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LICENSING, CENSORSHIP, AND RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY IN EARLY STUART ENGLAND*

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ABSTRACT. *This article engages with recent work on the nature of religious censorship in the early Stuart period that has emphasized that the government possessed neither the power nor the will to control systematically what was written. It is argued here, instead, that there is evidence of attempts to control the presses' output of religious materials during the Laudian period and earlier, by all parties within the Church of England. Nevertheless, the intention here is not to revive a simplistic view of government 'control', but rather to study the means by which licensers could exert an influence over what would be printed with an aura of mainstream legitimacy. Texts were often interfered with by official licensers with a variety of motives. Interference might sometimes be essentially 'benign', conferring legitimacy on marginal works by massaging their contents, or texts might be modified in order to make their authors appear to endorse the views of their opponents. The issue of whether it was practically possible to publish work clandestinely is here seen to be something of a red herring, since by publishing in this illicit fashion authors were effectively resigning their right to be considered as spokesmen of the orthodox mainstream. It is the control and manipulation of the licensing process which emerges as one important means by which the religious middle ground was defined and controlled in the early Stuart period.*

In recent years it has been fashionable for early modern historians to emphasize the degree to which the coercive powers of the state were strictly limited. Lacking modern communication networks and a professional salaried bureaucracy, central government could only secure compliance through a policy of co-operation with local ruling elites, and legal punishment tended to be exemplary rather than comprehensive. In religious affairs, historians have emphasized the weakness of the government as it sought to enforce religious change, with the further refinement in some more recent scholarship that the government was itself not necessarily interested in securing a uniform religious culture.[1] These developments have been paralleled by recent literature on the

* An earlier version of this paper was first delivered at the Tudor–Stuart seminar at the Institute of Historical Research in June 1992, and it has had subsequent outings at early modern research seminars at the Universities of Manchester and Sheffield, as well as at the Anglo-American Conference of Historians in July 1996. I am grateful to those present on each of these occasions for their comments, and especially to Peter Lake and Julia Merritt for subsequent discussions.

[1] A. J. Fletcher, *Reform in the provinces* (Yale, 1986); M. Braddick, 'The early modern English state and the question of differentiation, from 1550 to 1700', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38 (1996), pp. 92–111; C. Haigh, *English reformations* (London, 1993); M. C. Questier, 'Sir Henry Spiller, recusancy and the efficiency of the Jacobean exchequer', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), pp. 251–66.

nature of religious censorship in the early Stuart period. Here there has been a rejection of the idea of extensive government control, and interest in control, implied in Christopher Hill's vision of a crippling, all-embracing censorship which stifled the radical expression of radical opinions, and in Nicholas Tyacke's emphasis on the restraints imposed on the printing of anti-Calvinist opinions by Archbishop Laud during the 1630s. Instead, it has been argued that the government possessed neither the power nor the personnel to exercise such extensive and purposeful control. According to this view, the state never attempted to exercise a rigid control over what was written or believed, least of all to 'suppress all criticism'. Censorship, it is now argued, was merely intended 'to forestall not criticism, but disorder' and 'subversion'.[2] In the case of Laudianism, historians such as Sheila Lambert, Peter White, and others have maintained that there was no real attempt to control the expression of Calvinist opinion in the 1630s. Indeed, Dr Lambert has suggested that economic pressures resulting from the small size of the market for books were if anything more important in restraining authors than were the activities of the government, and that it was the monopolistic desires of the Stationers' Company, rather than the government's passion for censorship, which lay behind the increasing regulation of printing that was introduced with the infamous Star Chamber decree of 1637.[3]

This paper is intended to take another look at the control of religious literature in the early Stuart period, testing the view that there was no systematic control of the presses' output of religious materials during the Laudian period, but also tackling the broader issue of whether those in authority really had either the power or the desire to control religious opinion. Before addressing the evidence in any detail, however, there are a number of preliminary points which must be raised concerning the presuppositions behind some of the recent work on censorship described above. First, there are obvious problems in trying to argue, as some have done, that the government was only concerned with publications that threatened social or political obedience and order. What constitutes a threat of political disorder is very much in the eye of the beholder, and Charles I and Archbishop Laud are notorious for having discerned the threat of puritan populism in a whole range of political and religious beliefs and patterns of behaviour where other

[2] S. Lambert, 'State control of the press in theory and practice: the role of the Stationers' Company before 1640', in R. Myers and M. Harris, eds., *Censorship and the control of print in England and France, 1600–1910* (Winchester, 1992), pp. 1–32, at pp. 7–9; idem, 'Richard Montagu, Arminianism and censorship', *Past & Present*, 124 (1989), pp. 36–68, at p. 58; A. B. Worden, 'Literature and political censorship in early modern England', in A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse, eds., *Too mighty to be free: censorship in Britain and the Netherlands*, Britain and the Netherlands, IX (Zutphen, 1987), pp. 45–62; Christopher Hill, 'Censorship and English literature', in Hill, *The collected essays of Christopher Hill*, I: *Writing and revolution in 17th century England* (Brighton, 1985), ch. 2; N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1990), pp. xiii, 184.

[3] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 58–68; idem, 'State control', pp. 9–23; idem, 'The printers and the government, 1604–1637', in R. Myers and M. Harris, eds., *Aspects of printing from 1600* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1–29; Peter White, *Predestination, policy and polemic* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 287–307.

contemporaries would have seen nothing of the kind. Moreover, polemical literature in this period sought at every point to discredit the opponent's belief by claiming that it potentially threatened the social and political order. The point at which criticism constituted a threat of disorder was therefore itself the battleground in the seventeenth century: it is not an objective criterion that we can employ in a straightforward way to evaluate contemporary behaviour. This is particularly important as, in religious affairs, we cannot even speak of a single 'establishment' or 'government' position in this period. The question of precisely what was a threat depended on exactly what one thought was there to be threatened, and here opinions varied as to what was the precise doctrinal position of the Church of England. As I will suggest, we need to reject a simple attempt to view censorship as the control exerted by a monolithic government over 'oppositionist' writers, but instead view the manipulation of printing controls as one of the many ways by which competing religious groups sought to establish their own criteria of orthodoxy. When we do this, then the control of the press can be recognized as a crucial area in which the battle for religious orthodoxy was fought, and in which the Laudians can still be seen to have been both aggressive and effective combatants.

I

Any discussion of printing controls must begin with their linchpin – the licenser. The shortcomings of the licensing system as a method of control are all too obvious. Theoretically, a cumbersome system operated. A copy of a work was perused by one of the bishop's chaplains, who would indicate his allowance after noting any revisions that should be made, after which the manuscript would be taken to the Stationers' Hall for further perusal by the wardens, who would affix their names only after ensuring that the necessary authorization had been received from the chaplain and that any stipulated revisions to the text had been performed. The clerk would then examine the work again, checking for the authorizing signatures, before the book was finally formally entered in the Stationers' Register.[4]

Most scholars would agree that there was a large gap between theory and practice, however. The chaplains responsible for examining submitted works were, as Sheila Lambert has noted, under potentially crippling pressure of work, and could not be expected to read a good deal of what was put in front of them with anything more than a cursory glance. Once the work came back from the chaplain, an author might easily insert a few pages of additional matter – indeed, in 1634 the king's printer alleged that copies were frequently corrupted after they had been returned, and schismatical additions inserted. We know that many books were entered in the Stationers' Register before they

[4] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', p. 67; H. S. Bennett, *English books and readers, 1603 to 1640* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 40–1; L. Kirschbaum, *Shakespeare and the stationers* (Columbus, OH, 1955), p. 36.

had received a licence (and some before they had even been written).[5] From the early 1620s we can find several examples of the problems faced by a licenser and the ease with which his instructions might be evaded while still gaining from him the necessary authorization. All this provides useful evidence against Christopher Hill's model of an all-embracing, remorseless censorship. But these examples also permit an analysis of the different methods and intentions (aside from the merely obstructive) that might lie behind the licenser's use of his powers in the 1620s, as religious controversy became increasingly acrimonious.

The main problem which bedevils all discussion of licensing and censorship during this period is that it is only by pure chance that evidence of the editing process survives. This is the main difficulty in assessing the scope of revision at the press, and in evaluating the extent to which the Laudian press operating under Charles I may have been more severe and intrusive than previous regulators. It is comparatively rare that we can find detailed examples of this process in action, and these often only emerge when the licenser's specifications were disregarded. But by offering examples of three books dealt with in different ways by the same licenser – Archbishop Abbot's chaplain Daniel Featley – we can see how a licenser's aims in demanding revisions to texts might be subtly different in each case, and can help to illustrate the variety of powers and motives in play in the relationship between author and licenser.

In the first case, Featley sought to censor and tamper with the text of a work which he found offensive and doctrinally suspect. The work in question was a sermon by one Edward Maie, a provocative preacher at Lincoln's Inn, whose sermon *The communion of saints* (preached at the end of Hilary Term, 1620) caused a stir when first delivered and may have caused his departure from the Inn soon afterwards. Maie's is an extraordinary work, vehement in its anti-puritanism, suffused with outspoken sacramental and sacerdotal utterances as extreme as anything published at the height of the Laudian decade.[6] Faced with the sermon, the licenser Featley sought to make various alterations in a more Protestant direction: specifying, for example, that the sentence that priests were 'makers of Christs body' be rephrased as 'they make up the mysticall body of Christ by the Holy Ghost'. Nevertheless, Maie managed to print his first edition without this and other corrections. When Featley challenged him on this score, Maie promised to make the stipulated change in

[5] Bennett, *Books and readers*, p. 42; W. W. Greg, *Some aspects and problems of London publishing between 1550 and 1650* (Oxford, 1956), p. 113. See also William Prynne, *A briefe survey and censure of Mr. Cozens his couzening devotions* (1628), pp. 91–2, on the methods supposedly used by John Cosin to secure publication of his *Collection of private devotions*. As a result of such abuses, Bennett argues that it was directed that a book might be licensed only with the proviso that every sheet should be individually revised and allowed by the authorities, but the example that he cites for this procedure is Turquet's *General history of Spain continued up to the present* (E. Arber, ed., *A transcript of the records of the Company of Stationers, 1554–1640* (5 vols., London, 1875–94), III, p. 176) (hereafter Arber) which may well have received unusually careful attention because of its political sensitivity.

