and carnall Doctrine of Transubstantiation, did not onely well enough endure the name of Altar, but without any doubt or scruple, called the Lords Supper, sometimes a Sacrifice, and many times the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>14</sup>

To support this Heylyn quotes both Frith and Lambert, and then notes that while Cranmer rightfully opposed transubstantiation, 'at the phrase or term of Sacrament of the Altar, hee tooke no offence'.<sup>15</sup> Apart from this, however, Heylyn is more concerned with Cranmer's role in the two editions of the Book of Common Prayer than with Cranmer's remarks or theology.

Heylyn draws attention to the fact that the first Book of Common Prayer often used the word 'altar', but the second did not.<sup>16</sup> Why the change? According to Heylyn it was merely because from Calvin's perspective the use of altars in papist masses had become scandalous, and Calvin had thus persuaded Cranmer to alter the entire liturgy.<sup>17</sup> Consequently,

the leaving of the Word, Altar, out of the Common Prayer booke last established, and other alterations which were therein made, grew not from

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<sup>14</sup> Heylyn, *A Coale from the Altar*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39. Heylyn even refers to a remark in *Acts and Monuments* (part 2, p. 700) that the use of the terms 'altar', 'table', and 'Lord's board' are really a matter indifferent.

any scandall which was taken at the name of Altar, but the Countrey people; from the dislike taken against the whole Liturgie, by Calvin.<sup>18</sup>

Heylyn then argues that because the use of communion tables had grown indecent and scandalous, with people using them to take accounts and to sit upon, it would be appropriate to rail them in and replace them 'altar-wise'.<sup>19</sup>

In his response to *A Coale from the Altar*, Williams takes issue with almost every point Heylyn makes about the history of how altars became tables and found their way to the midst of the church. The work, words, and correspondence of Cranmer comprise a significant and recurring part of his objection. After presenting Williams' copy of the letter to the Vicar of Grantham, *The Holy Table* contains a discussion of regal power and then moves on to the topic of episcopal powers. Here he questions whether Heylyn's interpretation of Cranmer's words by Foxe is accurate. He argues that Heylyn has in fact 'produced those worthy Martyrs, that is, to witnesse point-blank against himself', as Cranmer and his contemporaries endorsed no altars.<sup>20</sup> Responding to the charge that Cranmer used the phrase 'Sacrament of the Altar', Williams remarks that 'The Treatise there set down, is of John Fox his composition, and set forth in his own name'. Foxe, Williams argues, was merely referring to the controversy surrounding debate on the Fifth Article dealing with the 'Sacrament of the Altar' when using this term.<sup>21</sup> In response to the contention that Cranmer used the term 'altar' when convicting heretics, Williams is

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>20</sup> *The Holy Table*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.



forced to stretch his argument somewhat, arguing that in the case at hand Cranmer was referring to Christ, and not the bread and wine of the service. In the end, however, Williams concludes by leaving Foxe responsible for the potentially misleading phrases recorded by Cranmer.<sup>22</sup>

In his fourth chapter, on the historical uses of altars, Williams turns Cranmer back on his opponents, drawing heavily upon Cranmer's dispute with Gardiner. He refers to Cranmer's remarks on the early church fathers, noting that in Cranmer's view 'it is called in the Fathers an Oblation and a Sacrifice, *Quia memoria est & repraesentatio veri Sacrificii*'.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, in Williams' opinion, 'the most learned in this Theme of our late divines, Archbishop Cranmer' is careful to distance himself from any implication that he is referring to anything more than a memory and representation of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Williams draws upon Cranmer's own observation that biblical references to sacrifices, such as those found in Malachi, are often merely symbolic, 'being the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving all people offer ...be they at the blessed Sacrament, at Prayers, or at some charitable worke, at any time, and in any place whatsoever; saith Archbishop Cranmer'.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, when addressing the significance of the Edwardian precedent, Williams presents Cranmer as a figure who acted of his own volition to assure that his revisions to the second Book of Common Prayer created the most theologically

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108; Williams is referring to Cranmer's defence of his first book against Gardiner.

sound service possible. He mentions first that Cranmer 'desired Calvin ...to write by him to the Protectour, and to perswade him to a serious Reformation in generall'.<sup>26</sup> While Calvin had, with the aid of an interpreter, reviewed the first Book of Common Prayer, and had corresponded with Somerset, Williams flatly denies that he had any direct involvement in its revision, especially with regard to altars. A review of the correspondence demonstrates to Williams that 'for Archbishop Cranmer; it is true, the foresaid Active man writes unto him from Geneva a couple of letters, and offers his service in person, to make up our Articles of Religion ... But hath not in all the two Letters, so much as one syllable of Altars'.<sup>27</sup> Thus Williams maintains that the elimination of altars from the liturgy was an indigenous initiative, in which Cranmer played a crucial role. The Edwardian precedent was all the more significant in this debate given that the other evidence cited by Williams and Heylyn was of a much more ambiguous nature. Biblical precedents for Jewish altars could be counterbalanced by the use of a table at the Last Supper and the unique nature of Christ's sacrifice (which could not be replicated). Arguments stemming from the early church fathers were often conflicting and could become matters of semantics. However, Cranmer's rejection of the term 'altar' in a revised prayer book that appeared to reflect a Reformed eucharist doctrine provided much support to a moderate such as Williams, who wished to retain the traditional form of service which he thought reflected Protestant doctrine. Not surprisingly, those

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

espousing other positions in the table debate of 1636-1638 appear less pleased to draw upon Cranmer in their arguments.

Heylyn would in time respond to Williams' tract and have the last word on the matter. However, the first to reply was John Pocklington, a chaplain to Charles I who had been a prebend at Lincoln. Pocklington's *Altare christianum* is dated 1637, and was likely written before the publication of Prynne's *A Quench-Coale*, as it does not refer to it. Pocklington begins his dedication to the Christian reader by noting that 'there is lately come forth a Coale from the Altar, and behind it a Letter to the Vicar of Grantham: The Author of either of these is to me utterly unknown'.<sup>28</sup> One must presume that this introduction is disingenuous, as Pocklington had been active in Lincoln, and was well known to the circle round Laud to which Heylyn was also familiar. In fact, Pocklington and Heylyn had both recently published on the topic of the Sabbath in response to puritan accusations that had drawn official concern.<sup>29</sup>

What is most notable about Pocklington's account is that he bases his argument and examples almost entirely upon scripture and the early church fathers. It is not until discussing the thirty-first article, on communion, that Pocklington addresses more recent precedents, and even here, he begins by listing the views of Richard Montagu, Lancelot Andrewes, and Francis White. Finally, when arguing for the necessity of the altar, he states that 'the Sacrament of the Altar is not abolished. He that will cast out these out of the Christian Church, must with them cast out Edward

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<sup>28</sup> John Pocklington, *Altare Christianum* (London, 1637), p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Pocklington, *Sunday no Sabbath* (London, 1636); Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath* (London, 1636).

the sixth, with diverse of M. Foxes Martyrs', and beliefs of the 'Primitive Church'.<sup>30</sup> In Pocklington's view, the altar is integrally tied to the very notion of Christian sacrifice. Yet, when dealing with the eucharist *per se*, Pocklington runs into a problem stemming from an observation of Cranmer. He notes that 'another reason the Author [Williams] hath met with for the utter casting downe of Altars, stand where they will, Church or Chancell: viz. that Christ himselfe instituted this Sacrament upon a Table, and not upon an Altar, As Archbishop Cranmer observes'.<sup>31</sup> Here again the argument for altars encounters the obstacle created by Cranmer's insistence on the term 'table' rather than 'altar' in the second Prayer Book. In response, Pocklington suggests that in the case of the last supper, a service upon a table was the most solemn that Christ could officiate, and that apostolic precedent provides a divinely prescribed model more befitting an altar than a table. Nevertheless, Cranmer's use of the term 'table' (and its corresponding biblical literalism and Reformed eucharistic theology) poses a problem that Pocklington cannot address directly. Thus, Pocklington sticks mainly to discussing only very recent and very ancient views.

Not to be left out of such a symbolically significant debate, Prynne prepared the largest tract of all, *A Quench-Coale*, taking aim at Heylyn, of whom he was also a long-standing enemy. However, whereas Williams sees the transformation of tables into altars as potentially misleading and impractical, for Prynne this act is an ominous prelude to an impending papist conspiracy. Not until the presence of

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

altars, Prynne opines, is the popish service a possibility, and their increasing presence warrants the most stringent possible opposition.

Prynne's literary approach in *A Quench-Coale* is also very different to that of Williams. Showing no interest in the games of anonymity and pseudonymity that Williams and Heylyn were playing, Prynne readily identifies both of them in his numerous introductory dedications, linking Heylyn with *A Coale from the Altar*, the main target of his tract. In his fifty-two-page dedication to the King, he quickly draws up a list of 'innovatours' who have corrupted the Book of Common Prayer and made the communion service much more papist. Chief amongst them are Richard Montagu and John Cosens, who in turn inspired Thomas Laurence, Robert Shelford, Edmond Reeve, John Pocklington, and Peter Heylyn to take up the cause of papist innovation.<sup>32</sup> After a brief refutation of Edmund Reeve, Prynne proceeds to his preface to the Christian reader, where he explains that because he cannot

at once encounter all those who are guilty ...I have here singled out some three of foure of them to combate with (especially the Authour of A Coale from the Altar ...whose Coale ...hath kindled a new Combustion every-where in our Church).<sup>33</sup>

He goes on to mention that this tract, whose author was 'ashamed to owne it by his name', is written to answer a letter to the Vicar of Grantham whose author

is certainly knowen to be Dr. Williams now Bishop of Lincolne and Deane of Westminster, a man farre more Learned and judicious then the Answerer, and everyway able to make good his owne Letter, which I have not particularly undertaken to defend.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> William Prynne, *A Quench-Coale* (Amsterdam, 1637), 'Dedication', pp. 30-32. Following his mention of Heylyn Prynne adds '(the Authour as most conclude of A Coale from the Altar)'.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

Despite this attempted disassociation from Williams, he and Prynne share many of the same arguments, as both argue on theological, historical, and pragmatic grounds for the retention of tables. One noticeable dissimilarity, however, is found in the references Prynne makes to Cranmer. Whereas Williams attached great weight to the precedents and authority of Cranmer, Prynne appears much more hesitant to do so, employing other Edwardian reformers, and generally preferring biblical arguments to those drawn from early Protestant prelates.

Prynne first refers to Cranmer rather indirectly in his dedication to the king where he attacks a certain 'J.A.' of Ailward's 1631 *An Historicall Narration*, a work he considers to be a recent forgery 'obtruded on the Church of England', and on par with the Donation of Constantine.<sup>35</sup> This work itself provides an interesting view of Cranmer's reputation. Its full title is *An Historicall Narration of the Judgement of some most Learned and Godly English Bishops, Holy Martyrs, and other: (Whereof III; viz. Archbishop Cranmer, B. Latimer, and Bishop Hooper, suffred Martyrdome, in the dayes of Queen Mary....*<sup>36</sup> Despite headlining the list of the 'learned and godly', Cranmer plays a very insignificant role in it. As Prynne is quick to point out, most of the tract consists of a copy of a tract, said to be from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, dealing with the implications of predestination. The only reference to Cranmer comes by way of a three-page excerpt from Cranmer's 1551 dispute with Gardiner, in which Cranmer's discussion of the nature of Christ's penultimate sacrifice is used to confirm the views of the author of the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>36</sup> 'J.A.', *An Historicall Narration*; (London, 1631); the work was reprinted in 1644.

'copy'. The semi-anonymous compiler of *An Historicall Narration* also includes longer passages from Latimer and Hooper. However, the underlying purpose of the tract appears to be that of generating historical legitimacy within the English Church for a less rigid view of predestination, which, in the author's view, is integrally connected to the meaning of Christ's sacrifice.

