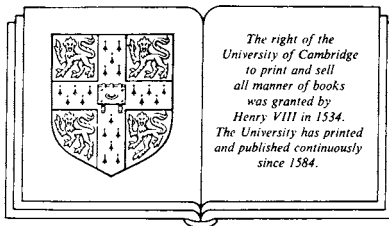


Predestination, policy and polemic

*Conflict and consensus in the English Church
from the Reformation to the Civil War*

Peter White



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1 The polemics of predestination: William Prynne and Peter Heylyn

'The task of the religious historian of England between the Elizabethan Settlement and the Civil War', it has been said, 'is . . . one of daunting complexity, if he is to confront the entire scene.' Somehow he must describe the simultaneous emergence of two 'almost antithetical processes': an increasing diversity of religious allegiance on the one hand, and the growth of a Protestant consensus on the other, closely linked with a sense of national identity and a hostility to Catholic foreign powers and to the Pope himself.¹

One answer to this dilemma has been to assert the existence of a doctrinal consensus usually labelled Calvinism as a 'theological cement' which held the Elizabethan and Jacobean church together. The Lambeth Articles of 1595, agreed to by Archbishop Whitgift and sent by him to Cambridge to be imposed upon the university, are held to be conclusive evidence of that consensus. The English Civil War is then seen as primarily the result of a Laudian or Arminian assault on a previously triumphant Calvinism. From that perspective, the Arminian assertion of 'the free will of all men to obtain salvation' was, in a society as steeped in Calvinist theology as England, revolutionary, and is the main reason why religion became an issue in the Civil War crisis. Differences over rites and ceremonies or over church government were not too divisive while Calvinist predestinarian ideas provided a 'common and ameliorating bond', as they did under Elizabeth and even more under James I. James's education in Scotland had left him favourably disposed towards Calvinist teaching. The majority of the clergy and probably most of the laity were convinced predestinarians. The harmony that ensued was symbolized by the attendance of English divines at the Synod of Dort.

Unfortunately this Calvinist heritage was overthrown in the 1620s by Arminianism. A small group of clergy – Neile, Andrewes, Buckeridge and Overall, with Laud in the background – captured the minds first of the ageing king, then of Buckingham and the heir to the throne.

¹ P. Collinson, 'The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion', in C. Haigh (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth* (1984), 175.

Their manifesto was Richard Montagu's *New Gagg*, published in 1624. The accession of Charles was decisive, for the new king became within a few months the architect of a revolution. Doctrinal Calvinists, humiliated in front of Buckingham at the York House Conference, were excluded from royal counsels and from ecclesiastical preferment. The isolation of the court from Calvinist opinions, and the aggressive Arminian policies pursued during the personal rule, ultimately drove previously law-abiding episcopalian Calvinists, both in England and Scotland, into counter-resistance to the king and the church hierarchy: but it was unquestionably the king and Laud who were the innovators, and the Puritans, the reactionaries; and even in 1640 the essential issue was doctrinal.²

This understanding of the doctrinal evolution of the English Church is by no means unsupported by contemporary evidence. That evidence comes, however, very largely from the latter part of the period, and from by no means disinterested sources. It derives above all from William Prynne. Prynne's *Anti-Arminianisme* has, it is claimed,³ 'never been answered' as a demonstration of the comprehensive commitment of the Elizabethan and Jacobean church to Calvinist orthodoxy. It was Prynne who, in seeking to demonstrate that commitment, first appealed to the output of the printing presses and to the content of university theses. It is Prynne, furthermore, who first advanced the view, often repeated but seldom argued, that there was a connection between 'Arminian' error in doctrine and 'Popish' ceremony in worship. The claim that until 1640 Prynne was a moderate should deceive no one.⁴ *Anti-Arminianisme* was written, as its author himself acknowledged, to persuade King Charles's third Parliament into passing an Act against it.⁵ Prynne had wanted action before the 'poisonous works of Aquinas, Lombard, Scotus, Suarez, Bellarmine and such like Popish schoolmen . . . read by too many, whence they smell and stink of Popery and Neutrality ever after, to their own perdition' did any more damage. The Dutch Arminians had been dealt with too leniently at Dort; English ones should be eliminated root and

² The argument here summarized is best known from N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter Revolution', in C. Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973), 119–43, since elaborated in *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640* (1987). Dewey Wallace 'is in the strongest possible agreement with his conclusions that Arminianism in England represented an utterly radical theological innovation'. D. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology* (Chapel Hill, 1982), 220.