[6] Edward Maie, *The communion of saints* (1621), passim. See also the discussion of Maie in my *Catholic and reformed* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 70, 199, 351–2. For a further allusion to the controversy surrounding Maie's 'affections to papistry' see Hampshire Record Office, MS 44M69/L30/54: Henry Sherfield to 'Mr Maye', 2 Aug. 1620.

the next impression, but instead inserted a large marginal comment and annotations to a very different effect.[7] The chance survival of an account of Maie and Featley's contretemps should warn us more generally against assuming that a licenser's signature represents a conscious approval of the text of a book as it survives (or even Lambert's counter-assumption that it may represent a careless licenser who had not attempted to revise the text).

Nevertheless, Featley did not aim simply to give texts more firmly Protestant credentials. He was also renowned as a sympathetic licenser of puritan works. For example, Dr Tyacke has noted that all but one of the fourteen posthumous works of the radical puritan Paul Baynes published between 1617 and 1621 were licensed by Featley.[8] Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that Featley was a mere cypher; rather, he appears to have tried to use his position as licenser in order unobtrusively to massage texts with which he was in broad agreement by removing radical or unnecessarily provocative passages in order to secure their acceptance. This meant in particular removing overtly Presbyterian or anti-ceremonialist material from radical puritan texts, presumably with the author's consent. Featley was involved in this practice in the two other texts which caused him particular trouble – namely, those of Edward Elton and William Crompton. Featley only licensed the first fifty-two pages of Elton's *Gods holy minde*, and altered a few things with the author's consent, after which Elton died, and the book was published illegally *in toto*, with a number of more inflammatory passages expounding extreme sabbatarian and potentially sectarian positions regarding the sacraments.[9] This led to the book being formally burned, apparently on the issuing of a royal proclamation against it.

With William Crompton's *St Augustines summes*, Featley found many errors in the book for which it might have been utterly rejected but (as he later explained) he chose to purge the errors, which he did with the help and advice of the moderate puritan Alexander Cooke (who had recently composed the similarly entitled *S. Austines religion*). Featley suppressed three sections of Crompton's book: those dealing with the parity of ministers; the unlawfulness

[7] For example, Maie agreed to insert the words 'to weet, in a sacramentall and mysticall sense', but chose to omit the word 'up' from the phrase 'They make up the mysticall body of Christ': Richard Sheldon, *Christ on his throne* (1622), sigs. A3v–A4r. For Featley's identity as the licenser see Arber, IV, p. 18. The second impression also included one Featley-stipulated passage which had been omitted from the first edition, which added to the sentence 'The preaching of Laicks can convert no more than a good morall sentence out of Seneca' the Protestant face-saver 'setting aside the efficacie of inspired Scripture': Sheldon, *Christ*, sig. a2r.

[8] N. Tyacke, *The fortunes of English puritanism, 1603–1640* (London, 1989), pp. 8–9; Sheffield University Library (SUL), Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 59v.

[9] E.g. Edward Elton, *Gods holy minde* (1625), pp. 106–7, 111–12, 119. A copy of what appears to be a royal proclamation requiring the burning of Elton's work (Cambridge University Library (CUL), MS Gg/1/29 pt II fo. 33) lists eight alleged errors in the book, including extreme sabbatarian and potentially sectarian positions regarding the sacraments. Probably the most significant listed error is that of opposing marriage with papists, which either consciously referred to the French Match, or could be taken by Elton's and Featley's opponents to be so directed. I am grateful to Dr Michael Questier for alerting me to this manuscript. It is understandable that Featley's later account of subsequent exchanges in James's presence concerning Elton's book should not have referred to the matter of the French marriage.

of marriage between parties of a different religion (which would have obvious implications for royal negotiations for a Catholic bride for Charles); and a section regarding the possibility of remarriage for an innocent party after divorce for adultery. Featley did not, however, deem it necessary to remove the claim in Crompton's book that the sign of the cross was only brought in after AD 160 by a heretic, although he later found out that Crompton had actually lifted this passage from the separatist Robert Parker.[10] There are other examples of puritan works which Featley was reported as having altered at the press, including Ezechiel Culverwell's *Treatise of faith* (published in 1623 with prefaces by the puritans Richard Sibbes and William Gouge).[11]

This phenomenon of what one might call 'benign censorship' is a useful reminder that the thorough revision of material by a licenser need not in itself be a sign that the author stood in disfavour. The authorized amendment at the press of Archbishop De Dominis's much-praised *De republica ecclesiastica* is another clear example of this point.[12] Featley's mode of benign censorship may also be observed among some moderate puritans who were not official licensers, but were also involved in guiding more radical puritan texts through the press. The puritan Richard Sibbes wrote introductory prefaces to the works of many fellow-puritans such as Culverwell, Baynes, and Robert Jenison, and saw them through the press. These introductions might on occasion offer a more moderate gloss on the content of the following text, and in at least one case Dr Tyacke has suggested that Sibbes may have deliberately blocked a substantial portion of Baynes's commentary on Ephesians which contained implicitly congregationalist passages.[13] Part of what prompted this moderating process was the practical consideration that certain puritans such as Sibbes were based in London, and could thus more easily see work through the press. But puritan authors were certainly aware of the value of using moderate Calvinist patronage to protect their work, although these discreet and cautious 'middle men' could on occasion provide effective 'benign censorship' and restraint as a price of their support. Robert Jenison found to his frustration that Sibbes's nerve failed him while seeing Jenison's text *The height of Israels heathenish idolatrie* through the press at the height of the Spanish Match. Sibbes insisted on the removal of passages concerning marriage with Roman Catholics on the

[10] Daniel Featley, *Cygnea cantio* (1629), pp. 45, 11, 12–19.

[11] Tyacke, *Fortunes*, p. 15; Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl.), Tanner MS 71 fo. 35r (Thomas Gataker to Samuel Ward, 11 Feb. 1630).

[12] It was reported that some sections of the *De republica ecclesiastica* regarding church government and jurisdiction were stayed at the press by authority and required to be amended: *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* (*CSPD*) *1611–18*, pp. 423, 432. Yet this denoted no lack of officical favour towards the archbishop: he still continued to receive advancement, and indeed King James ordered that many copies of the *De republica* should be distributed among dignitories abroad: W. A. Jackson, ed., *Records of the court of the Stationers' Company, 1602–1640* (London, 1957), pp. 362–4.

[13] M. E. Dever, 'Moderation and deprivation: a reappraisal of Richard Sibbes', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (*JEH*), 43 (1992), pp. 396–413 at pp. 406–8; Tyacke, *Fortunes*, pp. 11–12. An example of the same phenomenon may be the conforming puritan lecturer Robert Hill, who edited the works of the notorious nonconformist Samuel Hieron. I am grateful to Dr Julia Merritt for this point. Dr Merritt is completing an important article on Hill's activities.

grounds that they might 'prove dangerous' to Jenison and his friends.[14] Sibbes was right to worry: hostile reporting of Featley's involvement in the publication of Crompton's and Elton's tracts led to his being summoned before the king to provide an explanation for his conduct. Later in the 1620s, Jenison tried to avoid Sibbes's 'timorousness' and the London licensers altogether by using a separate route: he sought out another well-disposed 'establishment Calvinist' – Samuel Ward – to see his controversial works through the Cambridge press, but with a similar lack of success.[15] We can only guess at the extent to which we may have gained a misleadingly moderate sense of the content of Jacobean puritan writings because of the sanitizing work of Featley, Sibbes, and others. The absence of potentially volatile discussions of church government and attacks on church ceremonies may owe something to tactful editing, as well as to puritan authors' contentment with the Jacobean church.

There was, too, a sense in which the association of famous puritan preachers such as Sibbes with particular books not only offered the chance of appeasing the authorities, but also helped to provide a guaranteed 'godly' endorsement of the work. The prefaces composed by famous puritan preachers such as Sibbes, Thomas Gataker, and William Gouge, and appended to works by more minor or obscure writers, could be compared with the modern endorsement of products by television personalities. The bold statement on the front of Henry Finch's controversial *Calling of the Jewes* that it was 'published by William Gouge' was doubtless intended to boost godly sales.[16] In a sense, such endorsements represented a form of alternative 'godly licensing' – the approving preface or introduction providing a godly 'imprimatur' to assure puritan readers of the orthodoxy of the text, to go along with the official licence that reassured the authorities themselves.

Despite all this activity by licensers, however, it is still important to note how inconsistent and relatively limited their modifications of texts might actually be. For example, while Maie's work was refined, it still contained much that

[14] Bodl., Tanner MS 73 fo. 29 (Robert Jenison to Samuel Ward, 26 May 1621); Dever, 'Sibbes', p. 408. While not stated in his letter to Ward, the book under discussion is clearly Jenison's *The height of Israels heathenish idolatrie* (1621), of which the sermon in question is the third – 'Idolators blind zeale' (originally preached in March 1615, but printed with a dedication to Ward dated 19 Apr. 1621: Jenison, *Height*, iii. sig. Z2). It is not clear whether the printed copy which survives represents any reworking on Sibbes's part: it still retains the odd swipe at the Spanish (iii. p. 24), and warns against the dangers of tolerating idolaters 'and if you will, Papists' (iii. p. 7). Not surprisingly, it was Featley whom Sibbes sought out to license Jenison's work. Four years later Jenison asked Sibbes to write an introduction for another of his books.

[15] Bodl., Tanner MS 71 fo. 30 (Jenison to Ward, 29 Jan. 1629/30); Tanner MS 72 fo. 260v (Jenison to Ward, 20 Mar. 1627/8).