For Prynne, however, *An Historicall Narration* is nothing more than an unsophisticated attempt to introduce an Arminian view of predestination and sacrifice behind a veneer of historical legitimacy. Prynne asserts that the 'copy' contained therein was first published without license around 1560, and drew upon the works of Catholic apologists, rendering fraudulent the 1631 presentation of it as a Protestant document. Furthermore, Prynne remarks that other passages from Latimer and Hooper clear them from any association with the views of the said work, though he does not mention Cranmer (perhaps because the excerpt from Cranmer is both short and rather vague).<sup>37</sup> Prynne's concern about this tract demonstrates an acute fear that Laudians were purposely distorting not only the beliefs established by the early English Protestants, but also the historical interpretation of their beliefs, to prepare the way for popish innovations. However, for Prynne, upholding the beliefs of Cranmer is not a major preoccupation.

Though Prynne makes constant references to other reformers and martyrs, he does not promote Cranmer's views on the debate at hand. Rather, he argues that Bucer rightfully imposed his views upon Edward and Cranmer regarding the taking

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<sup>37</sup> Prynne, *A Quench-Coale*, 'Dedication to the King', pp. 23-26.

down of altars and alterations to the liturgy.<sup>38</sup> While Prynne does refer to Cranmer when discussing the issue of visitations near the end of his tract, he does not bring up Cranmer in the table debate, except in answering his opponents' objection that

our Godly Martyres, as John Fryth, Archbishop Crammer [sic], John Lambert, John Philpot, Bishop Latimer, and Bishop Ridley, call both the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, The Sacrament of the Altar, and the Communion Table an Altar.<sup>39</sup>

His response to this objection is particularly weak, arguing that Cranmer made such remarks 'in the very infancie of reformation', in the absence of popish plots to misuse the altar.<sup>40</sup> In the end, he acknowledges that Cranmer held several views on the eucharist, first defending transubstantiation, but then rejecting it along with its corollary of the 'sacrament of the altar'.<sup>41</sup> He further counters that all references to altars were edited out of the second Book of Common Prayer, 'not to humor M. Calvin, but on good and godly Considerations' by English authorities.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, he does not attribute this to Cranmer, whom he clearly sees as a much less suitable figure than other early reformers for countering Heylyn's view of English Protestantism.

In summer of 1637, the last word on the debate over tables went to Heylyn. With Williams falling into disgrace as a result of his Star Chamber hearing,<sup>43</sup> and

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<sup>38</sup> Prynne, *A Quench-Coale*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>43</sup> Laud, a long-standing rival of Williams at court, had first attempted a Star Chamber prosecution against Williams in 1628 for revealing state secrets whilst a privy councillor. Though unsuccessful in securing an arraignment, Laud persisted in investigating Williams and



Prynne arraigned for libeling Laud,<sup>44</sup> Heylyn was free to take aim at Williams and Prynne in his 343 page response *Antidotum Lincolniense*. He avoids identifying Williams by name, so that he can make the author of *The Holy Table* appear especially amateurish and associate him with Prynne and other puritans.<sup>45</sup> In his first chapter Heylyn questions the veracity of the copy of the letter to the Vicar of Grantham as recorded in *The Holy Table*, and compares it to the 'old edition' he included with *A Coale from the Altar*. Amongst the noticeable differences is a complete lack of reference to Cranmer in Heylyn's copy, despite the fact that his copy was supposedly circulating around Lincoln by 1636.<sup>46</sup> Whether Williams added references to Cranmer in his copy or Heylyn deleted them from his is difficult to tell. At any rate, it is indicative of their theological views that Williams relied upon the words of Cranmer to bolster his position while Heylyn either overlooked or deliberately expunged them.

With an absence of references to Cranmer, Heylyn is able to relieve Cranmer of responsibility for this act and to present the view that the tearing down of altars

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successfully demonstrated that Williams had bribed witnesses. On 11 July 1637 Williams went to trial and was fined, but while negotiating the terms of payment was formally accused of spreading seditious with the publication of *The Holy Table*. He was then charged once again with witness tampering, and was not let out of the Tower until the opening of the Long Parliament. See B. Dew Roberts, *Mitre & Musket* (London, 1938), pp. 139-153.

<sup>44</sup> In March, 1637, Laud charged Prynne with seditious and libel for the writing of *A Quench-Coale*, *News from Ipswich*, and *The Unbishopsing of Timothy and Titus*. After having his ears (re-)cropped he was kept in the Tower. E. W. Kirby, in *William Prynne, a Study in Puritanism* (New York, 1971, 1931), pp. 39-40 notes that Prynne still found ways to smuggle out anti-Laudian tracts, though the subject of the placement of communion tables apparently ceased to be his greatest concern.

<sup>45</sup> Heylyn, Peter, *Antidotum Lincolniense* (London, 1637).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-27. Heylyn remarks that Williams' copy 'varieth ... Nothing at all in forme ... but much in matter: so much as you thought fit to alter in it, the better to set off the business, and give a faire face to so foule a cause' (p. 21).

under Edward VI was merely the work of an overzealous laity taking matters into their own hands. Williams, in mentioning that Edward, ‘by the advice of Archbishop Cranmer, and the rest of his Counsell, did Anno 1550. by a kinde of law, put them down de jure’, presents the deconstruction of altars as being a premeditated episcopal act, and not merely a *post hoc* reaction to a *de facto* initiative of an uncontrolled laity.<sup>47</sup> Heylyn’s response is to argue that following the Elizabethan restoration numerous changes were made to the communion service, indicating that canons governing the administration of the eucharist need not necessarily follow the Edwardian precedent. Furthermore, he opines that Cranmer and other early reformers had no intention of banishing altars, as they frequently made reference to them themselves. Thus he asks, ‘touching Archb. Cranmer, can you shew us any where, that at the terme or phrase of Sacrament of the Altar, he did take offence?’<sup>48</sup> In fact, Heylyn notes, not only did Cranmer not object to the term, but, according to Foxe, when disputing with Bonner in 1549 ‘Archb. Cranmer used the name of Sacrament of the Altar, without doubt or scruple’.<sup>49</sup>

Regardless of Cranmer’s purported use of the term, the exclusion of altars from the second Book of Common Prayer remained one of the most difficult objections for Williams’ opponents to answer. Heylyn, however, proposes an answer that cuts to the heart of Cranmer’s legacy: Calvin, not Cranmer and other English prelates,

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<sup>47</sup> Williams, *The Holy Table*, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Heylyn, *Antidotum Lincolniense*, p. 89.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

lay behind the alterations made to the second Book of Common Prayer. Heylyn remarks that Williams' account of how the second book came about takes 'great paines to make it visible unto the world, that Calvin had no finger in it'.<sup>50</sup> Heylyn then endeavours to show how the correspondence between Cranmer and both Bucer and Calvin demonstrates that while Calvin could not have had a serious impact upon the first book, he certainly influenced, if not proposed, the changes to the second: 'for [Calvin's] tampering with the King and Archbishop Cranmer, wee have good warrant from his Letters'.<sup>51</sup> After reviewing Cranmer's correspondence more carefully, Heylyn concludes that alterations were made not because Cranmer sought out advice from Bucer, but because of Calvin's unwarranted intervention.

Now the first Reformation made by the Archbishops means, was the communion-book set out 1548. for the receiving of the Sacrament, *sub utraque specie*. ...[afterwards] an alteration there was made by the King and State, though not by the incitement of Martin Bucer, but of Calvin...<sup>52</sup>

The implications of this allegation call into question the very nature of the Reformation. Heylyn's view would indicate that English Calvinism, with its corollaries of predestination and a symbolic interpretation of the eucharist, did not originate with the Edwardian reformers, and does not reflect the beliefs of early reformers. Rather, it was a temporary imposition accepted by an ingenuous if not gullible, and irresolute if not spineless, Cranmer. Heylyn sees the need at Elizabeth's succession seriously to revise some aspects of the Edwardian service (and, in many cases, revert to the first Book of Common Prayer) to be a result of

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

this. For the moderate Williams, on the other hand, Cranmer's revisions, in which visiting divines played a merely advisory role, is indicative of a Reformed theology initiated by Cranmer and maintained after the Elizabethan settlement.

A final example of a moderate using Cranmer to buttress the theology reflected in the second Book of Common Prayer can be seen in the views espoused by Henry King, dean of Rochester, and future bishop of Chichester. His 1640 'Sermon Preached at St. Pauls' upon the fifteenth anniversary of Charles' coronation appeals for both an Erastian view of church government and a conciliatory position concerning the debate over the communion service and liturgy then brewing. King takes an interpretation of Cranmer that is very close to Williams in arguing that

'our ceremonies [are] the same, and Those much praised, and indeed admired, by learned Bucer, in his Censure passed upon the English Liturgy at the request of Archbishop Cranmer; And by Calvin earnestly commended to those English who fled to Frankeford, whom he exhorts to Conform.'<sup>53</sup>

However, while he carefully points out that Cranmer sought out the views of Bucer, and that Calvin did not unduly influence him by way of Bucer, King is far more concerned that his audience follow a path of reasonable conformity, as evident in past religious reform. With reference to the recent problems in dealing with the Scottish Kirk, and Charles' leniency in light of many challenges, King argues that there is no justification for dispute because the matter of the second Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI was retained in the English Church. King argues that despite the fact that some parts of the liturgy have been expunged, and some new features of communion added, no serious injury has occurred, unlike what

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<sup>53</sup> Henry King, *A Sermon Preached at St. Pauls* (London, 1640); STC: 14970.

could happen in the absence of conformity under a divinely appointed king.<sup>54</sup> It is therefore not surprising that he appeals to Cranmer's legacy of moderation and practicality while praising the programme for reform that Cranmer initiated.

When evaluating how Cranmer is employed in debates about the eucharist preceding the Civil Wars it becomes apparent that while many drew upon his views, it is the more moderate arguments of Williams, and to a lesser degree King, to which his legacy is most useful. The primary reason why there is so much debate about the significance of Cranmer's views appears to lie within the perceived contradictions of Cranmer's archiepiscopal tenure. While Williams provides a convincing argument that Cranmer intended to do away with altars and thus institute a less ceremonial communion service, Heylyn and Laud can still present a plausible counter-argument that he supported the real presence and had no intention of permanently disposing of altars. The fact that Cranmer went from a belief in transubstantiation to one that seems to have wavered initially between Lutheran and Calvinist views on the eucharist provides a degree of support for both sides, as does the various wording of the two prayer books.

What is most telling, perhaps, is the fact that in the debate over tables, Cranmer's actions as archbishop were brought up confidently by Williams, but proved more of an obstacle to Heylyn and Pocklington. In order to legitimize their proposal for altars, or at the least an 'altar-wise' position of an ornamented wooden table, they stressed the flexibility of liturgical regulations and looked to the Elizabethan settlement for precedents of this. More interestingly, when faced point-

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

blank with the fact that Cranmer asserted an expressed preference for tables, Heylyn resorts to an allegation of Calvinist interference that seriously questions Cranmer's independence and paints Calvinism as a temporary intrusion rather than a seminal doctrine.

This view of a Cranmer who was perhaps easily and unduly influenced, and prone to theological uncertainty, is one of very few things that Prynne and Heylyn share. Later, in his anti-episcopal tracts, Prynne would clearly delineate the many fluctuations and questionable actions that Cranmer took over his career,<sup>55</sup> and perhaps he is bearing this in mind as he employs Latimer and Hooper to a much greater extent when discussing Edwardian reforms. The mere fact that Cranmer sought to retain a said mass with many ceremonial features may also lie behind Prynne's less than stellar view of him.