³ N. Tyacke, in a letter published in *History Today* 34 (1984), 49.

⁴ W. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (1963), 13.

⁵ William Prynne, *The Church of England's Old Antithesis to the New Arminianisme* (1629), sig. c2'; it appeared 'much enlarged' as *Anti-Arminianisme* in 1630. Prynne's reply to Montagu, *The Perpetuities of a Regenerate Man's Estate* (1626), was independent of either (pace Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination*, 85–6). Prynne's other specifically anti-Arminian book was *God, No Impostor or Deluder: An Answer to a Popish and Arminian Cavil, in the defence of Free Will and Universal Grace* (1629).

branch. 'This infernal monster, which . . . breaks the golden chains of salvation in pieces . . . (whatever some may vainly dream) is but an old-condemned heresy, raised up from hell of late, by some Jesuits and infernal spirits, to kindle a combustion of all Protestant states and Churches.' It was the heresy of Pelagius, revived after lying dead for over a thousand years 'by a kind of Pythagorean metempsychosis' in the shape of Arminius and his followers. In its new form 'it is but a bridge, an usher unto Popery and all Popish ceremonies, which wind themselves into our church apace'.⁶

Prynne claimed that Anti-Arminianism was 'the pith and marrow of divinity'. 'The whole fabric of our salvation' depended on it.⁷ Far from being superfluous, nice or curious speculations, the truths of predestination had saved England from the Spanish Armada in 1588 and from the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.⁸ Prynne posed as a truly orthodox Anglican. Although translations of Calvin and Beza proved that the Church of England had 'indenized and adopted these foreign authors', the only proper appeal was to the Articles of Religion, the Homilies and the Book of Common Prayer, supplemented by the 'authorized writings of all the learned orthodox writers of the Church of England from the Reformation to this present'.⁹ To these Prynne added the Lambeth Articles, which far from being the resolutions of private men had been approved by both archbishops and the whole University of Cambridge. It was wrong to say that they had been revoked by Queen Elizabeth, and in any case they were included in the Irish Articles of 1615, issued under the Great Seal. Thirdly, appeal could be made to the conclusions of the Synod of Dort, 'convented by the pious care and providence of our late sovereign King James', to which the English delegates had subscribed not as private persons but as representatives of the Church of England. Finally, Prynne claimed a unanimity of doctoral theses in both universities for his anti-Arminian tenets. 'Scarce a graduate in divinity, but hath either in lectures or disputes, defended them in the school.' There had been 'not one authorized or approved writer of our Church (for I count not Barrett, Thomson, Montagu or Jackson such) who did ever once oppugn them. Yea all such who have formerly but barked against them in their inconsiderate sermons, have been forced to sing a public palinode for their pains.'¹⁰

According to Prynne, Arminianism meant first the denial of an absolute, immutable and irrevocable decree of predestination. There was no

⁶ W. Prynne, *The Church of England's Old Antithesis*, sig. c2^r-c3^v.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. ¶¶2^v.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. a2^v-a3^r.

predestination of particular persons, but generally a predestination of believers and unbelievers. Their respective numbers might therefore be increased or diminished. Election was conditional upon divinely foreseen faith, perseverance and good works. The only cause of reprobation was foresight of sin. Sufficient grace was granted to all men by which they might be saved if they would. Christ died for all men, without any intent to save any particular persons more than others. Men might either finally or totally resist the grace of God. True justifying faith was neither a fruit of election nor even exclusive to the elect alone, being often found in reprobates. The elect might fall both totally and finally from a state of grace.¹¹

In order to refute these positions, Prynne took each doctrine in turn, contrasting it with its orthodox antithesis. He dealt first, therefore, with the eternity and immutability of election. His case for unanimity, beginning with Tyndall and ending modestly with his own *Perpetuity of a Regenerate Man's Estate*, is overdrawn but convincing enough. Unfortunately it is irrelevant to the theological debate between Calvinists and Arminians, since they both accepted that common biblical premiss. Prynne implies otherwise, but it was no part of his purpose to be fair to those who had doubts about the more uncompromising presentations of predestinarian belief, and he did not consider it necessary to quote them.