[16] Gataker wrote a preface to Elton's *Gods holy minde*, although he claimed to have had only a 'short view' of Elton's work. Gouge's involvement in Finch's work got him into trouble, however, when the notorious tract was seized and the author imprisoned: *CSPD 1619–23*, pp. 247, 248; Henry Finch, *The worlds great restauration or the calling of Jewes* (1621), title-page; W. R. Prest, 'The art of law and the law of God: Sir Henry Finch (1558–1625)', in D. Pennington and K. Thomas, eds., *Puritans and revolutionaries* (Oxford, 1978). I am grateful to Dr Julia Merritt for drawing my attention to this episode. Dr Merritt is preparing a study of the activities of the London puritan preachers' network.

would have been abhorrent to the licenser, and it is interesting to note that Featley seems to have sought to subvert or alter the sense of Maie's work by adding saving clauses, rather than by completely removing text, or rejecting the book altogether. Moreover, many passages may be found in licensed contemporary literature which might seem to undermine orthodoxy by implication, but which do not appear to have been questioned (although we cannot, of course, be sure that they were not). A typical example is the attack by Andrew Willet in his *Synopsis papismi* (which was dedicated to the queen) on the officially endorsed doctrine of *iure divino* episcopacy. Willet would appear to have got away with this because the passage occurs in an anti-papal context, directed against specifically Roman Catholic authors, such as Bellarmine.[17] As in dramatic literature more generally, apparent challenges to prevailing orthodoxies were legion, but were seldom picked out for regulation unless they were in direct, explicit, and self-conscious conflict with an orthodoxy, or with government policy.[18]

Nevertheless, the government's sensitivity to implied criticism could vary over time. Mention of the Spanish Match reminds us that foreign policy concerns could at times force a tightening up of the regulation of the press, and hence the pressure on individual licensers. The restraints on anti-Catholic polemic during the early 1620s, and the sudden explosion of anti-papal works in the aftermath of Prince Charles's return from Spain, have been exhaustively documented by Professor Cogswell.[19] While he provides plentiful evidence of pressure on pulpits, Cogswell can find few examples of books being directly stopped at the press, perhaps because there was no subsequent parliamentary subcommittee compiling evidence as was the case with the Laudian licensing policy. One example, which seems to demonstrate the sheer speed of the changing climate for authors, is the extraordinary preface to Thomas Beard's *Antichrist the pope of Rome* of 1625. This preface includes a lengthy explanation and justification of the fact that the author is choosing to remain anonymous (evidently composed at the height of government restrictions), while the title-page and dedicatory epistle proudly bear the author's name (which, it seems, had been swiftly added when events swung in a more favourable direction).[20]

Worries over the advisability of printing works apparently critical of the government's foreign policy were legion throughout the 1620s, in religious literature just as much as in newsbooks. In 1628 Jenison was urgently requesting the help of Samuel Ward in Cambridge in securing the approval and printing there of his three sermons on the sin of Achan (prompted by the news of the disastrous Ile de Rhe campaign). Jenison feared that they would be 'ill taken by great ones', and bluntly stated his conviction that, were a copy to be presented to the authorities before publication, they would doubtless

[17] Andrew Willet, *Synopsis papismi* (1600), pp. 235–7, 240; Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, p. 16.
[18] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and compliment: the politics of literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 39.
[19] Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 40–6, 281–94.
[20] Thomas Beard, *Antichrist the pope of Rome* (1625).

suppress it. He therefore gave Ward the option not to become involved if he were fearful, so that Jenison would 'take the whole hazard to my selfe'. Not surprisingly, Ward would appear to have taken the way out offered him, and Jenison's book never appeared.[21]

But these were not merely examples of clerics opposing a secular-minded government. The 1620s also witnessed conflict between different clerical factions (dubbed, for want of better names, 'Arminian' and 'Calvinist'), each of which sought to use the mechanisms of licensing and censorship in order to outlaw the works of their theological opponents. The details of all this have been gone over exhaustively already by a number of historians,[22] and I therefore do not propose to discuss here in any detail the conflicts over Richard Montagu's works, save where they illuminate some of the themes outlined above.

One initial point to make is that Montagu's 'Arminian' treatise *Appello Caesarem* is an example from the 'Arminian' camp of the sort of 'benign censorship' that we have also observed in the puritan camp. We know that some of the more vehement passages that mentioned his opponents were withdrawn during the substantial revision of Montagu's tract by the Durham House camp prior to publication, by his friend John Cosin in particular. The work is also made to back-track from the *New gagg*'s position on a number of specific points, as well as qualifying the earlier emphasis on the congruity of Roman Catholic and English Protestant doctrines by including instead the systematic citation and refutation of more extreme Jesuit positions on the same points, as earnest of Montagu's Protestant good faith.[23] The 1630s were to see further examples of such 'benign censorship' of works on the Laudian side, including those by Christopher Potter, Joseph Mede, and (possibly) Giles Widdowes and Edmund Reeve.[24]

In the increasingly polarized atmosphere of these years, licensing and censorship could be (and were) used as weapons to block texts and embarrass opponents. With the chaplains of Laud and Abbot operating rival licensing policies, it became increasingly important to target rival licensers themselves in order to disable them from passing the works of opponents. The attacks on the works of Elton and Crompton did not come from nowhere, but were

[21] Bodl., Tanner MS 72 fo. 260v (Jenison to Ward, 20 Mar. 1627/8). The text of Joshua 7: 8–9 refers to the sin of Achan. Jenison's particular concern was with the desirability or otherwise of a dedication to the king, for which he asks Ward's advice. Jenison assumed that he should probably entreat leave first for such a dedication, or present a copy before first presuming to print it, but was clearly reluctant, as this would lead to its being suppressed at the press.

[22] On conflicts between the 'Arminian' and 'Calvinist' factions in the 1620s over licensing, see Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, chs. 6 and 7; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 56–61.

[23] *The correspondence of John Cosin*, I, ed. G. Ornsby (Surtees Society, 52, 1868), pp. 27, 29, 34–5, 37, 39–40, 43, 51, 54, 61, 65, 67, 84; Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, pp. 194–5, 214.

[24] William Twisse, *Of the morality of the fourth commandment* (1641), p. 3; Cosin, *Correspondence*, pp. 220–1; A. I. Doyle, 'A new Cosin letter', *The Durham Philobiblon*, 1 (1954), pp. 64–6; William Prynne, *Lame Giles his haultings* (1630), p. 2; Henry Burton, *The Lords Day the Sabbath Day* (2nd edn, 1636), p. 3. Prynne also suggests that this was done with the two editions of Cosin's *Collection of private devotions*: Prynne, *Briefe survey*, pp. 96–7.

deliberately orchestrated by Abbot's opponents – the anti-Calvinist trouble-shooter at work here was John Cosin.[25] If Featley was assaulted in this case in his role as licenser, he was also to suffer more directly as the author of an anonymous tract against Montagu (the anonymity itself reflecting Featley's perilous position) that was called in, with Cosin again acting as hit-man.[26] Cosin was accused of hovering about London, systematically seeking to calumniate Calvinist writings 'and to procure them either to be altogether suppressed, or to be so gelded and mangled, that the sale of them thereby was very much hindred'.[27] On the other side, parliamentary anti-Arminians did their best to track down those responsible for the licensing of Montagu's works, and to portray them as wilfully negligent in precisely the same way that Cosin sought to charge Featley.[28]

The (perhaps rather obvious) point to make about all the divisions of the 1620s is that both sides were seeking to silence their opponents. No one was campaigning for the freedom of the press as such: the battle was over who would control it most effectively. In this respect, the situation was reminiscent of the divisions of the early years of James's reign, when the protagonists of the new style of 'avant-garde conformity' (such as William Covell) and their opponents (such as Andrew Willet) each appealed in vain to the authorities to suppress the publications of the opposing side, which were held to be undermining the doctrinal purity of the English church.[29] In the 1620s, however, the authorities themselves were split, and battle was further joined over the question of who could cast most doubt on the responsibility and orthodoxy of the licensers who worked for the other side. The attacks engineered against Featley provide striking evidence of the fact that it was the licensing process itself, just as much as the writing of controversial tracts, that was seen by contemporaries as a vital area of concern, and where the battle for control of religious orthodoxy was most heated.

The king's Proclamation of 1626 and Declaration of 1628, following on the pamphlet controversies over Montagu's works, imposed a ban on discussions of predestinarian doctrine. The impact of the Declaration in particular has been the subject of much debate in recent years, with historians divided between those for whom it manifests an effective muzzling of Calvinism, and others who wish to stress its impartiality and lack of effect, and use this to oppose more general notions that there was any significant control of the press during the

[25] Featley, *Cygnea*, p. 40; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', p. 65 n. 106; Prynne, *Briefe survey*, p. 98.

[26] Featley, *Cygnea*, p. 40.

[27] Featley, *Cygnea*, p. 40 – 'The printer to the reader' by Robert Mylbourne. 'The informer' is identified by the pun that he had 'Cousened himselfe': see also Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', p. 65 n. 106. Another example of Cosin's activities against puritan publications is the attack on *The originall of idolatries* (1624), attributed to Isaac Casaubon, which was called in due to the efforts of Cosin, Bishop Neile, and Casaubon's son Meric: Cosin, *Correspondence*, p. 32.

[28] Eg. W. Notestein and F. H. Relf, eds., *Commons debates for 1629* (Minneapolis, 1921), pp. 58, 99–100, 125, 138, 140, 191. See also Prynne, *Briefe survey*, sig. A1r–v. Sir Edward Coke suggested that book licensing should henceforth be done by Convocation: Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English politics, 1621–1629* (Oxford, 1979), p. 240.

[29] Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, pp. 20–1, 23.

years of the Personal Rule. In the rest of this paper I will discuss the Declaration in the broader context of the restraints on the publication of theological opinion during the 1630s.