Thus, we see in these debates three divergent interpretations of history to which Cranmer is strongly tied. For Heylyn, he is somewhat of a blunderer who, while not completely rejecting altars, let himself fall victim to Calvinist interpretations that did not rightfully reflect the Church of England. For Prynne, he appears to be a weak link in an attempt to institute a true Reformation that never succeeded. Finally, for Williams, Cranmer represents a moderate English Protestantism that was responsive to rightful censure, moved in a Reformed direction, and saw itself standing on the foundation of Edwardian reform. One could hardly imagine that

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<sup>55</sup> Prynne, *The Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacie, both to Regall Monarchy, and Civill Unity* (London, 1641).

**Williams had any clue what a controversy would erupt when he first faced the disgruntled parishioners of Grantham in 1627.**

## Chapter 4 'Such a Filthy Precedent': Cranmer and the Seventeenth-Century Debate over the Episcopacy

Following the debate within the Church of England over the ceremonies surrounding the Eucharist, a new debate emerged in which the legacy of Cranmer would also play an essential role. The debate about the role and purpose of the English Episcopacy began as one over whether bishops should exercise secular authority in the House of Lords and through government appointments, but soon moved to a debate about the very existence of prelates and whether a new form of church government should be installed. As in the debate over the Eucharist, many participants in this debate drew upon the significance of Thomas Cranmer to argue for or against the validity of the English Episcopacy.

In these debates, however, it was not so much the theological views or reforming initiatives of Cranmer that were of primary concern. Rather, his position as a model prelate was at stake. Hence, moderates, wishing to see the existing structure of church governance retained, evoked Cranmer most often, albeit most vaguely, especially in his role as a revered and pre-eminent martyr. Used in this manner, Cranmer is most often presented as the first amongst a host of virtuous, reforming prelates who not only ushered in the Reformation, but suffered martyrdom or exile for it. For moderates, the specific details of his tenure as Archbishop were not important; what mattered was that as an archbishop, Cranmer, together with his episcopal colleagues, was responsible for



the Reformation, which they validated through martyrdom, thus proving the worth of their offices.

For Presbyterians, though, Cranmer and his contemporaries presented a considerable problem. One could not argue that the episcopacy was categorically bad with the legacy of prelates who had been such important reformers and exalted martyrs figuring so prominently in England's collective consciousness. Thus, one favouring the anti-episcopal position was faced with two options. Either one could ignore Cranmer and his colleagues (as most did), or one could argue that despite the good they may have done, their positions were nevertheless not immutable and should be replaced with presbyters, especially in light of their ignoble successors.

However, there was one other option, and this formed the basis for the most degrading treatment that Cranmer would receive at the hands of seventeenth-century Protestants. One could argue that Cranmer was in fact not a model of virtue, and that his archiepiscopal tenure served more to hinder than to advance the cause of Protestantism. This is precisely the argument adopted by William Prynne and John Milton, an argument that re-exposed much of Cranmer's dirty laundry that had lain hidden under almost a century of Protestant hagiography. After reviewing the pro- and anti-episcopal positions that viewed Cranmer favourably, this chapter will conclude with the re-assessments offered by Prynne and Milton.

After the opening of the Long Parliament, when it became clear that the position of bishops (first in the House of Lords and then in the English Church)

was by no means secure, a wave of petitioning, both for and against the episcopacy, swept England. Faced with a current Archbishop of Canterbury who was by no means an ideal role model, moderates in need of more stellar examples turned to the past. What is perhaps most notable about the many pro-episcopal petitions that emerged is their consistency, as they make essentially the same arguments, despite drawing upon a variety of evidence, when addressing the issue of the merit of episcopacy, often combining this with arguments for the retention of the *Book of Common Prayer*. As Judith Maltby has demonstrated in her survey of Stuart conformists supporting the Prayer Book, defenders of conformity were stuck between the designs of a disreputable and questionable Laudian faction on the one hand and a clearly anti-episcopal Parliament on the other. These two forces finally 'combined to force conformists to speak out in defence of the lawful liturgy and episcopal polity'.<sup>1</sup> One of the distinguishing features of pro-episcopal petitions is the way in which they repeatedly draw upon the legacy of Edwardian and Elizabethan reformers and Marian martyrs in their attempts to justify the importance of prelates.

The analysis of conformist petitions presents certain challenges. Maltby has identified twenty-eight extant petitions and two petitions without extant texts from 1640-1642.<sup>2</sup> Twenty of these appear in a collection published by Thomas Aston in the summer of 1642.<sup>3</sup> A Cheshire knight baronet, Aston became a

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<sup>1</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Appendix 1', pp. 238-247.

<sup>3</sup> *A Collection of Sundry Petitions Presented to the Kings Most excellent Majestie, and also To the two most Honourable Houses, now assembled in Parliament* (London, 1642) Wing: A4073. The petitions included are those from Cheshire (2), University of Oxford, University of

relentless campaigner for both the Book of Common Prayer and the Episcopacy, in the wake of the Root and Branch Petition and endeavours by the House of Commons to install a presbytery. Maltby notes that ‘he hoped by the publication of [this] tract ...to show the strength of the “silent majority” and to encourage other convinced conformists who had not spoken out, to do so’.<sup>4</sup> However, one must ask about the extent to which Aston’s *Collection* is typical of the ‘conformist’ position. First, it is significant to note that in cases where the authorship of petitions is known, they are composed by laity, and not clergy, suggesting that they do indeed reflect the concerns of mass sentiment and not Laudian or Royalist propagandists.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, the fact that many of Aston’s collected petitions refer to certain pro-Presbyterian petitions suggests that they represent a ground swell of popular resentment against a parliamentary drive to rally the masses to the Presbyterian cause. Finally, it should be noted that where it is possible to check, Aston’s *Collection* truthfully reproduces the petitions it contains.<sup>6</sup>

In comparing petitions for episcopacy with the root-and-branch petitions that they were presumably combating, one of the most striking differences lies in

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Cambridge, Nottingham, Huntington, Somerset, Rutland, ‘Colleges and Halls’, Exeter, Staffordshire, Canterbury, North Wales, Lancashire, Kent, Oxford (county), Hereford, and Cornwall (3).

<sup>4</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93. It should be noted, however, that Aston’s *Collection* is ‘Published by his Majesties speciall Command’.

<sup>6</sup> The Huntingdonshire, Somerset, and Cheshire petition, for instance, are also included in John Nalson’s *An Impartial Collection of all the memorable Events from the Scotch Rebellion to the King’s Murther* (London, 1674), pp. 720-722, 726-727, 758-759. Only the order of paragraphs in the petitions varies. Cf. Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, pp. 238-247.

their use of figures from the Reformation era. Whereas anti-episcopal arguments focus almost exclusively upon the faults of present-day bishops and the corrupting nature of the episcopacy, conformist petitions loudly extol the virtues of bishops from England's Protestant past. The February 1641 petition from Aston's own county of Cheshire, for instance, is typical of the nostalgic view taken of bishops, asking its reader to bear in mind that 'so many of them sowed the seeds of Religion in their bloods' and that 'to them we owe the redemption of the purity of the Gospell wee now professe from Romish corruption'.<sup>7</sup> Such a view is echoed by the December, 1641, Huntingdonshire petitions for Church governance and common prayer. They argue that 'wee owe the redemption of the purity of the Gospell, and the Reformation of the Religion wee now professe, from Romish corruption' to bishops, many of whom 'for the propagation of that Truth became glorious Martyrs, leaving unto us an holy example, and an honourable remembrance of their faith'.<sup>8</sup> The Somerset petition of the same month states that while it does not attempt to debate whether the episcopacy is a divine institution, one should at least bear in mind how bishops 'have frequently sealed' their reforming work 'with their blood'.<sup>9</sup>

The notion that the English Episcopacy had been endowed with a special aura because of the martyrs it produced is a recurrent theme throughout conformist petitions. The fact that these petitions claimed at least 84,000

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<sup>7</sup> Aston, *Collection*, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

subscribers outside London and even more from within (one petition rather preposterously claimed 100,000 signatures) demonstrates a definite understanding on the part of the laity of the significance of the five prelates martyred under Mary.<sup>10</sup> Even if these figures are grossly inflated, the petitions still represent an enormous effort to spread awareness about the harm pending to both the memory of such prelates and the institution they supposedly typified. Most importantly, though, the memory of bishop-martyrs added a much-needed gem to the dung heap their opponents were making of episcopacy. Dismissing Cranmer and his colleagues thus became more difficult for Presbyterians who nevertheless wished to support other aspects of his theology and programme for reform.

As proposals for the censure, and then the abolition, of prelates were presented in Parliament, John Williams rallied the prelates who ushered in the Reformation to the moderate cause in the House of Lords. Shortly before he broke with Parliament to flee north to take the appointment of the See of York, Williams made an impassioned plea against the 'Bill for restraining Bishops &c. from intermeddling in Secular Affairs'.<sup>11</sup> The Lords were meeting in a grand committee on 24 May 1641 to decide whether bishops should exercise any political power at all, though from Williams' speech it appears that he (rightfully) thought much more was potentially at stake. In *The Holy Table*,

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<sup>10</sup> See Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, pp. 238-247. Numbers of subscribers are listed for roughly half of extant petitions.

<sup>11</sup> John Williams, 'Speech to Parliament', in *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, Vol. II (London, 1807), pp. 794-806.

*Name and Thing* Williams had already aptly demonstrated his knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and in his relatively lengthy speech to parliament he draws upon a range of precedents and historical examples in an attempt to save his seat in the Lords, and possibly his bishopric as well.

After dealing with the royal prerogative behind prelatical appointments and the usual litany of biblical justifications, Williams turns to the Reformation era. Noting that Calvin and Luther did not object to the presence of bishops in foreign realms, he discusses the significant work that prelates have done when allowed to participate in government. To the suggestion that prelates now be excluded from any involvement he asks

No ecclesiastical person to be consulted withal, not in any circumstances of time and place? If Cranmer had been thus dealt withal, in the minority of our young Josias, king Edward 6. of pious memory, what had become of that great work of our reformation, in this flourishing church of England?<sup>12</sup>

By appealing to the necessary political influence exercised by Cranmer, Williams was reminding the House of the need for religious probity and consistency in potentially trying times. Furthermore, by attracting attention towards Cranmer and away from Laud, Williams was reminding the House that in spite of their current Archbishop (of whom he was certainly no friend), the office of Canterbury had played an integral role in guiding England's Protestant course. Though it is difficult to estimate the effect of Williams' plea, in the end, the Lords overwhelmingly rejected the bill on 7 June.<sup>13</sup> The obdurate position

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 803.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 816-817.

taken by the Lords, however, may have encouraged the introduction in the Commons of the 'Root and Branch Bill' several days later by parliamentarians whose aversion to Laud overpowered any appreciation for his office or predecessors.<sup>14</sup>

In the same year, Thomas Aston presented an interpretation of Cranmer and the legacy of the Marian martyrs which was much like William's. Aston had been active not only in organizing the drafting and circulation of petitions in his own county, but had also collected petitions from other regions for publication and redistribution. The fact that many of these petitions draw upon formulaic language to make the same arguments suggests that they may well have been modeled upon an archetype, perhaps first devised by Aston himself. Aston spelled out his own views explicitly in his 1641 two-part book *A Remonstrance against Presbitery*, containing both a 'Survey of Presbytery' and a 'Review of Episcopacie'.<sup>15</sup> Aston's vision of England's Protestant heritage could not be more different from Prynne's, and most notable amongst their differences is their interpretations of the work of Edwardian prelates and prominent Marian martyrs.