Other points were nearer the heart of the matter. In asserting the mere will and pleasure of God to be the only cause both of election and reprobation Prynne was indeed defending an interpretation of the 17th Article strongly argued by Cambridge Calvinists like Whitaker in the 1590s against William Barrett and Peter Baro. But it was much more difficult to demonstrate a universal consent to that interpretation. All Prynne could say about Bradford and Hooper was that they were demonstrably anti-Pelagian, and therefore 'must have' been anti-Arminian. 'These writers . . . make wholly for us, not against us, if rightly understood.'¹² It was on contentious issues like this that appeal had to be made – as was usual in 1628 – to the Articles of Ireland and the Synod of Dort.

In turning to consider universal grace Prynne was even less concerned to do justice to the opposition. He dismissed it as merely the assertion of free will, 'the only centre upon which the whole fabric of Arminianism is erected; by the undermining of which alone, the superstruction, both of Pelagianism, Popery, Arminianism and Libertinism, are utterly subverted'.¹³ And now Prynne dropped all pretence that he was not engaged in routine polemic. 'Our Arminians to support this rotten idol

¹¹ Ibid., 49–51.

¹² Ibid., 71, 118–19.

¹³ Ibid., 78. *Anti-Arminianisme*, 113.

of free will, are forced to maintain a conditional, mutable, general and confused decree of predestination only . . . If no predestination, then no vocation, no justification, no faith, no salvation, predestination being the original fountain of all these, and the main foundation both of grace and glory.' Free will made the fickle will of man the basis of the divine decrees; it made 'the great controller of the world a bare spectator'; it deified the will of man, pulled God out of heaven, destroyed the essence and nature of grace, suspended the efficacy of Christ's death, falsified Scripture, opened a gap to licentiousness,¹⁴ and 'lastly, it would make the most of all our Arminian sticklers (who are generally the very proudest, the slothfullest, the most ambitious, envious, lascivious, voluptuous and prophanest of our clergy, making no conscience for to feed their flocks, with which they are seldom resident, but when some tithes or gains come in) exceeding obstinate and graceless sinners. For if they have this power to convert, repent and leave their sins (as they pretend to have) why are their actions and their lives so vicious?'¹⁵

The Church of England's Old Antithesis to the New Arminianisme was a lawyer's brief rather than a work of theology. To argue that because the 'ancient Church of England' was unanimous in its rejection of Pelagianism, it was therefore necessarily anti-Arminian was mere polemic. Prynne refused to recognize the evident existence within both the Protestant churches abroad and the Church of England of differences of opinion on the doctrine of predestination. His assertion of unanimity involved him in a gross distortion of the teaching of Bradford, Hooper and Latimer, to mention no others. His discussion of the doctrine of reprobation was vitiated by his assumption that 'predestination' normally denoted both election to life and reprobation to death, but in sixteenth-century scholarly usage it was usually a synonym for election, and excluded reprobation. Prynne used the ambiguity to argue, illegitimately, that because the church taught unconditional election it therefore taught unconditional reprobation. Because the 17th Article does not mention reprobation, Prynne had to appeal both to the Lambeth Articles and the Synod of Dort, and to pretend that they represented official orthodoxy. But there is a much more profound reason why Prynne's discussion is wrong-headed. The essence of theology is the resolution of the great antinomies, of nature and grace, of freedom and necessity, of faith and works, of divine love and divine justice, of the command to preach the Gospel to all the world in the face of the rejection of that Gospel by the world, of hope and despair, of assurance and doubt, of good and evil. In proclaiming the reconciliation of God and man, it finds itself reconciling opposites. It is a search

¹⁴ *The Church of England's Old Antithesis*, 79–85, *Anti-Arminianisme*, 114.