II

A number of historians – most notably Sheila Lambert, Peter White, and Ian Green – have argued against those historians who have seen the 'Eleven Years' Tyranny' as a time of inflexible restraints on the expression of Calvinist or anti-Laudian views.[30] Their arguments are based around three crucial observations. First, they have noted that there are many examples of Arminian works being prevented from publication, just as much as Calvinist ones, during the Personal Rule, and have argued that this reflects the king's intention in the declarations on predestination simply to secure an even-handed, impartial peace that would inhibit controversy, rather than crush Calvinism.[31] Secondly, they have noted that, regardless of the existence of the king's Declaration, it remains a simple fact that a great many Calvinist works can be shown to have been published after the Declaration. Peter White lists ten Calvinist works republished after the Declaration but before the Star Chamber decree on printing controls in 1637, along with at least eleven other original Calvinist publications, including sermons, devotional works, and catechisms. After 1637, he notes another ten licensed Calvinist works (including sermons by the puritans Thomas Goodwin, William Sclater, and Richard Sibbes), some being reissued with a new licence. Some of these works provide particularly rigid accounts of the doctrine of predestination, and would seem to have been in contravention of the king's Declaration, although it should be noted that some (though not all) were licensed by Archbishop Abbot's chaplains.[32] These facts, it is implied, would also tie in with the foregoing interpretation of the intent behind the Declaration: if the government was not seeking to change the religious opinions in circulation, but merely to dampen controversy, then the licensing of *some* Calvinist works would seem only normal.

Thirdly, and passing beyond the simple issue of the king's Declaration itself, it has also been suggested that the 1630s did not witness any greater tightening up of press control: despite further proclamations, a good third of books published still failed to be entered in the Stationers' Register, and only 30 per cent or so of books carried the imprimatur that was officially required. Dr Lambert has also contributed a reinterpretation of the Star Chamber decree of 1637, arguing that it was diligently sought, at some expense, by the Stationers'

[30] For the earlier debate on the degree of censorship in the 1630s, see Greg, *Some aspects*, chs. 1 and 3; F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the press in England, 1476–1776* (Urbana, 1952), chs. 5 and 6; F. B. Williams, 'The Laudian imprimatur', *Library*, 5th ser., 15 (1960), pp. 96–104; Bennett, *English books*, chs. 3 and 8.

[31] White, *Predestination*, pp. 250–4, 298–9, 303–4; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 56, 58–9; G. Bernard, 'The Church of England, c.1529–c.1642', *History*, 75 (1990), pp. 181–206, at p. 190.

[32] White, *Predestination*, pp. 287–94; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 62, 68; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. xiii; I. Green, '"For children in yeeres and children in understanding": the emergence of the English catechism under Elizabeth and the early Stuarts', *JEH*, 37 (1986), pp. 397–425, at pp. 411–12 and n. 65.

Company, rather than being imposed by the government.[33] In the 1630s, as in earlier decades, Dr Lambert insists that 'insofar as there was an inhibition on the publication of ideas and opinion in print, economic and practical factors inherent in the small size of the market for books in England were quite as important as the formal censorship'.[34]

These are all arguments which offer important caveats to historians seeking to discuss the issue of censorship in the 1630s, and uncover important evidence that, as in other decades, the licensing system could be a far from effective enterprise. Nevertheless, these are arguments that tend to offer valuable correctives rather than a comprehensive analysis of the regulation of print in the 1630s, and there is a very great deal that they fail to explain. As I will argue, there remains plentiful evidence that there was an effective tightening of regulations of the printing of religious literature in the 1630s, but there were also other means of varying subtlety deployed by the authorities to influence the nature of what was printed in this decade.

First of all, we need to bear in mind the obvious point that evidence of the failure to implement censorship effectively need not imply that the will to do so was not there. As we have seen in the case of Featley, the fact that a book possesses a licence does not mean that the licenser did not direct that changes be made to the text as it survives, or that he was in agreement with its overall argument. More generally, all the arguments mustered against Hill's vision of an all-embracing censorship which have stressed its impracticality should at the same time warn us against trying to draw conclusions of government moderation from the simple fact that it was unable to operate the system effectively. There was an evident lack of co-ordination – revealed in Edward Hungerford's ability to print at Oxford a tract by his father that had been rejected by a Laudian licenser in London – which should not be equated with indifference on the part of the authorities.[35] Moreover, there were clearly attempts made to tighten things up, with a new emphasis that the licenser's imprimatur should be published in books (both in London and the universities), and that copies of sermons preached at Paul's Cross and proposed university act theses should be approved in advance of their presentation (thereby nipping controversial texts in the bud before they required more direct censorship at the presses).[36]

Moreover, the question of the Declaration's impartiality is not a simple one. The king may well have intended merely that his Declaration should silence controversy impartially; and certainly Laud was anxious to ensure that it was so executed, although the archbishop's motive may well have been more a desire to ensure that the charge of Arminianism (with now the added association of impugning the king's authority) was not used as a rod to beat his

[33] Williams, 'Laudian imprimatur'; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 66–7; Lambert, 'The printers'. [34] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 64–6; idem, 'State control', p. 23.

[35] On Hungerford's tract, see William Prynne, *Canterburies doome* (1646), pp. 252–4.

[36] *The works of William Laud*, ed. W. Scott and J. Bliss (7 vols., Oxford, 1847–60), v, p. 166; J. Sparrow, 'John Donne and contemporary preachers', *Essays and Studies*, 16 (1931), pp. 144–78, at p. 154. I owe the latter reference to Arnold Hunt.

ceremonial policies. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that, whatever the government's motives, the Declaration was undoubtedly being used in a more combative and weighted way on the ground by Laudians who were eager to use it in order to mount a more direct assault on prevailing Reformed doctrines. The Cambridge divinity professor Samuel Ward got into trouble this way, as he recounted to a friend 'under pretence of violating his Majesty's declaration; which, I say, I do not', but found his own solution in deciding to continue his university lectures in grace and free will 'though not in naming the author whom I impugn'.[37] It may well be true that most Laudians did not seek actively to promote distinctively Arminian doctrine, and were probably not preoccupied wth Calvinist predestinarianism except in so far as it threatened to be a hindrance to the realization of their own sacerdotalist ambitions. Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that restraints on predestinarian doctrines inevitably restricted Calvinist opinion more than it did anti-Calvinism.

Moreover, beyond the issue of predestination, arguments for peace and church unity in Charles's mind might not always point towards the suppression of controversial literature. Archbishop Abbot seemed to speak very much with the spirit of the king's Declaration when in a letter of May 1631 he instructed one William Page not to publish his treatise in defence of bowing at the name of Jesus, written in response to the earlier polemical exchanges of Prynne and Giles Widdowes. Abbot complained of men writing 'in a theme of so small necessity, and of so great heat and distemper'. Such questions should be silenced, Abbot opined, the better to secure the peace of the church. Yet Abbot found himself overruled by Laud and the king.[38] Clearly, all sides were happy to invoke the need for silence and unity, but preferred to do so on those religious matters that did not interest them. To claim, as some historians have done, that, like earlier governments, Charles and Laud simply used printing restrictions to preserve order and prevent disunity will not get us to the heart of what was happening.

More importantly, if (as some have argued) there was no effective religious censorship during the Personal Rule, it remains true that there was a widespread *consciousness* of restrictions on the expression of religious views, and a belief that such restrictions were being imposed much more strictly than they had been in the past. This is a major point, but a large caveat does need to be entered here. There are a number of books which contemporaries asserted had been 'suppressed' for which no evidence survives to justify the claim. There can be no doubt that it was in many people's interest to claim that a rigid censorship was in force during this period. Occasionally, the charge of being censored was alleged in order to blacken the reputation of Laudian books.[39]

[37] Ussher, *Works*, xv, p. 500.

[38] Laud, *Works*, v, pp. 39–40.

[39] See, for example, the unsubstantiated claim that Edmund Reeve's *Communion book catechisme* was called in, and then a second time published (Burton, *Lords Day*, p. 3). By 1640, as the Laudian regime crumbled, anti-Laudian writers used the fact of Laudian texts being called in to emphasize their illegitimacy: e.g. Robert Baillie, *Ladensium* AYTOKATAKRISIS (1640), p. 47.

More often, however, the charge was made in order to impugn the behaviour of the government and to bestow a martyred air of injured innocence on the prohibited texts. Thus it was reported in the 1630s that Robert Abbot's enormous manuscript commentary on St Paul's letter to the Romans had been a casualty of the printing controls around the time of the Spanish Match 'because it was too sharp against the Papists', whereas purely commercial considerations would have been a powerful motive against the publication of a Latin work of over 3,500 folios.[40] Accusations of censorship were not merely useful charges against Archbishop Laud – they could also be used to explain away the appearance of unwelcome material from older Calvinist pens, or the occasional attempts of hitherto sound Calvinist divines to sound a ceremonialist note in order to win Laudian patronage.[41] Robert Baillie's objection that a 1628 edition of Richard Field's *Of the church* had been interfered with at the press by Laud was prompted by the posthumous inclusion in that edition of a lengthy appendix which vindicated medieval eucharistic doctrine, although there is no evidence to suggest that this was not Field's own work.[42] It is also true that what one might call the *Spycatcher* principle was at work, whereby censorship might well bestow a certain cachet on the prohibited book: the printer Robert Mylbourne attested that the attempts to suppress Featley's *Pelagius redivivus* backfired, as 'by the stirre ... made about them, they were much more inquired after, and sold the better, being called for even from the remotest parts of Scotland'.[43]

Accusations of censorship did not merely explain away colleagues whose work might seem to be tailored too much to suit the Laudian wind, or give a certain cachet to a supposedly prohibited work. Some authors themselves actively sought the intrusion of Laudian licensers, the better to be able to justify their capitulation to their puritan friends on the grounds of the supposed pressure exerted upon them. Joseph Mede is a particularly good example of this phenomenon. Mede played up the supposed censorship of his apocalyptical writings for all it was worth in order to assure his puritan friend William Twisse that he was *persona non grata* with the Laudian establishment. In fact, however, he was collaborating closely with Laud and his allies (even receiving the offer of a chaplaincy from the archbishop) and purposely sought out pre-publication

[40] SUL, Hartlib MS 30/4 fo. 82v. Abbot's work survives in Bodl., MSS e Musaeo 10–13.