One of the most striking dissimilarities between the two on this matter is their depth and detail. Whereas Prynne carefully outlined and assessed every Archbishop of Canterbury, martyred prelate, and many other prominent martyrs (see below), Aston tended to see all the Edwardian reformers and Marian

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 822.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Aston, *A Remonstrance against Presbitery* (London, 1641), Wing: A4078.

martyrs more as representations of a moderate Protestant ideal. Furthermore, references to Cranmer and his contemporaries are much more indirect. Aston prefaces this work with a remonstrance to the Lords, which, like many petitions for episcopacy, grounds its arguments upon the martyrdom and reforms brought about by bishops, particularly in England. In this remonstrance, Aston finally spells out exactly to whom petitioners are referring; after remarking that ‘many [English prelates] for the propagation of that truth became such glorious Martyrs’ he inserts the marginal note ‘A.B. Cranmer, B. Latimer, B. Ridley, B. Hooper, B. Park[er], A.B. Parker, A.B. Gri[ndal], B. Whitegift, &c. vid. booke of martyrs’.<sup>16</sup> To the reader, contemporary or modern, this list of names might seem obvious, yet it is significant that Aston does not omit anyone, either for their staunchly Reformed and potentially embarrassing beliefs (such as Hooper or Latimer), or for their hand in slowing the spread of Protestantism or for theological vacillations (such as Cranmer). Rather, Cranmer tops the list of a group consistently portrayed as virtuous and dedicated, to whom ‘we owe the redemption of the purity of the Gospel we now professe from Romish corruption’.<sup>17</sup>

Aston also includes in the *Remonstrance* examples of several anti-episcopal petitions and a sermon by a certain Mr Samuel Eaton of New England to outline his opponents’ position.<sup>18</sup> While it appears as though Aston may have selected

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘The Remonstrance’.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Eaton (1595?-1665) was a divine who had been active in New England who became active upon his return to England in 1640 in the struggle against episcopacy.



straw men to oppose, it is certainly striking that his opponents, as presented here, discuss only their present grievances and not the historical foundation of their arguments. In his 'Survey of Presbyterie' Aston remarks that his opponents decry Laud as worse than Bonner, Gardiner, and Wolsey, and that they consider the Book of Common Prayer to be 'picked out of that Popish Dung-hill'.<sup>19</sup> However, Aston counters this by discussing the approval of Cranmer's work, noting that Bucer, 'requested by the Arch-bishop Cranmer to give censure of the English Liturgy says "I praise God that gave you light to reduce these Ceremonies to such purity"'.<sup>20</sup> Aston also makes repeated reference to the fact that other sixteenth-century reformers such as Calvin endorsed the Edwardian Reformation, as he outlines a uniform, moderate Protestant past he wishes to see transposed upon a fractured country about to lose any semblance of conformity. Convinced of the possibility of recovering a *via media* between Laudianism and Presbyterianism, Aston thus threw his weight behind the enormous effort underway by petitioners to recover a sense of conformity within the Church.

The extent of conformist petitioners' efforts, as well as the substance of their texts, greatly vexed anti-episcopal campaigners. Faced with the knowledge that many Continental reformers accepted an English episcopacy, and that many respected English martyrs and reformers were prelates, opponents stressed the temporal and mutable nature of the institution and argued for its abolition on practical grounds. Even so, the nature of the episcopacy headed by Cranmer

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 'A Survey of Presbyterie', part C2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, part C3.

could be contrasted with that of Laud, as is evident in an anonymous, eight-page 1642 anti-episcopal tract.

‘Certain considerations wherein the Prelates doe acknowledge that they stand by the meer mercy of the King and Parliament’ contrasts the submissive and flexible stand of Cranmer and his colleagues with the haughtiness and insolence of Laud’s faction.<sup>21</sup> The author(s) concede that ‘granting ecclesiastical jurisdiction’ is, by ‘antient lawes and customes’ the domain of the King. However, they hasten to add that during Edward VI’s reign ‘in a booke entituled *The Institution of the Christian Man* [the ‘Bishops’ Book’], composed by Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward Archbishop Yorke & all the Bishops, divers Archdeacons & Prelates of the Realm’ it was made clear that the King could both install and disinherit prelates.<sup>22</sup> Thus, ‘according to the first and best opinion and judgement of the said Archbishops, Bishops, &c. the same their jurisdiction might be taken way and altered at the will and pleasure of the Kings’.<sup>23</sup> However, subsequent corrupt prelates took up the popish position that their offices were instated by God, not the King, and had been so since apostolic times. To combat this view, namely that bishops are a divine ordinance, the author(s) draw upon a list of forty-six signatories to the Bishops’ Book, headed by Thomas Cranmer. They then ask why, if scripture ordains bishops, would such people endorse the view that prelates exist merely at the pleasure of their

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Certain considerations wherein the Prelates doe acknowledge that they stand by the meer mercy of the King and Parliament’ (n.p., 1642), Wing: C1698.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

prince.<sup>24</sup> Drawing upon the revisions to the Bishops' Book made under Cranmer,<sup>25</sup> they force their opponents into the position of maintaining that Cranmer and his colleagues adopted a position contrary to scripture and apostolic practice. This takes a great deal of wind out of the sails of the moderate position, as it credits Cranmer's role as a powerful agent of reform to Henry and Edward's preference, not to his historical archiepiscopal office. If Cranmer's position, by his own choosing, was merely one of convenience and monarchical fiat, then there would be nothing to stop England's present monarch from installing a more convenient, suitable, and efficacious form of church governance, such as a presbytery. This could be done without tarnishing the memory of the renowned Edwardian prelates.

A much more thorough reassessment of Cranmer came at the hands of William Prynne. In another of his lengthy books, *The Antipathy of the English Lordly Prelacie, both to Regall Monarchy, and Civill Unity*, Prynne carefully delineated all of Cranmer's shortcomings in his review of how the episcopacy had demonstrated an inherently corrupt nature throughout its existence.<sup>26</sup> For Prynne, episcopacy was not only a temporal institution, but also an intrinsically corrupt one. From Prynne's assessment of Cranmer in this book one can understand why he had been so hesitant to draw upon the reputation of Cranmer

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> See MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, pp. 207-213, 267-268; the author(s) neglect to mention that, contrary to the wishes of Cranmer, Henry VIII supported the inclusion of salvation by works in the Book.

<sup>26</sup> William Prynne, *The Antipathy of the English Lordly Prelacie, both to Regall Monarchy, and Civill Unity...*(London, 1641), Wing: P3891.

in *A Quench-Coale*. Such hesitancy also appears in *Antipathy*; in his dedicatory epistle, he lists one of the primary reasons for writing *Antipathy* to be that prelates have 'slandered our Martyrs, Latymer, Luther, and others heretofore'.<sup>27</sup> The reason Latimer gets mentioned but not Cranmer becomes clear as he concludes his prologue by remarking that 'because the Arch Prelates of Canterbury ...have beene the Archest Traytors, Rebels, and Opposites to the Kings of England in all Ages', he will begin his book with an investigation of those who have held the seat at Canterbury from its conception to the present day.<sup>28</sup>

By the time Prynne gets to Cranmer, he has firmly established the corrupting nature of the office of archbishop, setting the stage for the most thorough degrading that Cranmer would receive in the seventeenth century, as he draws upon a variety of sources to demonstrate Cranmer's corruption.<sup>29</sup> Prynne begins his overview of Cranmer's tenure by noting that Henry VIII made Cranmer Archbishop 'much against his will', noting that Cranmer himself even remarked that he delayed his return from the Continent after receiving news of his appointment in hopes that Henry would forget about him.<sup>30</sup> The dilemmas Cranmer faced over his oath of office do not escape Prynne's notice, as he focuses upon Cranmer's oath to the Pope as well as his oath to Henry to uphold

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 'The Epistle Dedicatory'. In his marginal gloss Prynne refers particularly to Bishop White and Peter Heylyn's *Antidotum Lincolniense*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Prologue'.

<sup>29</sup> Prynne's principle sources are Fox, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Speed's *Historie*, and *Antiquitca Ecclesiastica Britanica*.

<sup>30</sup> Prynne, *Antipathy*, p. 131.

Mary as second in line to the throne. Prynne presents this as evidence of the impossibility of holding such an office in good repute. Finally, Prynne addresses the issue of Cranmer's 'over-cowardly' recantation, made out of 'feare, and humane frailty'.<sup>31</sup> Curiously, though, before assessing the main aspects of Cranmer's life he does express admiration for his martyrdom, as he notes 'not to detract any thing from the due praise of this our glorious Martyr, give mee leave only to observe [his archiepiscopal tenure]'.<sup>32</sup>

From here Prynne discusses the principal features of Cranmer's work in his capacity as Archbishop, most of which are overwhelmingly negative, as he demonstrates that not only was Cranmer a weak agent of reform, but that he also, by way of his office, became a traitor to the realm. Prynne makes observations about nine specific aspects of Cranmer's career: first, he had a 'hand in the condemnation, and execution of Lambert, Frith, and some other of our godly Martyrs'; secondly, he had a role in Henry's divorce and 'subsequent lustfull, if lawfull marriages'; thirdly, the Lincolnshire rebels expressed dislike for him; fourthly, Cranmer's tenure was coeval with bishops of the greatest disrepute; fifthly, the Six Articles were brought in under Cranmer's tenure; sixthly, Cranmer was the only Archbishop of Canterbury to suffer martyrdom; seventhly, Cranmer only became a martyr after his deprivation; eighthly, his martyrdom was marred by the shame of his recantation; and ninthly, prior to his martyrdom he had been justly condemned as a traitor for breaking his oath to

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

support Mary's ascendancy (Prynne also adds at this point that Cranmer had been willing to allow Mary to 'use the Masse' in Edward's day).<sup>33</sup> Most notable in these observations is the attention Prynne devotes to Cranmer's complicity in acts of state that served to retard the cause of Protestantism, as well as the nature of Cranmer's martyrdom.

The first, second, and fifth of these observations, dealing Cranmer's role in distinctly non- (or anti-) Protestant actions, serve especially to underscore the corrupt and injurious nature of his archiepiscopal office. Though Prynne does not consider Cranmer a papist, he stresses the part he had in papist persecutions. In so doing, Prynne distinguishes Cranmer the martyr from Cranmer the Archbishop. It is interesting that Prynne does not bring up the issue of Cranmer's own marriage or theological fluctuations, perhaps because he was not familiar with Harpsfield's account of Cranmer, but more likely because he wished to focus upon how the office of Archbishop itself forced the weak-willed Cranmer into ignominious acts. Prynne makes this especially clear through further references to Cranmer's oaths, both to the Pope and to Henry, which he was completely unable to uphold. Moreover, Prynne does not address Cranmer's role in the Forty-two Articles or the repeal of heresy laws, leaving the reader with the impression that as an archbishop Cranmer was capable only of holding back reform. It is therefore not surprising that when addressing what he considers the only positive aspect of Cranmer's life – his martyrdom – Prynne is careful to note that it came only after his dismissal from office.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-134.

Cranmer's martyrdom forms the subject of Prynne's last four observations, showing that Prynne obviously considered it to be the key part of Cranmer's legacy, authority, and reputation. Prynne demonstrates just how significant it was by stressing that Cranmer was the only archbishop to suffer such, 'the others making many Martyrs in all ages by their persecutions, but never being any themselves'.<sup>34</sup> However, Prynne is careful to add some caveats to any hagiographic auras that might surround Cranmer. First, as mentioned, Prynne notes that Cranmer was in fact not a bishop but 'a private Christian' at the time of his burning, and secondly, Cranmer 'failed more ... than any of his fellow Martyrs' because of his recantation. Finally, Prynne believes that Cranmer's martyrdom, though genuine, was nevertheless meted out to a convicted and admitted traitor, and was only facilitated by Mary's pardon of Cranmer on charges of high treason. This, Prynne implies, significantly diminishes the stature of the martyr; by drawing attention to the fact that Cranmer had tolerated Mary's papist practices in the same sentence, Prynne also suggests that Cranmer's martyrdom was partly his own doing.