¹⁵ *The Church of England's Old Antithesis*, 87, *Anti-Arminianisme*, 136.

for equipoise, the pursuit of the middle way. For Prynne there was no middle way. Montagu was condemned because he was a neuter, a Proteus, a chameleon. His religion was a weather-cock.¹⁶ Prynne's attack on him is a classic example of an excluded middle.

The ecclesiastical pastures which nourished 'anti-Arminianism' also produced anti-Calvinism. Where Prynne was William Laud's most prolific opponent, Peter Heylyn, only to a degree less prolific in controversy, was his first biographer: the Laud with whom the modern student is familiar remains substantially Laud seen through Heylyn's eyes. Most of Heylyn's controversial church histories date from the 1640s and 1650s, and several of them were not published until after his death in 1662. Harassed by Prynne in 1640, Heylyn lost all his money and his library early in the war, and spent much of the rest of it wandering from house to house in disguise.¹⁷ The attack on episcopacy and the Prayer Book, together with the execution of Laud and later of Charles I, confirmed all the warnings that farsighted Anglicans like Bancroft and Montagu had issued earlier concerning the evil designs of the 'Calvinian faction.'

Heylyn's conspiracy theory reached maturity in *Aerius Redivivus*, or *The History of the Presbyterians*. The 'faction' had been the chief source of civil discord ever since the 'Genevians' had returned from exile. The Genevan Bible was a preparative to the introduction of 'the whole body of Calvinism, as well in reference to government, and forms of worship, as to points of doctrine'. Some of the Puritans 'in their zeal to the name of Calvin, preferred him once before St Paul'. They had received encouragement from persons near the queen, and especially from Leicester. A fatal step was the setting up of the French Calvinist Church in England by Grindal at the request of Beza: it was both a model for Presbyterians like Cartwright ('the very Calvin of the English') and one of the reasons for the alienation of church papists. It was primarily as a result of Cartwright's activities that the faction arrogated to themselves titles like 'the godly', 'the elect' and 'the righteous', to distinguish themselves from orthodox Christians, who were dubbed 'carnal Gospellers', 'the prophane' and 'the wicked'. Their divisiveness was reflected even in their repudiation of heathen names for their children, who instead were christened 'Accepted', 'Consolation', 'Discipline', 'Kill-sin' and so forth. Similarly

¹⁶ W. Prynne, *Perpetuities of a Regenerate Man's Estate*, 250–1. Similarly, Laud 'was another Cassander, or middle man between an absolute Papist and a real Protestant'. W. Prynne, *Rome's Masterpiece* (1644), 28–9. But by then Prynne was significantly less confident of the doctrinal charge: 'an absolute Papist in all matters of ceremony, pomp and external worship . . . if not half a one at least, in doctrinal tenets'.

¹⁷ Biographical details from *Ecclesia Restaurata, or The History of the Reformation of the Church of England by Peter Heylyn . . . with a life of the author by John Barnard* . . . ed, J. G. Robertson (2 vols., Cambridge, 1849).

with their dress. The 'turkey gowns' worn by the delegates to the Hampton Court Conference reflected their subscription to Cartwright's opinion that in outward ceremonies 'we ought . . . rather to conform . . . to the fashion of the Turks than to the Papists'. Meanwhile, 'in the Low Countries all things prospered with the Presbyterians, who thrive best when they involve whole Nations in blood and sacrilege'.¹⁸

Heylyn's fullest discussion of matters doctrinal was reserved for his *Historia Quinquarticularis*. The burden of his attack on Calvin was familiar from Romanist polemic: he made God the author of sin.¹⁹ In arguing a necessity in Adam to commit sin, because the Lord has so decreed it, Calvin maintained that God had sentenced millions of men to everlasting damnation necessarily, inevitably and without respect to their moral condition. Having ordained the end, He must ordain the means. 'The odious inferences which are raised out of these opinions I forbear to press, and shall add only at the present, that if we grant this doctrine to be true and orthodox, we may do well to put an *Index expurgatorius* upon the Creed and quite expunge the Article of Christ's coming to judgement.'²⁰ Beza and his followers made the doctrine even 'wilder' by placing the decree of predestination before the Fall, 'which Calvin had more rightly placed in the corrupted mass of mankind'.²¹ The differences between them were reflected at the Synod of Dort, where arguments between the delegates had been quite as bitter as at the Council of Trent. Those differences did not, however, prevent the condemnation of the Arminians, who were looked on as mortal enemies. The supralapsarians, by contrast, were gently treated as erring brethren, Maccovius receiving no other reprimand for calling God the author of sin 'and many other expressions of a like foul nature' than a friendly warning to forbear such language in future.²² Although Heylyn conceded that the canons were sublapsarian, his summary of the decrees ('the shortest and withal the most favourable summary . . . I have . . . met')²³ was unscrupulously designed to arouse his readers' moral outrage. 'God by an absolute decree hath elected . . . a very small number of men, without any regard for their faith or obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and