[41] Note, for example, the claim by Thomas Bedford that in his *A treatise of the sacraments* published in 1638 'there was both castration, and interpolation used by a hand not mine', which included the specific passage objected to later by Richard Baxter: Richard Baxter, *Plain scripture proof of infants church-membership and baptism* (3rd edn, 1653), p. 348. An example working the other way is observable in Simon Patrick's claims that the supposed discrepancies between the different editions of a work of Richard Sibbes were due to the nefarious inclusion of new material by Sibbes's puritan editors: *Works of Richard Sibbes*, ed. A. B. Grosart (7 vols., London 1862–4), I, pp. 290–4. I am grateful to Dr Dever for drawing this example to my attention.

[42] Baillie, *Ladensium* (1640), pp. 101–2. Baillie was similarly suspicious of the posthumous publication in the 1630s of works by Andrewes and Overall.

[43] Featley, *Cygnea*, p. 40; Sharpe, *Personal rule*, p. 652; Harold Love, *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 1993), p. 188.

editing from John Cosin for two of his pro-Laudian publications.[44] Laud found himself besieged by Joseph Hall and others anxiously entreating him to edit their work.[45] This phenomenon may be compared with the requests which Laud was constantly receiving from moderate puritan pastors for direct orders to enforce the ceremonial innovations which he was promoting. Eager to show their loyalty, these divines at the same time wanted to be able to demonstrate to the puritan members of their congregations that they were acting under duress, in order to maintain their reputation and credibility in godly circles. Laud, however, was sufficiently astute pointedly to resist such requests for direct commands, and thereby pressurized such ministers still further into committing themselves one way or the other.[46] If they were to conform, then this had to be at the price of their puritan support, obliging them to look only to the established church for their patronage (thereby ensuring unqualified loyalty), while at the same time potentially legitimating the same establishment in the eyes of other moderate puritans. This co-opting of moderate opinion is a process to which I shall return later.

Nevertheless, even bearing this substantial caveat in mind, there are still clear indications of widespread perceptions of a severe censorship, under which people chafed.[47] This is especially evident on matters relating to predestination and the implementation of the king's Declaration. It was not just in university disputations or sermons that the pressure was felt, nor was it merely puritans who believed themselves beleagured. John Davenant, bishop of Salisbury, realized that he would not able to include the lecture that he had given at the Cambridge commencement of 1611 on the indefectibility of the grace of justification among his published *Determinationes* in the 1630s. He admitted to Samuel Ward in 1632 that 'the newfangled humour of these times will not brook it without opposition', but hoped that he would be able to publish it at

[44] Mede submitted copies of his *The name altar* to John Cosin and others in the Cosin circle at Durham, requesting Cosin's intercession on his behalf with Laud, to whom he also wrote (see Cosin's reply, dated 4 Aug. 1637, in Cosin, *Correspondence*, I, pp. 220–1). Note also Cosin's copious annotations to his copy of Mede's *The name altar*: Durham University Library, Cosin Library shelfmark N.IV.17/7. A letter from Cosin to Mede in 1637 enclosed corrections to Mede's *Churches that is appropriate places* along with the draft of the work, as well as an accompanying letter which refers to an earlier review of Mede's *The name altar*: Doyle, 'A new Cosin letter'. The substance of Cosin's amendments to Mede's *Churches* is recorded in CUL, Adv. d. 38.1 (I am grateful to Dr David Cockburn for drawing this volume to my attention). The corrections seem mostly to have aimed at refining remarks concerning private congregations, independent parishes, and 'Idolatrous Chappells' which were possibly susceptible to a puritan gloss (see the marginal annotations on pp. 15, 30, and 70). More substantive changes would appear to have been made to Mede's *Diatribae* (1642) – described in annotations in the same CUL volume which drew upon the author's own copy – in which passages which emphasized that bishops did not constitute a separate order from ministers and deacons were removed for the 1642 version (pp. 109, 110) but replaced in the edition of Mede's *Works* published in 1677 (p. 26). Many, but not all, of the marginal annotations to the 1642 *Diatribae* in CUL, Adv.d.38.1 were inserted into the 1677 edition of the *Works* (for annotations omitted in the 1677 edition too, see pp. 28, 45, 93, 110, 118, 131, 147, 195, 197). I hope to deal with Mede's position in more detail elsewhere.

[45] Laud, *Works*, VI, pp. 572–8 (Hall), 326 (Potter).

[46] E.g. Laud, *Works*, V, pp. 204–7; Public Record Office (PRO), SP 16/417/31, 418/41, 442/84 and 138, 216/107.

[47] See for example, Sharpe, *Personal rule*, pp. 647–8, 653–4.

a later date, at a time when 'mens mindes will bee better setled'.[48] Davenant's is not a lone voice among Calvinist conformist correspondents during the 1630s. In 1638, John Prideaux was complaining to Archbishop Ussher that 'matters that entrench … upon true divinity' were 'strictly overseen' at the Oxford press, whereas books on other subjects could more easily be passed.[49] Ussher indeed was reported as saying that all good books should be bought up and sent to America for the present, 'holding that they would labour to root out all godly men and godly books'.[50] Once we look at the private correspondence of moderate puritans such as Thomas Gataker, and especially the 'ephemerides' of Samuel Hartlib, complaints of restraints on preaching and publishing are legion, as are discussions of the large number of anti-Laudian treatises circulating only in manuscript.[51] Interference at the press was so widespread that Hartlib even considered gathering together all the passages that the London censors had removed from godly works into an 'Index expurgatorius'.[52]

III

Further indications of censorship in force may be adduced from a glance at the many anti-Laudian works (particularly on the sabbath and the altar controversies) that were circulating in manuscript in the 1630s, and which came out as printed books in 1641, directly after the removal of Laudian printing controls. Now, Sheila Lambert has rightly warned against deducing censorship merely from the non-appearance or delayed publication of a particular book, emphasizing how copyright or commercial publications, or even the perceived stigma of print, may account for such a delay. Certainly, some economic restraints can be observed in the publishing of religious books.

[48] Bodl., Tanner MS 71 fo. 153 (Davenant to Samuel Ward, 15 Jan. 1632/3; British Library (BL), Harleian MS 7038 p. 88; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 39. This example strongly qualifies Peter White's assertion (*Predestination*, p. 307).

[49] Ussher, *Works*, xv, p.419. Although the printed edition of Ussher's letters gives this letter a date of 1628, internal evidence clearly dates the letter to 1638: see Amanda L. Capern, 'The Caroline church: James Ussher and the Irish dimension', *Historical Journal* (*HJ*), 39 (1996), pp. 57–85 at p. 80 n. 113. On censorship see also Ussher, *Works*, xvi, pp. 46–7.

[50] SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 54r.

[51] SUL, Hartlib MSS 29/2 and 29/3, passim; *The diary of Thomas Crosfield*, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1935), p. 89; L. B. Larking, ed., *Proceedings in Kent* (Camden Society, 80, 1862), p. 32. Thomas Gataker was reporting in 1630 that 'some bookes offered for license handling the points in orthodoxam partem have at the Archbishops ben refused': Bodl., Tanner MS 71 fo. 35r (Gataker to Ward, 11 Feb. 1629/30). Burton claimed explicitly in his *Seven vialls* that, while it would be objected against him that he had not gained a licence for his book, this was not his fault, as he could no longer expect orthodox books to be licensed. Only popish and Arminian books, he claimed, were licensed, whereas refutations of them were not allowed (sig. ×3v). It was reported that Arthur Hildersham had omitted all material relating to the sabbath from his *Lectures on Psalm 51* (1635) because otherwise it would not have been passed at the press: SUL, Hartlib MS 29/3 fo. 20r (this should qualify Peter White's observation that Hildersham's work represents the lack of strict regulation on predestinarian doctrine: *Predestination*, p. 291). William Twisse feared persecution for writing on the sabbath issue: Twisse, *Of the morality*, pp. 38–9.

[52] SUL, Hartlib MS 29/3 fo. 44v. I am grateful to Dr John Young for his assistance with this passage in German.

In the 1620s, the Roman Catholic apostate James Wadsworth had found himself reduced to pleading for a general collection around Oxford colleges in order to support the printing of his conversion narrative, *The English Spanish pilgrim*.[53] Certainly, too, some puritan authors might resist having their sermons printed for purely aesthetic reasons, and Samuel Hartlib faced constant frustrations in trying to persuade the more popular puritan preachers into print. There was, too, in poetical circles a healthy network of 'scribal publication' where authors deliberately sought to avoid the 'stigma of print'.[54] However, suppression seems a more likely explanation when we are dealing with controversial tracts, composed by divines accustomed to print publication, and which were written as replies to specific *printed* polemical works. Moreover, replies to controversial tracts were not like the posthumous collections of sermons discussed by Dr Lambert, where delays in publication were of little concern: rather, the topicality of controversial tracts meant that they only had a limited shelf-life, and the intention was surely that they would follow hard on the heels of the tracts that they were refuting. Similarly, commercial considerations would hardly militate against publication – contemporaries recognized the clear fact that works on the sabbath and the altar were commercially successful in the 1630s.[55] It seems more plausible to explain the existence of these manuscript works by John Vicars's assertion 'that MS[S] are nowe the best help Gods people have to vindicate the Truth, printing being now a dayes prohibited to them'.[56]

The sheer volume of anti-Laudian pamphlets circulating in manuscript in the 1630s, and then exploding into print in 1641, is also striking. If we look at print figures relating to the sabbath dispute, for example: whereas no replies to Laudian pamphlets were published in printed form in the 1630s (except for Burton's solitary clandestine publication) no less than eight were published in 1641, all in response to Laudian tracts that were published over the period 1634–7. There seems little reason to doubt Henry Burton's claim that, if there had been freedom to publish, Francis White's works on the sabbath would soon have had too many confutations to handle. Some of these confutations can be shown to have been in manuscript circulation as early as 1635,[57] and one of

[53] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 62–6; Magdalen College, Oxford, MS 281/22 (petition of Wadsworth to the chancellor of Oxford University, William Herbert earl of Pembroke, n.d.). The back of this letter bears a list of amounts collected from the different colleges. Henry Burton complained that a book would only sell well if it had a punning title: Henry Burton, *The baiting of the popes bull* (1627), preface. For one explicit reference to the better market for printing Latin works on the continent, see John Dove, *A perswasion to the English recusants* (1603), p. 33.