Considering Prynne's view of Cranmer's accomplishments, namely, that his only truly redeeming virtue was his martyrdom, one finds it hardly surprising that when Prynne finally gets around to discussing the 'judgements and resolutions' of English martyrs and writers he overlooks Cranmer completely. In the eighth chapter of *Antipathy* Prynne deals with a list of worthy Protestants from the Reformation era that includes Hooper and Latimer, but completely

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

ignores Cranmer.<sup>35</sup> The reason soon becomes obvious, as he focuses upon Hooper's opposition to ceremonies and Latimer's opposition to bishops' seats in the Lords. In each case, he considers episcopal offices to be a hindrance. As Cranmer opposed neither, he plays no part in Prynne's discussion of the views of 'our ancient Writers and Martyrs' on the jurisdiction of bishops. William Lamont, in his biography *Marginal Prynne*, has suggested that Prynne, though still appreciative of Foxe's martyrology, had begun by 1641 seriously to question Foxe's rather monolithic interpretation of the Marian martyrs, noting that 'his historical analysis was intended as a corrective to Foxe's account'.<sup>36</sup> This is particularly evident in Prynne's attempt to differentiate Archbishop Cranmer from Cranmer the martyr, the first a self-interested, weak-willed oath breaker, the latter an ordinary Christian doing what true Christians were expected to do.

A very similar position to that of Prynne was taken by a young and little known playwright, poet, and pamphleteer named John Milton. *Of Reformation touching Church-discipline in England: And the Cases that hitherto have hindred it*, published in May 1641, was the first anti-episcopal tract written by Milton, who was then employed as a private tutor.<sup>37</sup> John R. Knott, in *Discourses of martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694*, remarks that unlike

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 421-438.

<sup>36</sup> William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London, 1963), pp. 65-68.

<sup>37</sup> John Milton, 'Of Reformation touching Church-discipline in England: And the Cases that hitherto have hindred it', in Don Wolfe, ed., *Complete Prose Works of John Milton* (New Haven, 1953), Vol. I, pp. 514-617.



the view developed in *Paradise Lost*, Milton, in his early pamphlets, was 'much more willing to praise the combativeness of individual martyrs in the defense of truth than to dwell upon the fact of their suffering', as Milton was quite sceptical about the validity of many martyrs promoted by Foxe.<sup>38</sup> This is clearly demonstrated in *Of Reformation*, where Milton appears takes the view that the bishop-martyrs of the Marian persecution did very little to combat evil and were certainly not laudable, their only virtue being their martyrdom itself.

Milton begins *Of Reformation* by stating his need to address both the 'foule and sudden corruption' of the Reformation thus far, as well as his faith in a 'long-deferr'd' Reformation about to come.<sup>39</sup> In his search for what caused the ostensible abortion of the first Reformation, prelates soon become his prime target for past failings as well as a scapegoat for all that was wrong with the present Church. As with Prynne, the intrinsically corrupting nature of prelacy itself becomes a central theme, as Milton seems willing to accept a stereotypically negative view of prelates even though he carefully evaluates martyrs on an individual basis. Milton argues that the primary reason for the failure to install a full, lasting Reformation in Edward's reign lies with bishops, who were 'so far from any such worthy Attempts, as that they suffer'd themselves to be the common stales to countenance with their prostituted Gravities every Politick Fetch that was then on foot'.<sup>40</sup> Milton focuses his

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<sup>38</sup> John R. Knott, *Discourses of martyrdom in English Literature, 1563-1694* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 151.

<sup>39</sup> Milton, *Of Reformation*, p. 519.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 531.

resentment not upon Bonner and Gardiner but rather Cranmer and Ridley. He concurs yet again with Prynne in arguing that one of the Edwardian prelates' gravest faults was to tolerate the private masses of Mary Tudor, as he argues that

...if a Toleration for Masse were to be beg'd of the King for his sister Mary, lest Charles the Fifth should be angry; who but the grave Prelates Cranmer and Ridley must be sent to extort it from the young King? But out of the mouth of that godly and Royall Childe, Christ himselfe return'd such an awfull repulse to those halting and time-serving Prelates, that after much bold importunity, they went their way not without shame and teares.<sup>41</sup>

As the penultimate example of the 'halting and time-serving' nature of these self-interested prelates, Milton draws attention to Cranmer's support of Jane Grey's attempted succession, contrary to Henry VIII's will. Milton is astounded that Cranmer would not strenuously try to root out private masses but would unabashedly break his oath to Henry:

Yet Bishop Cranmer, one of the Executors, and the other Bishops none refusing ...could find in their Consciences to set their hands to the disinabling and defeating not onely of Princesse Mary the Papist, but of Elizabeth the Protestant, and (by the Bishops judgement) the Lawfull Issue of King Henry.<sup>42</sup>

This leads Milton to reevaluate the very nature of and prestige accorded to martyrdom. He asks rhetorically 'it will be said, These Men were Martyrs: What then? Though every true Christian will be a Martyr when he is called to it; not presently does it follow that every one suffering for Religions, is without exception'.<sup>43</sup> Noting that many Arians and Pelagians were also 'martyred',

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 531-532.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 533.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Milton resolves that in the case of questionable martyrs such as ‘Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley’ (as with questionable emperors such as Constantine) it would be better that their names be abolished ‘like the Brazen Serpent’ than to have ‘mens fond opinion ... idolize them, and the Heavenly Truth be thus captivated’.<sup>44</sup> This is not to say that Milton places the Oxford Martyrs on the same level as heretics, as he cites Cranmer’s proposed constitutional reforms (*Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, 1554) as proof that Cranmer, for instance, did desire further reform. Rather, he stresses the futility of their endeavours, maintaining that ‘their Professions and their Ends were different’. Hence, episcopacy did not ‘wrought in them the Heavenly Fortitude of Martyrdome’; it only led to the circumstances by which they became martyrs.<sup>45</sup>

In presenting this interpretation of Cranmer and his contemporaries, it seems clear that Milton is taking aim at the arguments presented in the pro-episcopal petitions coming into circulation. Before discussing his proposals for church discipline, Milton addresses the pro-episcopal faction and remarks ‘and for those Prelat-Martyrs they glory of, they are to bee judg’d what they were by the Gospel, and not the Gospel to be tried by them’.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Milton maintains a position remarkably close to Prynne, in combating conformist representations of model prelates by, as Knott puts it, ‘choosing to concentrate on the political fluctuations of [Cranmer and Ridley’s] early careers rather than the triumphant

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 535-536.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603. Wolfe notes that Milton is addressing not only pro-episcopal petitions, but also Joseph Hall’s and ‘Smectumnuans’ competing attempts to claim the heritage of the prelates martyred under Mary.

martyrdoms that Foxe memorialized'.<sup>47</sup> This was a position that would be troublesome for moderate and Presbyterian alike, both of whom were competing to claim Cranmer's legacy.

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<sup>47</sup> Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, p. 154.

## Chapter 5 In the Blood of the Martyrs: Cranmer and the English Liturgy

In 1645, a disgraced Royalist faction in Oxford received news that the House of Commons had passed the 'Directory for the Public Worship of God', replacing the Book of Common Prayer that had served England's parishes for almost a century. Having recently scored decisive victories against the Royalists, and having executed Laud by a bill of attainder, Parliament now disposed of the newly revised version of the Prayer Book that had been the source of the 1637 Scottish crisis that had initiated so much opposition towards Charles in the first place. Based upon the hastily concluded recommendations of the Westminster Assembly, the Directory replaced a set order of service with general directions for worship that emphasized the sermon. More importantly, however, the Directory was an attempt to strip the Church's service of all its ceremonial aspects.

The reaction that both preceded and followed the removal of the Book of Common Prayer is indicative of the attachment English people had developed for it over the previous nine decades. Proponents argued in favour of its balance, its consistency with scripture and the early church fathers, as well as its potential appeal to papists. But above all, they stressed the careful manner in which reformers had compiled it. As with the debate over episcopacy, the virtue and orthodoxy of the Edwardian and early Elizabethan reformers became a central

theme amongst the Prayer Book's supporters, as the arguments of moderates and Laudians converged to support a book that had come to define the nature of English Protestantism. The actions of Cranmer, not so much in compiling but rather in verifying the Book of Common Prayer's orthodoxy with Continental reformers, became a central point.

The circumstances that underlay Parliament's decision to abolish the Book of Common Prayer were much the same as those that contributed to the Civil Wars. Laudianism had led to growing fears that England would revert to Roman Catholicism, and the introduction in 1637 of a Prayer Book into Scotland had led to a serious revolt. The result of the 1637 Scottish Prayer Book, far from creating religious uniformity within Charles' realms, was that both Scottish Presbyterians and English puritans became convinced that the English Liturgy, increasingly associated with Laud, represented popish designs. Regardless of the extent to which Laud was responsible for the introduction of the 1637 Prayer Book, Laud was deeply resented by the Scots, and blamed in England for Charles' ill-fated endeavour.<sup>1</sup> Following its introduction, irate Scots sent some eighty-six petitions to the Scottish Privy Council, and rioting ensued in Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>2</sup>

During the initial consultation process before the Prayer Book's introduction, Scottish bishops had recommended a book similar to the 1549 Book of Common

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<sup>1</sup> See Charles Carlton, *Archbishop William Laud* (London, 1987), pp. 157-161, 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Prayer, which Laud refused.<sup>3</sup> The result was a Prayer Book that drew only partially upon that of 1549, and replaced scriptural texts drawn from Cranmer's Bible with those of the Authorized Version.<sup>4</sup> Scots generally viewed this slightly modified form of the 1604 Prayer Book as both an English and Laudian imposition, and the resistance they displayed resulted in the military conflict that necessitated the recall of Parliament.<sup>5</sup> Once recalled, Parliament itself gave voice to the long-standing puritan grievance that England needed further reform. As England slid into a Civil War between Royalist and parliamentary factions, Parliamentarians supporting a Presbyterian form of service and government eventually won the day.

Though in the end not successful, resistance to Parliament's designs to abolish the Book of Common Prayer is surprising. In addition to the Laudian faction (and the growing circle of Roman Catholics at court surrounding Queen Henrietta Maria) one can also find much evidence of a central, conforming body of lay and clerical believers who desired neither Presbyterianism nor Laudianism. For such moderates, the Book of Common Prayer clearly held enormous value, and the reasons for this are intriguing. Obviously, one must take into consideration the fact that the plain, clear, and near poetical English, as well as the interactive style, of Cranmer's Prayer Book liturgy obviously had

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<sup>3</sup> Frank Edward Brightman and Kenneth Donald Mackenzie, 'The History of the Book of Common Prayer down to 1662', in W.K. Lowther Clarke, ed., *Liturgy and Worship, a Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion* (London, 1959), p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> For a catalogue of the specific changes made to the 1604 edition see *ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that Scottish Presbyterians would have accepted the 1549 Prayer Book, which several Scottish bishops desired.

considerable appeal in itself. However, the Book of Common Prayer had also become an English institution, influencing sacred literature, personal devotion, and, most importantly, religious culture in England. Before turning to the political debates over the Book of Common Prayer in the 1640s, it is useful to survey briefly some of ways in which Cranmer's liturgical project managed to affect English culture.

Alongside polemicists' use of Cranmer in seventeenth-century theological debates, there is also considerable evidence of Cranmer's influence upon literature, especially devotional writings. This is, however, a rather difficult matter to assess. To be sure, the Book of Common Prayer was universally known and very popular, existing in every parish church and in many homes, and undergoing numerous editions.<sup>6</sup> Yet even if Cranmer's literary influence was profound, it must also have been rather subtle, given that many English people would have read words of his on a weekly basis since childhood, and seventeenth-century clergy would have practiced no other form of liturgy. Though aware of the Book of Common Prayer's influence, many may not have recognized Cranmer's role in it. Cranmer was usually acknowledged as merely the most important of a number of compilers, and he obviously drew upon a number of antecedents when putting together the Book of Common Prayer. Moreover, the Prayer Book underwent numerous revisions (though mostly of a minor nature) during 1552-1662. Thus, it is also difficult to determine the extent to

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<sup>6</sup> See Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, pp. 24-30.



which Cranmer's influence upon people's conception of liturgy and sacred literature was a conscious one.