¹⁸ P. Heylyn, *Aerius Redivivus, or The History of the Presbyterians* (2nd edn, 1672), 213–15, 221–4, 254, 289, 334.

¹⁹ P. Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis, or a Declaration of the Judgement of the Church of England in the Five Controverted Points, Reproached in these Last Times by the Name of Arminianism* (3 vols, in 1, 1660), I. 6, citing Calvin's *Institutes*, III. 23, 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, I. 37. But cf. 38, where supralapsarianism is said to have been 'first broached by Calvin'.

²² P. Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, I. 66–7.

²³ Heylyn's authority was the noted anti-Calvinist Laurence Womock, *The Examination of Tilenus before the Triers . . . to which is annexed the Tenets of the Remonstrants* (1658).

appointed them by the same decree to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity or impenitency.' Christ had died exclusively for the elect, 'having neither had any intent or commandment . . . to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'. Man had lost free will by Adam's Fall, and thereafter whatever he did or did not do was by an 'unavoidable necessity'. The elect were unable to reject grace, the reprobate unable to accept it. Once having received grace, the elect could never fall 'finally, or totally, notwithstanding the most enormous sins they can commit'.

Heylyn maintained that Arminianism, far from being novel, was older than Calvinism. Even in the Netherlands Arminius was by no means the first who had protested against the more rigorous doctrines brought in by the French ministers who settled there under the protection of William of Nassau.²⁴ Arminius had spread the doctrines; but there was no more reason for calling them Arminianism than for calling the great western continent America. Really they were the views held by all the ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, until St Augustine's time, by the Jesuits and Franciscans in the Church of Rome (the Dominicans holding views comparable to those of Calvin) and by Melancthon and all his followers in the Lutheran churches. Among the Reformed, the Zwinglian doctrines were the same as the Calvinists. Heylyn did not accept that St Augustine provided support for Calvin, even though harsh expressions had escaped his pen in his writings against Pelagius.

In the Church of England, the Melancthonian views had been held by Hooper and Latimer in the reign of King Edward. For Heylyn these 'old English Protestants' understood the true Anglican doctrine, represented by the Thirty-nine Articles, the Homilies, and the first Liturgy of King Edward VI ('the key to the whole work').²⁵ These were complete before either Bucer or Martyr arrived in England, and 'I am sure that our first reformers were too old to be put to school unto either of them.'²⁶ In any case Bucer approved of the first Book of Homilies, and the second Prayer Book marked only liturgical, and not doctrinal, development. Even under Elizabeth, there was nothing in Nowell's Catechism 'which a true English Protestant or a Belgic Remonstrant may not easily grant, and yet preserve himself from falling into Calvinism in any of the points disputed'.²⁷

The 'first great breach' in the true doctrine, after the returning exiles

²⁴ Heylyn instanced Isbrandius, Snecanus, Holmanus, Meinhardius and Wiggerius as 'professed anti-Calvinists before Arminius was ever even heard of'. *Historia Quinquarticularis*, I. 48. Cf. P. Heylyn, *Certamen Epistolare* (1659), 22–3.

²⁵ Heylyn, *Certamen Epistolare*, 164.

²⁶ Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, II. 4–34; *Certamen Epistolare*, 162–3.

²⁷ Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, III. 24–6.