[54] SUL, Hartlib MSS 29/2 and 29/3, passim; Love, *Scribal publication*, passim; Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', p. 63; Twisse, *Of the morality*, p. 37; J. W. Saunders, 'The stigma of print: a note on the social bases of Tudor poetry', *Essays in Criticism*, I (1951), pp. 139–64.

[55] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 62–6; Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *De l'Isle*, VI, p. 114; Crosfield, *Diary*, p. 95.

[56] Crosfield, *Diary*, p. 89.

[57] For a useful list, see K. L. Parker, *The English sabbath* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 217. Of particular note are George Abbot, *Vindiciae sabbathi*; Richard Bernard, *A threefold treatise of the sabbath*; George Hakewill, *A short, but cleare, discourse of the institution, dignity and end of the Lords-day*; Arthur Lake, *Theses de sabbato* (published posthumously and appended to Twisse's work); Hamon

these authors – John Ley – intended to publish his work in Latin 'because it would not passe in English'.[58] As regards the altar controversy, the first printed refutations of the works of Pocklington and Heylyn, besides the writings of Prynne and his comrades, did not appear until 1641, when they included the pre-1640 writings of John Ley, George Hakewill, and Charles Chauncy, Chauncy and Ley's works being publications of letters originally written in 1635.[59] On predestinarian matters, Bishop Davenant's refutation of the Arminian Samuel Hoard's *Gods love to mankind* was also not published until 1641, and its publication abroad had been mooted before the meeting of the Long Parliament made this unnecessary.[60]

There are no references that I know of to these works being turned down at the press in the 1630s. What is surely the case is that these authors were simply not offering up their books to the press. Government religious policy was now unidirectional – there were no longer the Featleys who could be relied upon to license publications which attacked Laudian works. Censorship and restrictions were clearly not new to the 1630s, but the hegemony of Laudian opinion clearly was. Moreover, it should be noted that the Laudian hegemony was successful in ensuring the marginalization of opposition to its policies. The flood of illegal and intemperate tracts churned out by Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne is often allowed by default to speak for the opposition to Laudian policy, and what emerges is of course a violent puritan minority position. But Burton and company may well be unrepresentative. It was the moderate puritans who obediently waited for the printing controls to be lifted before publishing their denunciations of Laudian policies – men such as Richard Bernard, George Hakewill, John Ley, and, above all, William Twisse. Indeed, it may well be that it is Twisse, rather than Prynne, who should be regarded as the anti-Laudian ideologue of the 1630s. Hartlib's 'ephemerides' make it clear that Twisse's writings against Laudian innovations were circulating extensively in manuscript form among the godly, and were eagerly sought after. Twisse himself voiced his concern to Archbishop Ussher that there should be full refutations written of every one of the Laudian pamphlets.[61] The fact that it

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l'Estrange, *God's sabbath before the law, under the law and under the gospel*; John Ley, *Sunday a sabbath*; William Twisse, *Of the morality of the fourth commandment*; George Walker, *The doctrine of the holy weekly sabbath*. Almost all seem to have been written prior to 1640. For pre-1640 references to some of them being in circulation, along with other refutations of anti-sabbatarian works written by Thomas Ball, Thomas Lydiat, and John White of Dorchester among others, which were not subsequently published, see SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fos. 9v, 36r, 51v; 29/3 fos. 19r, 20r, 36v, 37v, 44r, 49r; Bodl., Tanner MS 65 fo. 83r (William Twisse to Archbishop Ussher, 9 June 1640); Henry Burton, *For God and the king* (1636), p. 127.

[58] Ley, *Sunday*, sig. A4v. Ley describes having written the preface to this work 'about five yeers agoe'.

[59] George Hakewill, *A dissertation with Dr Heylyn: touching the pretended sacrifice in the eucharist* (1641); John Ley, *Defensive doubts* (1641); *The retractation of Mr Charles Chancy* (1641).

[60] SUL, Hartlib MS 2/2 fo. 26r: Dury to Hartlib, 3 July 1640.

[61] SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fos. 9v, 51v; 29/3 fos. 20r, 49r; Bodl., Tanner MS 65 fo. 83r (Twisse to Ussher, 9 June 1640). Twisse may also be contrasted with George Walker – always a more

was the more extreme Prynne and Burton who (by default) spoke for the 'Opposition' did much to strengthen the Laudian claim to the moderate middle-ground. Kevin Sharpe's tendency to depict Laudian religious policies as appealing to all except an extreme puritan minority of Prynne and his friends springs in part from the misleadingly attenuated nature of printed anti-Laudian materials for the period before 1640.[62]

With 'benign censorship' of puritan works no longer operative, there are no cases of Presbyterian works slipping through the Laudian net. Rather, it was Roman Catholic works which might evade the cumbersome licensing process, as Laud's chaplain William Heywood was to find as the Romanist Francis a Sales's *Introduction to a devout life* was published with Heywood's imprimatur, although the printer had inserted all the 'popish' passages which Heywood had directed should be removed. Here we can see Heywood suffering just as Featley had done over Elton's book.[63]

Now it may also be true, of course, that licensing laws were simply being severe on people who, and ideas which, had not been stopped before. Self-censorship may previously only have been operative in extreme ceremonialist circles. Apart from the fortuitous survival of Maie's example, and Archbishop Abbot's reported refusal of a licence to an anti-sabbatarian work by Broad, there is little evidence of ceremonialist books actually being stopped at the press in the pre-Laudian period, although Samuel Harsnett's early experiment in anti-Calvinism had been forbidden by Archbishop Whitgift, and was not published until the 1650s.[64] But given the attempted alterations to Maie's sermon, it is not surprising that Richard Montagu urged his friend John Cosin to ensure that his *New gagg* was not licensed by a puritan such as Featley. It is important to note that some of the most effusive and exalted pro-Laudian defences of ritual and ceremony were composed by elderly ministers who had rarely (if ever) ventured into print before: Robert Shelford, for example, was publishing in his old age. We may have here an extreme ceremonialist underground finding its voice for the first time – it is worth remembering Montagu's advice to Cosin in the 1620s not to even try to deliver a sermon at Paul's Cross, given that it was notorious as a Calvinist pulpit.[65] Moreover, even more moderate, established divines who belonged to what Peter Lake has dubbed the 'avant-garde conformist' strand of Church of England conformity, such as Lancelot Andrewes and John Overall, did not have their most

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intemperate figure – who finally in frustration published his sabbath treatise (circulating in manuscript since 1634: SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 36r) in Amsterdam in 1639, before printing restrictions were finally lifted in England and he could print it there (SUL, Hartlib MS 30/4 fo. 15v). Note Ley's citation of the two Walker editions: *Sunday*, p. 196. Twisse did publish his anti-Arminian works abroad, however.

[62] Sharpe, *Personal rule*, pp. 317–22, 328–48, 360–3, 383–92, 731–65.

[63] Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, p. 86 and n. 94; HMC, *De l'Isle*, VI, p. 102.

[64] Twisse, *Of the morality*, p. 170; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 164. See also F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett and the devils of Denham* (Newark, 1993), pp. 42–5, where an interesting case is made for redating Harsnett's sermon to 1594.

[65] Cosin, *Correspondence*, pp. 33, 47, 52.

significant writings appearing in print until after their deaths, in the 1630s.[66] So one man's censorship in the 1630s was another man's freedom to publish for the first time.

IV

Another problem with arguments for a censorship limited in intention and impact is that they do nothing to explain the books that *were* suppressed or altered at the press. Disregarding the many works of Burton, Bastwick, Prynne, Leighton, and others which never sought a licence but were called in and/or burnt anyway,[67] between 1625 and 1640 well over thirty religious books were reported as interfered with or stopped at the press. In many of these cases we have more than one testimony, and further circumstantial evidence from other sources. We will never know the precise numbers – most are known about only because the author or his publisher later pressed charges in the Long Parliament. Even here, we have no full list of the alleged purging of books investigated by Sir Edward Dering's parliamentary subcommittee concerning religious innovations. Some are listed in the fragments published by L. B. Larking, some notes survive in Lambeth Palace Library, and other lists of purgations are in Prynne's transcriptions in *Canterburies doome*, but Prynne clearly did not have access to a fair amount of this material. Dering himself admitted in his later *Discourse of proper sacrifice* that some of his notes from this committee had been given to a worthy member of the House (presumably Prynne), but that 'most of my other notes are rotted in their damp lodging whilst I was away, and some of them otherwayes lost'.[68] Further examples, apparently unknown to Dering or Prynne, continue to emerge: direct editing or suppression appears to have been inflicted on works by Thomas Morton, Joseph Mede, Henry Spelman, John Heily, Edward Kellet, Christopher Harvey, Richard Bernard, and Arthur Hildersham.[69] In all these cases, it is

[66] Most of Andrewes's sermons and other writings were published for the first time after his death, by Laud and Buckeridge. Overall first appeared in print in a transcription of part of one of his university determinations in Richard Montagu's *Apparatus ad origines ecclesiasticarum* (Oxford, 1635), pp. 49–51.

[67] See for example, Larking, *Proceedings*, pp. 82–4; W. W. Greg, *A companion to Arber* (Oxford, 1967), p. 246; PRO, SP 16/188/13, 16/190/ 40 and 64.

[68] Prynne, *Canterburies doome* gives details of over twenty works (pp. 165–6, 171–2, 181–4, 245–6, 251–2, 252–6); and Dering's *A discourse of proper sacrifice* (1644), sig. d2r, and the notes from Dering's committee published by L. B. Larking (*Proceedings*, pp. 80–100) list a further nine interfered with at the press and not mentioned by Prynne. Dering's notes for his speech to parliament concerning expurgations made by Laud's chaplain Samuel Baker to William Jones's *Commentary on Hebrews* are in Lambeth Palace Library, MS 943 pp. 735–7.