In spite of the difficulties in trying to trace the influence of a source that was so widely dispersed, and itself drew upon numerous antecedents, it is possible to make a number of links between Cranmer's liturgical writings and seventeenth-century writers. It should be noted that not only the Book of Common Prayer, but also many of Cranmer's early liturgical writings, drawing upon the Sarum Breviary and Lutheran writings, survived to influence later writers.<sup>7</sup> The result was an enormous potential breadth of influence that helps to explain the popularity of the Book of Common Prayer throughout English society, and the heartfelt attachment many expressed when Parliament attempted to take it away.

One example of a likely connection to Cranmer can be found in the divine poems of John Donne. James E. Wellington, in his essay 'The Litany in Cranmer in Donne', argues that Donne's poem 'A Litany', with its emphasis upon the Virgin Mary and ceremony, does not reflect a lingering 'devotion to the Church of Rome' so much as it reflects Cranmer's liturgical writings and views.<sup>8</sup> Donne likely wrote this poem (a sharp contrast to his early, satirical works) in 1608, before he entered the priesthood.<sup>9</sup> Wellington notes four key features of Cranmer's liturgical writings that concur with Donne's: first, both omit the opening *Kyrie Eleison*; secondly, Donne modifies 'Lord' several times

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<sup>7</sup> See C.H. Smyth, *Cranmer & the Reformation under Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1926), Appendix: 'The Date of Cranmer's Liturgical Projects', pp. 74-77.

<sup>8</sup> James E. Wellington, 'The Litany in Cranmer and Donne', *Studies in Philology*, 68 (1971), p. 178.

<sup>9</sup> See Helen Gardner, *John Donne. The Divine Poems* (Oxford, 1978, 1952), p. 81.

with the adjective 'good', a practice introduced by Cranmer; thirdly, as in Cranmer's 1544 liturgy, Donne addresses only the Virgin Mary by name, otherwise referring only to 'categories' of saints; and fourthly, Donne, like Cranmer, 'combines in similar cumulative fashion the separate, step-by-step versicles of the Sarum deprecations and obsecrations'.<sup>10</sup> This leads Wellington to conclude that 'the text which formed his starting point was not a Roman Catholic litany but that of Cranmer, and the theology which he explores is characteristically Anglican'.<sup>11</sup>

Cranmer's influence was not limited to poetry. Richard Noble has conducted a nearly exhaustive survey of biblical and English liturgical references that come up in Shakespeare's plays,<sup>12</sup> with the aim of enabling 'an estimate to be formed of the extent of Shakespeare's acquaintance with the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer'.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, biblical references are ubiquitous. However, this study also demonstrates that Shakespeare drew many easily recognizable references from the Book of Common Prayer, indicating that Cranmer's liturgical achievement contained a number of common, easily recognizable expressions, useful for the playwright and identifiable by the audience.

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<sup>10</sup> Wellington, 'The Litany', pp. 180-182.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of the Book of Common Prayer as Exemplified in the Plays of the First Folio* (New York, 1935, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

John N. Wall, in *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan*, has explored numerous connections between Cranmer and the Book of Common Prayer, and the three poets upon which his survey centres.<sup>14</sup> Looking at the spiritual context of their poetry, Wall stresses the extent to which they were influenced by a church tradition that ‘is marked in the use of the Book of Common Prayer instead of either the medieval missal or a service of preaching and extemporaneous prayer’.<sup>15</sup> In ‘The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse’,<sup>16</sup> for example, Wall argues that the rituals performed by Spenser’s Red Cross knight constitute ‘a “right reading” of the functioning of Cranmer’s church, both physically and liturgically’. Hence the experiences of the knight

echo the pattern of movement from faith to hope to charity basic to Cranmer’s interpretation of Christianity; the linking of the eucharistic “cup of gold / With wine and water fild up to the hight” and the “booke, that was both signd and seald with blood” echo his affirmation, articulated in the Prayer Book.<sup>17</sup>

In a similar way the poet and priest George Herbert draws upon Cranmer’s specific arrangement of the liturgy in *The Temple*, published just after his death in 1633.<sup>18</sup> Wall notes that Herbert, like Cranmer, moves the *Gloria in excelsis* from the beginning to the end of the eucharistic rite. By quoting the *Gloria*’s ‘opening line in Cranmer’s translation at the end of “The Church,” Herbert

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<sup>14</sup> John N. Wall, *Transformations of the Word: Spenser, Herbert, Vaughan* (Athens, Georgia, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> This formed Book I of *The Faerie Queene* (London, 1596) STC 23080.

<sup>17</sup> Wall, *Transformation of the Word*, p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> Published in a collection entitled *The Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (London, 1633).

concludes his exploration of the eucharistic life with a reminder' of the significance of the eucharist as a communion with God and fellow believers.

For the poet, physician, and Royalist Henry Vaughan, writing in the Interregnum, Cranmer's liturgical legacy was especially significant, as use of the Book of Common Prayer was officially banned from 1645 to the Restoration. In a prose work entitled *The Mount of Olives*,<sup>19</sup> Vaughan captures a feeling of both the isolation of Prayer Book proponents and longing for a Prayer Book liturgy. Wall suggests that in the absence of Cranmer's liturgy, *The Mount of Olives* 'is in fact a companion volume to the Prayer Book, a set of Private prayers to accompany Prayer Book worship'.<sup>20</sup> By creating a personal daily order that mirrored the Book of Common Prayer and made constant allusions to it, Vaughan was thus able to perpetuate 'its influence and informing purpose'.<sup>21</sup>

This enduring affinity for the type of liturgy established by Cranmer, one that stressed not only inward faith but also outward devotion, while democratizing the eucharist celebration and denying transubstantiation, was evident amongst a broad segment of society. A large number of those who desired a retention of the episcopacy also argued for the retention of the Prayer Book, often combining their arguments in the same tracts and petitions. For conforming theologians, however, there was more than the intrinsic appeal of the Book of Common Prayer for which to argue.

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<sup>19</sup> Henry Vaughan, *The Mount of Olives, or Solitary Devotions* (London, 1652).

<sup>20</sup> Wall, *Transformation of the Word*, p. 284.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

For theologians and petitioners eager to defend their cherished Prayer Book, arguments pertaining to its compilers added considerable weight to defences based upon its inherent value. In taking this line of argument, two justifications for the Book of Common Prayer emerge as recurring themes: the virtue of its author(s), and the correspondence undertaken by Cranmer with Continental reformers to ensure that the Book of Common Prayer was theologically orthodox. In this way this debate closely parallels those over the eucharist and episcopacy, with two exceptions. First, at no time in this specific debate did opponents of the Book of Common Prayer call into question the reputation and virtue of Cranmer and his contemporaries; opponents generally ignored his contribution. Secondly, the theological stakes were not so high. Theologians admitted that the English liturgy was mutable, that Parliament had amended it several times in the past, and could amend it in the future. Furthermore, an alteration in the order of service did not raise the same fears of heresy that accompanied both sides in the debate over the eucharist. Nevertheless, the passion with which moderates and Laudians alike argued for the Prayer Book's retention demonstrates a long-standing affinity for what amounted to a sort of religious culture.

One of the first to publish his views on the Liturgy, before Parliament abolished either the prelate or Prayer Book, was Joseph Hall, then Bishop of Exeter.<sup>22</sup> In a forty-three page tract entitled *An Humble Remonstrance to the*

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<sup>22</sup> Joseph Hall (1574-1656), later Bishop of Norwich, received the attention of Laud over his hesitancy to comply with Laudian reforms.

*High Court of Parliament*,<sup>23</sup> Hall stresses that the Book of Common Prayer has been 'reverently used by holy Martyrs daily' and 'contrived by the holy Martyrs, and Confessors of the blessed Reformation of Religion'.<sup>24</sup> Hall does not mention Cranmer by name, though his repeated reference to 'martyrs' obviously limits the field to Cranmer and at the most two or three contemporaries. He contrasts the original compilers of the English Liturgy with contemporary detractors by arguing that 'were the Readers but as charitable, as the Contrivers were religiously devout, those quarrels had either never been raised, or had soone died'. To this he adds the admonition 'maintain, and beare up the pious acts of your godly predecessors, yea, make good your owne: And if our holy Martyrs heretofore went to heaven with a Litany in their mouth, Let not an ill advised newfanglednesse be suffered to put scorn upon that'.<sup>25</sup> Thus Hall, who had not vigorously enforced the Laudian position on altars,<sup>26</sup> nevertheless made a very impassioned plea for the Prayer Book, fearing that its loss would cause disparate elements of the Church to divide amongst themselves 'till they come to very Atomes'.<sup>27</sup> Hall's fears did not go unchallenged, but rather helped to trigger a

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Hall, *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament by a dutifull Sonne of the Church* (London, 1640); Wing: E204 no. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>26</sup> See Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>27</sup> Hall, *Remonstrance*, p. 40.

wider debate, as his argument was answered in a tract by the five

‘Smectymnuus’ writers, and in turn by Milton’s *Of Reformation*.<sup>28</sup>

Another line of argument was to recommend that Parliament not abolish the Book of Common Prayer but work with the episcopacy and divines of England to amend it, as Parliament had done in 1559 and 1604.<sup>29</sup> The semi-anonymous writer ‘J.W.’ took just such a view in *Certaine Reasons why the Booke of Common-Prayer Being Corrected Should Continue*.<sup>30</sup> Like Bishop Hall, the author of this tract begins by stating that Parliament must not abolish the Book of Common Prayer ‘because it was composed and approved by godly reformed professors and Martyrs, and reverently used and frequented by devout Protestants’.<sup>31</sup> By stressing that the Book of Common Prayer met the approval of ‘grave and orthodox Divines, Martyrs, and zealous Protestants’, the author adds weight to his stress upon the Reformed nature of an English Liturgy that is by no means becoming of Papal designs.

As the possibility of a wholesale change to Presbyterianism became a reality, even more detailed arguments emerged emphasizing the English Liturgy’s association with revered martyrs and reformers. Here the role of Cranmer became critical. In 1642, the anonymous tract *A short View and Defence of the*

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<sup>28</sup> See John W. Packer, *The Transformation of Anglicanism 1643-1660* (Manchester, 1969), p. 115.

<sup>29</sup> For a review of these amendments see Frank Edward Brightman and Kenneth Donald Mackenzie, ‘The History of the Book of Common Prayer down to 1662’, in W.K. Lowther Clarke, ed., *Liturgy and Worship, a Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion* (London, 1959).

<sup>30</sup> [J.W.], *Certaine Reasons why the Booke of Common-Prayer Being Corrected Should Continue* (London, 1641); Wing: W40.