(‘though otherwise men of good abilities in most parts of learning . . . so altered in their principles, as to points of doctrine, so disaffected to the government, to forms of worship here by law established, that they seemed not to be the same men at their coming home as they had been at their going hence’),²⁸ was the work of Foxe. Even Foxe, however, agreed that we should rest in God’s general promise, and not cumber our heads with any further speculations. William Perkins’s *Armilla Aurea* (1592), first in Latin then (*The Golden Chain*) in English, marked the arrival of the fully fledged supralapsarian doctrine derived from Beza, though set forth more methodically. It became ‘wondrously acceptable amongst those of the Calvinian party’, the Latin edition being reprinted fifteen times in the space of twenty years. The defence of Perkins, ‘though otherwise a godly and learned man’, ‘hath given the church some more than necessary troubles . . . not without manifest scandal to it’.²⁹

In his comments on the two universities, Heylyn was prepared substantially to concede Prynne’s case that Calvinism was triumphant. He gives a graphic *tour d’horizon* of its hegemony at Oxford:

The face of that university was so much altered, that there was little to be seen in it of the Church of England, according to the principles and positions upon which it was at first reformed. All the Calvinian rigours in matters of Predestination, and the points depending thereupon, received as the established doctrines of the Church of England; the necessity of the one sacrament, the eminent dignity of the other, and the powerful efficacy of both unto man’s salvation, not only disputed, but denied; the article of Christ’s local descent into hell . . . totally disclaimed, because repugnant to the fancies of some foreign divines . . . Episcopacy maintained by halves, not as a distinct order from that of the presbyters, but only a degree above them, or perhaps not that, for fear of giving scandal to the churches of Calvin’s platform; the Church of Rome inveighed against as the whore of Babylon . . . the Pope as publicly maintained to be Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, and this as positively and magisterially as if it had been one of the chief articles of the Christian faith . . . the visibility of the church . . . no otherwise maintained, than by looking for it in the scattered conventicles of the Berengarians in Italy, the Albigenses in France, the Hussites in Bohemia, and the Wycliffites among ourselves. Nor was there any greater care taken for the forms and orders of this church, than there had been for points of doctrine, the surplice so disused . . . and the divine service of the Church so slubbered over in most of the colleges . . . And in a word, the books of Calvin made the rule by which all men were to square their writings, his only word (like the *ipse dixit* of Pythagoras) admitted for the sole canon to which they were to frame and conform their judgements . . . so as it might have proved more safe for any man . . . to have been looked upon as an heathen or publican, than an anti-Calvinist.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., 48.

²⁹ Ibid., 62–5.

³⁰ P. Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus, or, The History of the Life and Death of William [Laud]* (1668), 51–2.

All the more credit, therefore, to Harsnett, to Barrett and to Baro for defending at Cambridge the 'genuine doctrine of the church', which by 1595 'was beginning then to break through the clouds of Calvinism, wherewith it was obscured, and to shine forth again in its former lustre'.³¹ At Oxford, Heylyn, confessed, he could find no evidence of anyone who had been prepared to oppose Calvinism publicly in the university until after the turn of the century. The best he could do was to speculate that in all probability 'some hundreds' had held anti-Calvinist opinions without making them known! Yet even if Buckeridge, Howson and Laud were the sole witnesses to the cause, they would still be sufficient to show that the church had not lost altogether possession of her primitive truths. *Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*.³²

Heylyn was not quite sure what to make of James I. For all his boasting of his 'king's craft', Heylyn thought that usually he allowed himself to be manipulated by others.³³ To his credit were his handling of the Millenary Petition ('no less tedious than it was impertinent') and the Hampton Court Conference. On the debit side was his approval of the Irish Articles of 1615. Worst of all were the hostile expressions the king had used against Vorstius (Prynne had made much of the reference to that 'enemy of God, Arminius'), which Heylyn had to explain by reference to James's education in Scotland, the influence of George Abbot and James Montagu, the 'transport of affection' he had for the Prince of Orange which clouded 'the clear light of his own understanding', but most probably to *raison d'état*, which made the unity of the Netherlands vital to his foreign policy.³⁴

Notwithstanding all that, James's preferments, especially of Bancroft, Barlow, Neile, Buckeridge, Harsnett, Overall, Howson, Cary and Laud were encouragements 'by which . . . the anti-Calvinians or old English Protestants took heart, and more openly declared themselves'.³⁵ The rise of Dutch Arminianism helped the Church of England to recover the true interpretation of its Articles. In the universities the king's directions of 1616 to study the church Fathers were a great blow 'which most apparently conduced to the ruin of Calvinism'.³⁶ The outbreak of the Thirty Years War was the final turning point. The Calvinists – and none more than Abbot – saw it as their opportunity to dethrone the Pope and set up Calvin in his chair, if necessary by pawning the crown jewels. But the king now

³¹ Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, III. 87.