[69] BL, Add. MS 34600 fo. 170 (Spelman to Sir William Boswell); Bodl., Tanner MS 72 fo. 292 (Edward Kellet to Samuel Ward, 7 Aug. 1628); Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 212 (possible interference in the two editions of Morton's *Of the institution*); and PRO, SP 16/437/56 (interference with Morton's sermon at Newcastle, 1639); House of Lords Record Office, Main Papers, 23 Jan. 1641 (Heily); BL, Add. MS 7002 fos. 81–2 (Philemon Stephens to Christopher Harvey, 8 Mar. 1633/4) (I owe this reference to Arnold Hunt); SUL, Hartlib MS 30/4 fo. 17r (Bernard); Hartlib MS 29/3 fo. 20r (Hildersham). For other suppressed books, see Hartlib MS 29/2 fos. 33r, 33v; 29/3 fo. 53v; Notestein and Relf, *Commons debates*, pp. 58, 138, 191. Hartlib's ephemerides also note the censoring of a work aganst Heylyn's *History of St George* by Hacket, although this may be a mistake for George Hakewill (SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 5v).

purely by chance that the information concerning licensers' interference survives, and it is quite possible that our current knowledge still only represents the tip of an iceberg of petty intrusiveness by licensers. Dr Lambert's implication that 'the bottom of the barrel has been scraped' and a few familiar examples endlessly repeated to support claims for the direct censorship of texts in this period must – on the evidence presented in this paper – be strongly resisted.[70]

What we do have is an unparalleled collection of religious material allegedly stopped at the press. We cannot simply point to this fact, or to the books which *were* published, and claim that censorship either was or was not operative. Rather, we have to look at why certain books *were* selected for systematic purging, and not others, while always bearing in mind the truism that censorship in the early modern period was often arbitrary in its application.

It seems clear that catechisms and pietistical works were generally not targeted by licensers, even when they dealt with predestinarian or ceremonial issues in some detail. Rather, licensers seem to have targeted the sort of works that prompted the unrest in the first place, that is, systematic works of controversial divinity and polemic (hence the stopping of treatises by Davenant and by Bishop Downham, and also the extraordinary lack of published works on the issue of the antichrist after 1633, or replies to controversial pamphlets regarding the sabbath, the altar, and so on). Nevertheless, some sermons and bible commentaries were stopped at the press, including works by conforming divines such as Featley himself, and the posthumously published sermons of Richard Clerke (a prebend of Canterbury and one of the translators of the King James bible), William Jones's commentary on the epistles to Philemon and Hebrews (after 1636); and Richard Ward's *Commentary on Matthew* (1639).[71]

Much of what was purged from these works has nothing to do with predestination, or with attacks on episcopacy or the Book of Common Prayer. Several works were systematically purged of anti-papal material – some of it especially harsh, but most of it common in the works of anti-papal controversy composed with royal approval by a generation of Calvinist bishops under James. The removal of this material might appear to illustrate the sort of damper that had been placed on rabid anti-popery for foreign policy reasons at the time of the Spanish Match. However, I have argued elsewhere that, regardless of foreign policy developments, dowplaying anti-popery was more in keeping with the Laudians' general policies and predispositions, and the licensers themselves claimed that such works were purged more out of a desire to appeal to wavering church papists. But much of the material purged also relates to issues concerning the nature of the visible church and ministry, sacraments, ceremonies, and preaching. This was not a purging of puritan

[70] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 57–8, 68.

[71] Prynne, *Canterburies doome*, pp. 254–347; Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 7, 78–9. Hartlib's 'ephemerides' also report a series of concordances and bible commentaries being interfered with or blocked at the press: SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 33r, 33v; 29/3 fo. 20r; 30/4 fo. 17r.

opinions, but of positions argued by moderate Calvinist bishops such as Davenant, and represents a censoring of more fundamental positions regarding the visible church which might have been interpreted as placing an unwelcome inhibition on the strident ceremonialism being advocated by Laud and his colleagues.[72]

The identity of the authors whose work was targeted in this way is even more intriguing. It is not simply the case that there were some non-puritans singled out – with names like Joseph Hall, John Hales, and John Davenant among the aggrieved to conjure with. Rather, it is clear that, on issues of predestination, there was a tendency to aim at Davenant rather than puritan sermonizers. Why should this have been so? Was it that Davenant's brand of moderate Calvinism was held to be more dangerous than that of Bezan-style puritan lecturers? It could be argued that, in a sense, it was: Davenant *was* more dangerous, but also potentially more useful. Much of the rationale of Laudianism relied upon seeing certain more radically Protestant doctrines regarding popery, the nature and succession of the church, and the value of ceremonies, as inherently subversive and the preserve of an oppositionist radical puritan fringe. Calvinist bishops like Hall, Morton, and Davenant challenged this essential perception. Also these bishops in their dioceses, like Featley in his licensing, were struggling to keep within the orbit of the established, orthodox Church of England the very same puritans whom the Laudians were trying to eject from it. As we have seen, men like Featley were even massaging incipiently Presbyterian writings in order that they might be able to come within the charmed circle of orthodoxy, exercising 'benign censorship' over even the writings of Thomas Cartwright himself.[73] It was precisely these links which Laud and his followers were most determined to break.

This was all the more important as the major Calvinist bishops such as Davenant represented an alternative source of doctrinal authority, an authority which might be taken to be implicitly opposed to the Laudian claim to the doctrinal mainstream of the English church. The antics of Prynne and others, publishing illegally or abroad, were ultimately less important because by these very clandestine acts they had declared their alienation from the charmed circle of established orthodoxy.[74] It was the moderate Calvinists such as Davenant, publishing at a legal press with a licence, who thus represented a potentially more formidable opposition. This was a danger that was all the

[72] Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, p. 160 (see also pp. 66–7, 71–2, 79–80, 120–1).

[73] Featley licensed for publication Thomas Cartwright's *Confutation of the Rhemists' New Testament* 'with such corrections as I shall adde thereunto for ye presse': A. E. C. Simoni, *Catalogue of books from the Low Countries, 1601–1621, in the British Library* (London, 1990), p. 101. On the earlier struggles to have Cartwright's book licensed, see Peter Lake, *Moderate puritans and the Elizabethan church* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 69–72 and n. 50.

[74] Compare this point with Julia Merritt's discussion of Thomas Wentworth's attitude towards anonymous libels in her 'Power and communication: Thomas Wentworth and government at a distance during the Personal Rule, 1629–1635', in Merritt, ed., *The political world of Thomas Wentworth* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 109–32 at pp. 111–12.

more acute because it was during the 1630s that Davenant's writings seemed to be becoming the focus of divines attempting to preserve the English Calvinist tradition in the face of Laudian incursions and restrictions. It was in this decade that Davenant decided to publish the determinations that he had delivered at Cambridge Commencement acts over the previous two decades, along with a treatise on justification and two new editions of his substantial commentary on St Paul's letter to the Colossians. The *Determinationes* and commentary on Colossians were edited and seen through the press (and into several editions) by Davenant's friend Samuel Ward, and were licensed jointly by Ward, Ralph Brownrigg, Richard Love, and Thomas Bainbrigg. These four divines were at the same time acting in close alliance in a series of bitter conflicts with Laudian college heads in the Cambridge consistory court over Laudian doctrinal and ceremonial innovations. Despite being large Latin tomes, Davenant's published works went into several editions in the 1630s, and were eagerly applauded in puritan circles.[75] There was, in other words, a struggle in the 1630s to provide rival versions of the doctrinal orthodoxy of the Church of England.

Nevertheless, Laudian practice was not to marginalize such divines, but rather to absorb them into a Laudian mainstream. Heterodox authors were not therefore simply blocked by the licenser; rather, their work was massaged to enable them to speak with a Laudian accent. Richard Montagu loved nothing better than to cite the Calvinist bishop Thomas Morton in support of his arguments, 'though perhaps against his will and intention', as Montagu himself put it. Similarly, Laud was at his happiest when citing Davenant in support of his altar policy.[76] If these divines should not be seen to oppose Laudian policies, it was just as important that they should not appear to be being directly suppressed. It is this consideration that may lie behind the extraordinary events at the court of High Commission in 1629 over the licensing of the *Collegiate suffrage* written by the British delegation at the synod of Dort. This is the fundamental testament of English moderate Calvinism, with two future bishops among its authors. At the first discussion in High Commission of the printing of this work, the printer was charged with contempt of the king's Declaration. In the articles in commission, however, he was only charged with printing it unlicensed – presumably so that the court would not be seen to be attacking the Calvinist bishops directly.[77]

[75] M. Fuller, *The life, letters and writings of John Davenant D. D.* (London, 1897), pp. 408–9; *STC* 6294–8; SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 44r; Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, pp. 72–7; D. Hoyle, 'A Commons investigation of Arminianism and popery in Cambridge on the eve of the civil war', *HJ*, 29 (1986), pp. 419–25. See also Davenant's *Praelectiones de duobus in Theologia controversis capitibus*, published in Cambridge in 1631 and 1634. Another part of this campaign may be reflected in the publication of Joseph Bentham's collection of fourteen sermons – *The Christian conflict* – which was entered in the Stationers' Register in October 1634 as having been licensed by Dr Love, vice-chancellor of Cambridge, 'with 3. Doctours hands more': Arber, IV, p. 303.

[76] Laud, *Works*, VI, pp. 13, 19–21, 60–2; Cosin, *Correspondence*, pp. 85–6 (cf. pp. 29, 51, 54, 80). See also A. Milton, 'The Church of England, Rome and the true church: the demise of a Jacobean consensus', in K. Fincham, ed., *The early Stuart church* (London, 1993), pp. 187–210 at p. 203.

[77] Bodl., Tanner MS 71 fo. 7 (Thomas Goad to Samuel Ward, 21 May 1629).