*Reformation of the Church of England by King Edward and Q. Elizabeth*

focused specifically upon the role liturgy played in nascent English Protestantism.<sup>32</sup> After noting that the Thirty-nine Articles came about by God 'stirring up most learned and holy men, such as this Kingdom never saw nor are ever like to see',<sup>33</sup> the tract turns to the development of the English Liturgy. The author(s) argue that the Prayer Book was 'compiled not according to the pattern in the former Masse-Books ...but according to those famous ancient Liturgies'.<sup>34</sup> However, because of some 'imperfections ...Arch-Bishop Cranmer who had a chief hand in this work, caused it to be turned into Latine, and sent to Martin Bucer ...requiring his judgement'.<sup>35</sup> Noting that Bucer found the 'main body' of the book acceptable, Cranmer re-worked it and sent it this time to Peter Martyr. This final edition 'was in those daies thought so compleat and perfect, that Arch-Bishop Cranmer in his Book against Stephen Gardiner gives forth' a challenge to defend it as congruent with the apostolic church. Later in the tract the author(s) make several more references to Cranmer's correspondence,

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Anon., *A short View and Defence of the Reformation of the Church of England by King Edward and Q. Elizabeth* (London, 1654); Wing S3638. Though the earliest extant copy listed by Wing is 1654, one finds on page 60, in a discussion of Protestantism's peaceful existence since Elizabeth, the note 'viz. 44. years in the daies of Queen Elizabeth, 22. years in the daies of King James, and 17. years in the daies of our King that now is', indicating that 1654 could not possibly be the date of publication. Rather, 1642, '17. years' after Charles' succession would coincide with the start of the first Civil War.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



drawing attention to the fact that Cranmer sought and was given Calvin's approval for his proposals, both for church government and discipline.<sup>36</sup>

What is interesting about this tract is that it grants much less authority to Cranmer and his fellow prelates than to foreign reformers in theological matters, though it does seem to see him as the chief conduit for their views. Likely this is due to the fact that sixteenth-century Swiss reformers, especially Calvin, represented the very model to which English Presbyterians looked. Yet, one must ask if it did not also reflect the ambiguous nature of the lives of Cranmer and some of his contemporaries. Though the martyrdom of the Edwardian reformers is stressed repeatedly, Edward, Elizabeth, and, unique to this tract, the Duke of Somerset, are portrayed as the real agents of reform. It is only in the development of the English Liturgy that Cranmer is granted a role beyond that of seeking foreign approval, and even with his liturgy the point is made continually that he amended it according to the wishes of foreign divines.

A similar view comes forth in the writings of Henry Hammond, a Laudian divine who became closely associated with Charles at Oxford. King Charles himself had responded to the 2 January 1645 ordinance of Parliament that the Directory be used for all public worship with a proclamation on 13 November; Hammond followed this up with his tract *A view of the New Directory*, which included Charles' proclamation.<sup>37</sup> Hammond stresses the benefits of public participation in the service prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer before

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 41-42.

<sup>37</sup> Henry Hammond, *A View of the New Directorie and a Vindication of the Ancient Liturgie of the Church of England* (Oxford, 1645); Wing: H614.

addressing the issue of its origins. Here he follows almost exactly the argument set forth in *A short View and Defence*, noting ‘that Cranmer procured the King Edwards Common-Prayer-Book to be translated into Latine, and sent it to Bucer ...who answer’d, that there was nothing in it, but what was taken out of the Word of God’.<sup>38</sup> He follows this with the observation that ‘Cranmer made a challenge’ that he would ‘enter the lifts with any Papists living, and defend the Common-Prayer-Book to be perfectly agreeable to the Word of God, and the same in effect which had been for 1500 years in the Church of Christ’.<sup>39</sup>

The repeated use of this argument, and even wording, suggests strongly that Cranmer’s correspondence, and his challenge to defend his liturgy as congruent with the early church, was a commonly known fact, at least amongst those eager to defend the products of his life’s work. This is quite noteworthy, considering that Foxe, in his account of ‘Cranmer, Archbishop of Canturbury, his trouble, acts and martyrdome at Oxford’, gives little attention to Cranmer’s liturgical works, focusing instead upon accusations made against Cranmer under Henry VIII, as well as Cranmer’s trial and martyrdom under Mary.<sup>40</sup> What this focus, in the writings of moderates and Laudians, upon Cranmer’s role in the development of the Liturgy likely indicates is a strong concern to demonstrate

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Acts and Monuments*, 1641 ed., Vol. III, pp. 633-645, 647-678. When summarising Cranmer’s work during Henry’s reign, Foxe notes ‘Bisides these book above cited of this Archbishop, divers other things there were also of his doing, as the Book of the Reformation, the Catechisme, with the Booke of Homilies, whereof part was by him contrived’. However, Foxe adds little in this section about Cranmer’s work under Edward.

that the Book of Common Prayer was by no means 'papist', being instead a uniquely English yet universally approved Protestant order of service. By drawing attention to Cranmer's readiness to defend his liturgy against the likes of Gardiner, Prayer Book proponents were also able to combat the accusation that it was simply a translated papist mass book.

This concern is reiterated in the numerous conformist petitions sent to Parliament, many delivered even before the 1 September 1641 House of Commons resolution that all ceremonial vestiges be removed from English churches.<sup>41</sup> As with their arguments for the episcopacy, these petitions argue for the validity of the Book of Common Prayer by extolling the Protestant virtues of the early reformers responsible for it. The language of the Huntingdonshire petition for 'the continuance of the Church-Government, and Divine Service, or Booke of Common-prayer' is typical:

...the Forme of Divine Service expressed and contained in the Book of Common prayer, was with great care, piety, and sincerity, revised and reduced from all former corruptions and Romish Superstitions, by those holy and selected Instruments of the Reformation of Religion within this Church, and was restored to its first purity ...many of them for the propagation of that Truth became glorious Martyrs, leaving unto us an holy example.<sup>42</sup>

Though obviously not as detailed as theological tracts, petitions also occasionally bring up the fact that the English Liturgy was 'attested and approved by the best of all Forraigne Divines',<sup>43</sup> alluding to the role Cranmer

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<sup>41</sup> See S.R. Gardiner, ed., *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 197-198.

<sup>42</sup> Aston, *A Collection of Sundry Petitions*, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Petition of Kent, *ibid.*, p. 33.

and his contemporaries played in gaining widespread Protestant approval for their work.

When assessing how much these petitions, many of which claimed thousands of subscribers, genuinely reflected popular sentiment, one should bear in mind the extent to which the Prayer Book had become a part of everyday life for many English people. In the decades preceding the 1640s literacy had been increasing while books were becoming more affordable.<sup>44</sup> Judith Maltby, in *Prayer Book and People*, accepts a figure of about 290 editions and over half a million Prayer Books in circulation by the Civil Wars.<sup>45</sup> Though Maltby notes that it is difficult to quantify the use of it amongst laity, many anecdotes of lay familiarity do exist,<sup>46</sup> as demonstrated by the 1641 Cheshire petition to Parliament. This petition, after praising England's 'pious, laudable, and ancient forme of Divine Service, composed by the holy Martyrs, and worthy Instruments of Reformation ...honoured by the approbation of many learned forraigne Divines', goes on to make the statement

that scarce any Family or person that can read, but are furnished with Books of Common Prayer: In the conscionable use whereof many Christian hearts have found unspeakable joy and comfort, ...All these dayly practised, with confidence, without punishment.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 260-264.

<sup>45</sup> Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28. Such examples include Richard Baxter's family using the Book of Common Prayer for family prayers; parishioners bringing their own Prayer Books to church to scrutinise their minister's use of the Book; Bishop Morton of Durham distributing Prayer Books to literate children and servants; reports of parliamentary soldiers using the Prayer Book; and even smuggling and illegal sale of Prayer Books printed abroad – a sure sign of the Book's popularity!

<sup>47</sup> Aston, *A Collection of Sundry Petitions*, pp. 20-21.

Thus, for both a laity that longed to maintain an established form of worship, as well as a Laudian such as Hammond who felt a strong need for a more ritualistic mass, the Book of Common Prayer represented a religious culture that was felt to be as important as the retention of either the episcopacy or the manner in which the eucharist was administered. By emphasizing the role of Cranmer, proponents were able to show how the Book of Common Prayer was in keeping with the beliefs of English martyrs and Continental reformers, much to the embarrassment of their opponents.

It is notable how relatively little use is made of Cranmer's role by those seeking to abolish the Book of Common Prayer. One early anonymous tract, *The Abolishing of the Booke of Common Prayer, by Reason of above fifty grosse Corruptions in it*, makes references to numerous reformers, especially John Jewell, but completely ignores Cranmer.<sup>48</sup> When examining the 'corruptions' listed in it, it becomes clear why the writer would not want any respectable individual associated with the Book of Common Prayer's authorship. The writer remarks, for instance, that the Book's translation of the Psalms is frequently inaccurate, and that it 'misapplyeth sundry places of Scripture', a clear objection to Cranmer's translation and hermenutics.<sup>49</sup> The writer then uses Calvin, Beza, and Bucer, amongst others, to defend his views on the surplice, but completely ignores the approval Cranmer received from such individuals for his liturgy. Thus, from this tract we see not so much a competition over the legacy of

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<sup>48</sup> Anon., *The Abolishing of the Booke of Common Prayer, by Reason of above fifty grosse Corruptions in it...* (London, 1641); Wing: A97.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2

Cranmer and the Marian martyrs, but rather competition over the legacy of sixteenth-century Continental reformers. The anti-liturgical author(s) of this tract conveniently push the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer to the side, perhaps unwilling to assail Cranmer's reputation, but more likely embarrassed that a reformer of his stature was the driving force behind the very introduction of an English Liturgy.

The Directory for Public Worship itself took an especially diplomatic standpoint on origins of the Prayer Book it was replacing.<sup>50</sup> The preface to the Directory begins by stating that 'in the beginning of the Blessed Reformation, our wise and pious Ancestours took care to set forth an Order for Redresse of many things', which included an English liturgy. Unfortunately, note the Presbyterian proponents of the Directory, 'the leiturgie [sic] used in the Church of England (notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the Compilers of it) hath proved an offence'.<sup>51</sup> This, the Directory claims, has happened because prelates have raised it up above all other aspects of worship, and papists have tried to claim it as their own.<sup>52</sup> Noting that were the 'first Reformers' still alive they would no doubt agree upon the Directory, the preface concludes that God's providence 'at this time calleth upon us for further Reformation'.<sup>53</sup> In this way parliament was able to stay true to both the

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<sup>50</sup> A Directory for the Public Worship of God In the Three Kingdoms (London, 1645); Wing: D1550.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

Edwardian reformers and the long-standing puritan ambition to abolish the mass. Yet, the Directory avoids all mention of Bucer, Martyr, and Calvin's approbation of Cranmer's two prayer books.

In the debate that arose concerning the replacement of the Book of Common Prayer by the Directory, we see that the details of Cranmer's role in its composition became an issue that likely would have been overlooked had moderates not raised it. What is more telling, however, is who did not raise the issue. One can only attribute the reticence that Presbyterians displayed over Cranmer's role to embarrassment, as evident in the artful style in which the preface to the Directory addresses the issue of early reformers' work. This is certainly ironic, considering that many of the same people would have drawn attention to Cranmer's European correspondence as proof that England should not erect altars.

What is most peculiar about Cranmer's legacy when it came to the Book of Common Prayer is how little authority proponents gave him when it came to defending his crowning achievement. Though it was widely acknowledged that he had 'a chief hand in this work', seventeenth-century defenders of the Prayer Book invariably looked across the Channel for theological defences of it. This was no doubt largely tactical. Rallying Calvin to the support of the Book of Common Prayer certainly swept the rug out from under the stubbornly planted feet of the Presbyterians. Nevertheless, the fact that Cranmer's authority in compiling the Book of Common Prayer constantly rests on his position as a martyr and not a theologian is telling. Though his role as a writer was obviously

**influential, and his role as a reformer widely acknowledged and appreciated, his authority as a theologian clearly rested upon the credibility of others.**



## Conclusion

In the century following the Elizabethan Settlement the legacy of Thomas Cranmer was determined above all by historical circumstances. For some, the Elizabethan Settlement was a frustrated opportunity to attempt further Protestant reform, and for others, a fleeting chance to retain a measure of Catholicism. But for most, it was a restoration of a reformation that had come to fruition under Cranmer's archiepiscopal tenure, one that desperately needed historical legitimacy. The fact that Cranmer's religious beliefs had changed with, and not in spite of, official policy in England, made him a perfectly suited figure to represent the careful, moderate path England took in moving towards Protestantism. His experience after Mary's succession further confirmed this, as the conflict between his loyalty to God and his quasi-Erastian beliefs mirrored that of a predominant Protestant faction whose concept of rule by a godly prince had been undermined. His final decision to go to the stake not only earned him a place in what was to be an immensely important tradition of Protestant hagiography, but also served to distance and to exonerate him from some of the dubious beliefs and actions in his early career. Rather than taint the legacy of England's foremost reformer, primate, and liturgist, Cranmer's uncertainties, wavering, and doubts put a human face on a reformation believed to be ultimately dependent upon a higher power for achievement.