³² *Ibid.*, 92 (printed 74).

³³ P. Heylyn, *Observations on The History of the Reign of King Charles published by H.L. Esq.* (1656), 13–14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23–4.

³⁵ Heylyn, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, III. 103.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 106–7.

finally decided that the only way to suppress the Presbyterians was to let Richard Montagu loose on them, 'a man of mighty parts and undaunted spirit' who knew better than any how to 'discriminate the doctrines of the Church of England from those which were peculiar to the sect of Calvin'. The accession of Charles I and the supremacy of Laud completed the triumph of the 'anti-Calvinist party'.³⁷

This book re-examines the story that Prynne and Heylyn tell. Underlying that re-examination is the conviction that church history is worth studying for its own sake, and not merely as a tool of political explanation. It attempts to distinguish theology from polemic, and to demonstrate that theological development had a momentum of its own, which was sometimes at odds with political circumstances and the interests of the court. It seeks to do justice to the continuing power in the Reformation period of what was considered authoritative in the past, made in response to perceptions of paramount concerns in the present. Above all, however, it reflects the conviction that the model of a theological dichotomy between 'Calvinism' and 'Arminianism' is simply inadequate for understanding either the overall development of doctrine in the Reformation period, or of personal allegiances within it. This is by no means to deny the existence of polarities, but rather to suggest that they were concurrent and evolutionary rather than abruptly linear, that there was development within a continuing spectrum, a development to which theologians of contrasting churchmanship contributed, in spite of their indulgence from time to time in the language of polemic against each other.

A spectrum, however, includes a middle area. Where Prynne denied one altogether, Heylyn's lay between popery and Puritanism.³⁸ Interestingly, neither made more than a passing reference to John Jewel. Prynne gives only two references to Hooker – slender enough evidence for assimilating him to his prevailing orthodoxy: yet Heylyn cited him not at all.³⁹ Neither Prynne nor Heylyn made use of the British 'Suffrage' to Dort, surely a better indication of what the delegates thought were the doctrines of the Church of England than the canons of that synod. Heylyn was only lukewarm in his references to John Overall.⁴⁰ He did

³⁷ Ibid., 110.

³⁸ Prynne and others complained that Heylyn's 'Puritans' included all the 'real Protestants'. Hence the charge, repeated by Baxter, that the Laudians redefined Puritanism to include conformists 'who in doctrine were not Arminian'. For Heylyn's reply, see *Certamen Epistolare*, 1–19.

³⁹ Heylyn was reduced to suggesting that Hooker's *Discourse on Justification* must have been either a product of his misinformed youth, or alternatively doctored after his death, *Historia Quinquarticularis*, III. 90.

⁴⁰ 'He did not Arminianize in all things, but I am sure he Calvinized in none', P. Heylyn, *Respondet Petrus* (1658), 175. In the *Historia Quinquarticularis* Heylyn compared the 'invincible constancy of Barrett' – Heylyn denied that he had recanted – with the 'slender opposition' of Overall, III. 87.

not quote the views of Lancelot Andrewes. Even the Richard Montagu of the *New Gagg* was too hesitant to serve his purpose.⁴¹ This book argues that protestations of moderation should not invariably be dismissed as mere rhetoric.⁴² Perhaps there was a middle ground that neither Prynne nor Heylyn could see.

⁴¹ Ibid., II, 85–6, on Montagu's admission in the *New Gagg* that the Church of England had left the doctrine of perseverance 'undecided'.

⁴² P. Lake, 'Calvinism and the English Church, 1570–1635', *Past and Present* 114 (1987), 69. Cf. P. White, 'The *Via Media* in the Early Stuart Church', in K. Fincham (ed.), *The English Church under the Early Stuarts* (forthcoming).