Open censorship of such divines was thus not only undesirable, but might not in fact be necessary. There were more sophisticated forms of control available. These could involve not blocking the work of a Calvinist author, but actually printing the author's works, but in inappropriate circumstances. A case in point is the Laudian treatment of that renowned establishment Calvinist and fierce anti-Arminian John Prideaux, regius professor of divinity at Oxford. In 1634 one of Prideaux's Latin university determinations was published in English translation by Peter Heylyn, with a new introduction composed by Heylyn himself. This particular determination had been printed initially in Latin in 1625 with other lectures without attracting any particular comment. Its publication in 1634, however, was calculated to embarrass Prideaux into inadvertently supporting the newly reissued Book of Sports. Heylyn's gloss on Prideaux's arguments in his introduction scandalously misrepresents the regius professor's words on this issue.[78] The ultimate aim, here as elsewhere, was to secure apparent support for the Laudian programme from the moderate Calvinist wing of the establishment, though here made more pointed by the fact that Heylyn and Prideaux were sworn enemies. Heylyn attempted to force Prideaux into seeming to support the Laudian position, and he could do this in the full confidence that Prideaux would be embarrassed by this revelation, rather than there being any danger that Prideaux might take advantage of it in order to promote himself at court. Heylyn was at least partly successful: Hartlib's 'ephemerides' bear witness to the amount of bewilderment in puritan circles as Prideaux, a man whom they had hitherto trusted, appeared to side with the enemy on an issue that was so troubling to puritan consciences, although they would appear to have concluded that he had been set up.[79]

Joseph Hall's correspondence with Laud concerning his defence of episcopacy written in the late 1630s represents another prime example of this Laudian manipulation. Here was a Calvinist bishop systematically leavening his defence of episcopacy with vigorously anti-Catholic allusions and affirmations of confessional unity with foreign Presbyterian churches, intended to reassure puritans of his good faith. But here too was Archbishop Laud, equally systematically directing the removal of the same passages so that Hall was forced to stand unambiguously on the Laudian side.[80]

An even more subtle way of ensuring apparent moderate Calvinist support for the Laudian programme was to invite such a divine to act as licenser (and

[78] John Prideaux, *The doctrine of the sabbath, delivered in the act at Oxon, anno 1622* (1634), translator's preface. See also Parker, *The English sabbath*, pp. 197–8. Prideaux's lecture was first printed in his *Orationes novem inaugurales* (Oxford, 1626), pp. 129–51.

[79] For puritan responses to the *Doctrine*, see Twisse, *Of the morality*, sigs. C2r, C4r, pp. 91–3; SUL, Hartlib MS 29/2 fo. 9v.

[80] See my discussion of this correspondence in *Catholic and reformed*, pp. 126, 460–1, 468–9, 494. Hall's desire to include in *Episcopacy by divine right* an identification of the pope as antichrist is also suggestive of the pressures exerted earlier in the 1630s by Laudian licensers. Hall regularly identified the pope as antichrist in his pre-1630s writings, but tortuously avoided making this point in his *Plaine and famliar explication of all the hard texts of the Old and New Testament* of 1633: Hall, *Works*, IV, pp. 568–633 (see especially pp. 481–2, 488, and 562).

dare him to act as censor) for a work with which he was in profound disagreement. The victim in this case was Prideaux again, who was invited by Laud to act as licenser for a work by William Chillingworth (Laud's godson) in 1637. It is clear that Prideaux licensed the book under extreme duress. It appears that, while Laud was sympathetic towards many aspects of Chillingworth's book, he was also suspicious of its author's doctrinal rectitude, and was keen therefore to have the work published, but not in a way that could be attributed to himself. What could be better, then, than to have the work licensed by one whom everyone knew to be Laud's opponent, and a man generally regarded as a pillar of Calvinist rectitude? If this would lead people to treat Chillingworth's book with more respect, then that was all to the good. If they were repelled by it, and blamed Prideaux, then this served Laud's purpose just as well, as it helped to remove Prideaux as a focus of puritan opposition, and aided the more general policy of detaching moderate Calvinist episcopalians from their puritan brethren.[81]

How could such Calvinist establishment figures escape such muzzling, or reassure puritan friends of their anti-Laudian credentials? We have already seen how Samuel Ward sought to avoid prosecution in his Cambridge lectures by simply not identifying his opponents directly. We can also find evidence of the same attempt at elliptical anti-Laudianism in works by other figures, such as Prideaux and Morton. There are obvious dangers in trying to read hidden criticisms of Laudian writings and practices into books written during a time of printing controls, and doubtless it is important to resist the urge to read beyond the evidence. Nevertheless, there are some very clear examples that illustrate that, for some Calvinist divines, making disguised criticisms of their Laudian opponents was an established practice. In 1626, Prideaux launched an attack in an Oxford lecture on nameless individuals who maintained that the pope was not the antichrist – but this took the form of a systematic refutation point-by-point of the arguments and supporting citations in Richard Montagu's *Appello Caesarem*. Similarly, Prideaux seems to have tried to escape from his forced licensing of Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* by condemning Chillingworth's arguments (unattributed, of course) in lectures given at the very time that the work was published. Thomas Morton, too, can be found attacking Montagu in all but name on issues concerning the eucharist.[82] These examples may well represent the tip of yet another iceberg. Moreover, if catechetical and homiletic literature was most likely to avoid the keen eye of Laudian licensers, it may well be that other hidden attacks on Laudian practices lurk therein, waiting to be identified.[83]

[81] I hope to document this interpretation of the licensing of Chillingworth's book in more detail elsewhere. Kevin Sharpe's suggestion that the licensing represents a *rapprochement* between Prideaux and Laud is unconvincing: K. Sharpe, *Politics and ideas in early Stuart England* (London, 1989), pp. 138–9.

[82] Milton, *Catholic and reformed*, pp. 116–17, 198; cf. G. Windsor, 'The controversy between Roman Catholics and Anglicans from Elizabeth to the Revolution' (PhD thesis, Cambridge, 1967), p. 358; review by Robert M. Adams of H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, anglicans and puritans*, in *New York Review of Books*, 14 Apr. 1988, p. 28.

[83] I owe this suggestion to Bill Sheils.

V

Clearly, what has emerged from the foregoing analysis is not the all-embracing east European-style censorship depicted by Christopher Hill, but neither is it the essentially weak and permissive government line presented by other historians. Clearly, licensers could not exert a stranglehold over what appeared in print, but they could have a decisive influence over what appeared with the full panoply of mainstream legitimacy. The term 'censorship' may not in itself be the most useful way of describing this phenomenon. Sometimes the interference with texts might have been essentially benign, conferring legitimacy on potentially marginal works. At other times, as we have seen, it was important for the government not to be seen to be suppressing directly the work of Calvinist bishops, while it often suited many people to emphasize the hard cutting edge of the Laudian reforms, the better to disguise their own collaboration. The notion of 'censorship' was itself a weapon in the controversies of the period, and our obsession with proving or denying its existence may prove to be something of a red herring. This does not mean that Laudian press control was merely a fabrication – as we have seen, it could act forcefully where necessary. Rather, it is to suggest that the range of more subtle restraints on freedom of expression were most easily explained and accounted for by many contemporaries by collapsing them into the more extreme form of direct censorship. If we look only for the latter, however, we may miss some of the tensions and latent conflicts surrounding not just what was said and written, but also what was done, during the early Stuart period.

Nevertheless, if we do not have here simple pervasive censorship, surely we have instead a still more significant attempt to control what opinion passed for orthodoxy in the church, with the aim, not of crushing opposition, but of securing control of what official, established religion was meant to be. In the process, we have observed that press restrictions may sometimes act, not (as Christopher Hill likes to present them) as preventing the expression of radical heterodox ideas, but rather as muzzling the more moderate opposition, and thus presenting historians with a more polarized model of divided opinions in the period. Clearly there were attempts – and often rather successful ones – to control the opinions that were expressed by particular individuals through the medium of the established, official presses, not necessarily by a government acting against an alienated opposition, so much as different groups within the establishment acting against each other in seeking to claim to speak for the Church of England.

We are often reminded by revisionist historians working on the early seventeenth century that it is wrong to talk of a simple division between 'government' and 'opposition', and that on the contrary all groups aspired to government and the respectable and orthodox middle ground, and attacked their opponents for seeking to introduce division and disharmony. This is an insight that should also inform our understanding of the working of press controls during this period. Our attention should not be directed solely at the

unlicensed, clandestine printings which castigated the government from the sidelines, and the ultimately futile attempts of the authorities to stamp them out. Rather, we need to consider the struggle to control the middle ground, the press controls themselves. It is unquestionable that it was possible for people to publish clandestinely or abroad, and to evade the licensing controls. But what is most striking is that most authors made no such attempt, and indeed made strenuous efforts to secure proper authorization for their works. Most of the Laudians' opponents preferred not to publish rather than to abandon their claim to speak for the official church by printing their attacks in a clandestine fashion. The determination of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne to publish without a licence marks them out as the exceptions rather than the rule, and even in Prynne's case we should remember that the book that began his troubles – *Histriomastix* – still received an official licence, which its author had struggled for some eight years to obtain.[84] Licences were not simply a means of restricting what was printed; they also offered a means of legitimation, and for most authors and participants in the intellectual battles of early Stuart England it was legitimation that was most sought after, rather than simple notoriety. Official licences marked the boundary of what was respectable, and if the struggle was for the middle ground there was nothing to be gained by embracing unrespectability. For this reason, control of the licensing process was vitally important in ensuring what was defined as orthodox, and in enabling the process of 'benign censorship' to operate effectively.

Control of official licensing might thus define and shape religious orthodoxy in the early Stuart period, and its influence may stretch well beyond the perceptions of contemporaries, and into the very nature of the sources with which historians read and understand the period. The nature of early Stuart puritanism provides one example here. Jacobean puritanism has tended to appear moderate to historians, with its spokesmen manifesting only limited interest in issues of church government and ceremonies, while in the 1630s puritanism appears radicalized, vehemently opposed to bishops and ceremonies in the vitriolic polemics of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne. But does this in part reflect the fact that puritanism's supporters could control licensing in the 1620s, but not in the 1630s? Was it perhaps the control of official licensing that was decisive in determining which religious group appeared moderate and mainstream, and which appeared radical and marginal, in early Stuart England?

[84] *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637*, ed. S. R. Gardiner (Camden Society, n.s. 18, 1877), p. 3. Prynne's defence pointedly observed of *Histriomastix* that 'itt was not printed beyounde the seas, nor in corners, nor unlycensed, nor privately dispeirced' (ibid., p. 14).