Thus, it was as a model, albeit fallible, prelate that Cranmer entered the annals of Foxe, the pages of religious tracts, and the Stuart stage. While Cranmer's Prayer

Book was clearly unpopular amongst some puritanical elements of the Elizabethan and Stuart Church, and puritans certainly would not have appreciated his preference for vestments and a degree of ceremony, his place in upholding the Edwardian Reformation safeguarded him from criticism, and made him a useful figure for the episcopal establishment. The nature of religious debates within the Caroline Church, however, would change this.

Up to this point, the teachings and actions of Cranmer had simply not been conducive to religious debates, over such issues as public morality, observation of festivals and the Sabbath, or the interpretation of Christ's atonement and God's predestination. His role in debates over the eucharist, episcopacy, and liturgy, on the other hand, most certainly was favourable to debate. It is significant that the first of these debates to create a widespread sense of urgency over changes to Church policy was that over the eucharist. This debate highlighted Cranmer's role in creating the eucharist service and the Book of Common Prayer, as well as his relation to continental reformers. It was henceforth more difficult for opponents of episcopacy and a Prayer Book liturgy to ground their attacks in accusations of popery with such an important reformer noticeably associated with the episcopacy and liturgy. However, as Cranmer became a figure increasingly difficult to ignore in such debates, he became increasingly a subject of attack by radical puritans and an obstacle for Laudians and Presbyterians.

The result was a mid-seventeenth-century perception of Cranmer that was anything but uniform. Laudians, and particularly radical puritans, began to see Cranmer's legacy in a less positive light. As it was clearly difficult to dissociate

Cranmer from the beliefs of moderates, radical puritans first devalued his significance on account of his office, but eventually took to debasing him for his actions. No where is this better illustrated than in the denunciation of Cranmer by Prynne, peculiarly resembling the Catholic Nicholas Harpsfield's vituperation of a century before.

For some Laudians and Presbyterians, it was possible to circumvent Cranmer's more disagreeable beliefs by drawing attention to the unique circumstances in which his reforms took place and the fact that Church policies were malleable. On the one hand, Laudians could argue that certain aspects of Cranmer's Protestantism, such as his altar policy, were needed at one time to avoid popish superstition, but could and should be changed. On the other hand, others suggested that Cranmer's reforms were merely a starting point which, however appropriate for their time, were not the end goal of reformation. Either argument encountered difficulties that were strongly connected to Cranmer's association with continental reformers. For Laudians, the Reformed theologians with whom Cranmer associated represented exactly what they were fighting against. For Presbyterians and radical puritans, such associations ruined the case that Reformed theology was both superior to and incompatible with England's episcopal establishment and liturgical practices, as Cranmer and the Reformed theologians with whom he associated were quite content with episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer. The result was a legacy of Cranmer that was not automatically appreciated or thought to be exemplary by all Protestants. For Laudians, the answer was to reinvent Cranmer, for radical puritans, to scorn him, and, for Presbyterians, largely to ignore him. For moderates,

the legacy of Cranmer remained much as it had traditionally been, except that he could no longer be invoked with an expectation of universal approval and agreement over what he had accomplished. Rather, the fact that his beliefs about communion, his intentions in the Prayer Book, and his approval of Reformed theology were being revised at this time points to the 1630s as the end of what many historians have referred to as the 'Calvinist consensus'.

The Elizabethan and early Stuart legacy of Cranmer demonstrates a belief that the Edwardian Reformation represented a significant and permanent break with Rome. While the phrase 'reformation of religion' was sometimes used to refer to changes made under Elizabeth, it was by far most commonly associated with the reforms instituted by Cranmer, during the reign of Edward, and not Henry. This reformation was symbolized by the English liturgy and the Thirty-nine and Forty-two articles, in which Cranmer's role was rightfully regarded as paramount. Such an interpretation of Cranmer supports the notion that the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church was based upon a clear, Protestant consensus, and did not have much continuity with its Henrician antecedent. Cranmer's mid-seventeenth century legacy is, however, indicative of a Church that was rapidly ceasing to have consensus over how it interpreted the Reformation, and the force responsible for this was clearly Laudianism.

Seventeenth-century impressions of Cranmer and his colleagues shed considerable light upon the nature of Laudianism. First, from the debates which invoked Cranmer, we see that Laudianism and its contemporary synonym Arminianism concerned much more than predestination. In the debate over the

eucharist, which cut to the heart of the issue of ceremony in the Church, puritans, and a large number of moderates, saw the policies of Laud (or at least those perceived to be his doing) as a gateway to popery. This clearly generated a form of puritanism that was reactionary and got considerable support from moderates within the English Church. History identified Cranmer as a primary force behind the conversion of altars to tables, and for Laudians to reverse this they had to search for reasons why this was the result of Cranmer's circumstances, and not his theology.

Finally, the concern demonstrated over the importance of Cranmer and the Edwardian Reformation tells us much about the long-standing religious factors underlying the Civil Wars. To be sure, there is much to be said for the importance of Scottish and Irish crises and the ineptitude of Charles I. Moreover, the debates examined above highlight the sudden nature of the reaction to Laudianism. Yet, the seventeenth-century legacy of Cranmer points to a longstanding and zealous adherence to Reformation ideals. This was not limited to puritans. Moderates, tending more often towards neutrality or Royalism, also rose up vociferously, frequently citing the work of Cranmer, when they felt that their rightfully established religion was under threat, be it from Presbyterians or Laudians. The hesitancy on the part of a conforming middle to stray from established practices also helps to explain why the Laudian faction was so easily ostracized by the Presbyterian Parliament in the 1640s.

With the introduction of the Directory for Common Worship, debate over issues connected to Cranmer's legacy largely disappeared. No longer did debate centre

upon what should be prescribed; rather, debate in the 1640s would shift to the issue of what should be tolerated. Thus, the 1650s see an important change in Cranmer's legacy. It is at this point that he largely drops out of the picture as an authority to be used polemically, and enters the annals of historiography that is not written as martyrology. This shift is first evident in the writings of Thomas Fuller, a minister who supported the Royalist side, but exhibited many moderate tendencies.<sup>1</sup>

Fuller's 1655 publication *The Church History of Britain* was not written as a response to a particular issue, but rather was a long-term endeavour that stressed the importance of England's early Protestant establishment.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly the case in his description of Cranmer, where he seems to be at pains to defend Cranmer against the arguments presented by Milton and Prynne.<sup>3</sup> Though his praise of Cranmer is tempered by an awareness of the difficulties Cranmer faced, and he attributes Cranmer's actions at Lambert's trial to 'cowardice', he catalogues Cranmer as the foremost amongst those responsible for the implementation of proper religious reform.

Cranmer's role in the establishment of Protestantism was not so well recognized following the Restoration, especially at the 1661 Conference at the Savoy, despite

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<sup>1</sup> See J.E. Bailey, *Thomas Fuller* (London, 1874).

<sup>2</sup> Fuller notes in the dedication to the reader that he completed the first three books 'in the reign of the late king'; *Church History*, Vol. 1, p. lix.

<sup>3</sup> Fuller, *Church History*, Vol. 3, p. 68 clearly, though indirectly, refers to Prynne's *Antipathy* as he remarks 'Pass we now to such exceptions which a modern writer (zealous against popery) taketh against him, being no fewer than nine, as if he intended what they want in weight to make up in number'. He does not refer to Milton, however, in 1641 he had preached against Milton's tract *Of Reformation*.

the fact that the main subject of this conference was his liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Presbyterians fearing a return to sacramentalism based their pleas upon the authority of the early Church, and not the Edwardian reformers.<sup>5</sup> When Richard Baxter<sup>6</sup> invoked Edwardians to his anti-sacramental cause, he could only entreat his opponents to consider the warnings of Ridley and Hooper about such matters, as he obviously did not feel confident discussing the opinions of the very author of the Prayer Book whose introduction he feared so much.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for such Presbyterian hesitancy would no doubt have been the same as when the Directory for Public Worship was introduced. For the 'restored' prelacy, as with earlier Laudians with whom they had much affinity, the theology of Cranmer likely also had much to do with reticence over the Edwardians.

One exception is Peter Heylyn's *History of the Reformation*, a work published in 1662 shortly after his death.<sup>8</sup> Heylyn, who had derided and quickly became enemies with Fuller, wrote this work not in response to a specific issue, but rather attempted to give legitimacy to a more Laudian interpretation of the Church. Ignoring potential conflicts between the beliefs of Cranmer and those of his own vision for the Church, Heylyn also provided a rather apologetic account of Cranmer

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<sup>4</sup> See *To the Kings most excellent majesty, the due account, and humble petition* (London, 1661) Wing T1499; [Richard Baxter], *The grand debate between the most reverend the bishops* (London, 1661) Wing B1278A.

<sup>5</sup> See Brightman and MacKenzie, 'History of the Book of Common Prayer', pp. 190-193.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Baxter (1615-1691) was a puritan evangelist from the Midlands.

<sup>7</sup> [Richard Baxter], *The Papers that passed between the commissioners Appointed by His Majesty for the Alteration of Common Prayer, &c.* (London, 1661) Wing B1337, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Heylyn, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, James Craigie Robertson, ed. (Cambridge, 1849).

in his *History*. He presents him as a reformer who was not nearly as instrumental as Fuller sees him, and too easily impressed by the opinions of others. As in his earlier polemical tracts, Heylyn maintained that the first Book of Common Prayer was a purely English project, but the second Book and its underlying theological aims were the result of an unwarranted and temporary Calvinist influence.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, however, both Fuller and Heylyn are less concerned with rallying Cranmer's authority to their respective positions, and more concerned to demonstrate that their present conceptions of the Church are compatible with his.

This sort of balanced praise continued in later seventeenth-century historiography, most notably in the first two volumes of Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, published in 1679 and 1681 respectively, and John Strype's 1697 biography *Memorials of ...Thomas Cranmer*, which only MacCulloch's recent biography rivals in length.<sup>10</sup> What is perhaps most significant about these works is the stress they place upon Cranmer's character, holding him up as an example of Christianity, more than as a reformer. They differ from Fuller and Heylyn in as far as they do not attempt to squeeze Cranmer into a particular vision of the Church, and, unlike Fuller, are completely detached from the debates that forced many seventeenth-century polemicists to re-evaluate him.

Writing in a period during which moderates had little about which to be optimistic, Fuller likely captured better than anyone the dilemma many faced over

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, see esp. Vol. 2, p. 179.

<sup>10</sup> John Strype, *Memorials of the Most Reverend Father in God Thomas Cranmer*, 2 Vols., Philip Edward Barnes, ed. (London, 1853); Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 4 Vols., E. Nares, ed. (London, n.d.).



an archbishop who was at the centre of the paramount event in England's history, yet was such a questionable base upon which to build. Cranmer was trapped between two factions that could neither whole-heartedly praise nor ignore his contribution, and in the process became the subject of either abuse or revision. Writing of the radical puritan response to Cranmer and his colleagues, Fuller remarked

Some zealots of our age will condemn the Laodicean temper of the protestant bishops, because if stickling to purpose, and improving their power to the utmost, they might have set forth a more pure and perfect religion. Such men see the faults of reformers, but not the difficulties of reformation.<sup>11</sup>

As someone who had witnessed the difficulties of religious reform even in his own day, Fuller was well suited to empathize with the problems that Cranmer had faced. The fact that so many 'difficulties of reformation' had impinged upon Cranmer's career was certainly what created the potential for such divergent interpretations of him. In this respect, it is perhaps fitting that it was the circumstances surrounding renewed attempts at reform that led to a significant reinterpretation of him in the greatest religious upheavals to follow the Reformation.

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<sup>11</sup> Fuller, *The Church History*, Vol. 3, p. 139.

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