

that the theologian was profoundly concerned with the compassionate care of souls. The study is thus convincing in arguing that Herbert had much in common with and on occasion was directly influenced by Calvin. Precisely because forms of devotional experience can sometimes be compatible with multiple doctrines, though, it would have been helpful if the book had had some account of the areas of overlap between the spiritual life described by Calvin, enacted by Herbert's poems, and assumed or prescribed by other devotional texts – for example, the Catholic private prayer books that, after tactful translation into English, were cheerfully used by English Protestants. That is, even Calvin is not always 'Calvinist' when his materials are traditional. Regardless of whether the pedigree of these ideas is completely pure, however, Doerksen here offers a description of how Herbert's lyrics work that seems, simply, true.

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*Charles I and the people of England.* By David Cressy. Pp. ix + 447 incl. 12 figs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. £30. 978 0 19 870829 2

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King Charles I was a difficult man to know. Divided by rank even from his closest associates, Charles's personality was also less distinctive than, say, his father's, whose preoccupations and salty language generated endless contemporary anecdotes. Nevertheless, speculation on 'the man' Charles Stuart – what sort of man and king he was – has become a cottage industry among historians trying to measure his share of blame for the collapse of his kingdoms into civil war.

David Cressy presents his spirited and exhaustively-researched new book as a contribution to this debate. In fact, *Charles I and the people of England* has very little to say about Charles I as a person; this is one of the book's primary virtues, as the sources for Charles's personal conduct are polemical and difficult to use. Cressy's intervention is more historiographical, and goes like this: some scholars have tried to defend Charles I by arguing that he was not as aloof, unpopular, inaccessible and unreasonable as is often assumed. A few – or at least the late Kevin Sharpe – sometimes suggested that negative impressions of Charles were anachronistic errors, constructed after the collapse of his reign by his parliamentary enemies or their sympathisers in the historical profession. Cressy, however, convincingly shows that negative impressions of Charles I were generated throughout his reign. In other words, not only later propagandists, but also some of Charles I's own subjects, said that he was a rotten king.

Cressy makes this point through what we might call argument by successive quotation, and it is in these extended recitations of evidence that Cressy really finds his voice. *Charles I and the people of England* features a number of passages that only an encyclopaedist like Cressy could write: one eight-page section narrates, in chronological order, weather conditions for every season of every year, complete with illustrative quotations, for the first fourteen years of the king's reign (pp. 56–63). The book jacket blurb, by Tim Harris, describes Cressy's book as 'evocative', which means that Cressy uses primary sources to make things concrete and particular: by enumerating the food available at accession-day festivities in Cambridge (p. 85), or by describing Charles I's royal progresses as the vast

logistical enterprises that they must have been, reciting the number of carts requisitioned by the Ordnance Office, the number of wheelwrights needed to maintain the carts, and so on (pp. 162–3). An especially good chapter on petitioning catalogues the immense variety of petitions that Charles received (from palace staff for unpaid wages, from suppliers for unpaid bills, from convicts for pardons, from debtors for protections) and recounts the charming history of the mathematical projector Richard Delamain (pp. 186–90).

Cressy particularly delights in telling a certain kind of story. He is interested in ordinary people, in giving ‘commoners of all sorts their voice’ (p. 8); but he is most interested in them when they are being obnoxious to authority figures. Cressy’s heroes are the unruly, those who refused to do as they were told, the sort of village lad who would tell his clergyman that the sermon wasn’t worth a fart. ‘Instead of remaining silent and subordinate’, Cressy concludes one representative anecdote, ‘Elizabeth Stevens spoke her mind and stood up for her family’ (p. 245). For Cressy, these anecdotes represent what he sometimes calls ‘vernacular opinion’, a sort of vibrant, egalitarian folk culture that was ‘more radical and more visceral than the politer formulations of the elite’ (p. 288). Cressy’s recitation of his evidence is, as always, impressive, though *afficionados* might find it familiar: one randomly chosen page recites the views of the Kentish sawyer Matthew Haman, the London gunsmith Thomas Aldberry, John Basset of Stepney, Alice Jackson of Holborne, Rachel Mercy of Fakenham, the knacker Miles Cushion of Fincham, Joan Sherrard of St Dunstan in the West, and the Yorkshire artisan Thomas Beevers (p. 300). All appeared in Cressy’s 2010 *Dangerous talk* (pp. 154, 192–3, 196).

Cressy’s commitment to a particular vision of ‘vernacular opinion’ sometimes gets him into trouble. For example, to make village rebels seem particularly rebellious, Cressy overstates the settled, complacent character of elite politics and ‘dominant opinion’, whereas the deep division of the elite political establishment arguably helped to authorise the microrebellions that Cressy describes. Further, for Cressy, village rebels were only properly rebellious when they were criticising the king. But what happens when King Charles and ‘vernacular opinion’ found themselves on the same side of a contested issue? One way to understand the controversy over the ‘Book of Sports’, for example, is to recognise multiple authorities in parish life: landlords, ministers, bishops, the middling sort, JPs, and so on. The Book of Sports, which listed lawful recreations that could be used on Sunday afternoons, restricted how far godly ministers could tyrannise over their flocks. By reissuing it, the king was (among other things) protecting some subjects from the self-aggrandisement of others. This sort of activity was a major aspect of royal legitimacy, as John Walter has continually stressed. But from Cressy’s perspective the episode looks like just another example of overreaching royal interference.

What does all this mean for how we think about early Stuart England? Those interested in topics that Cressy touches again, like the Book of Sports or the beauty of holiness, will find his discussions instructive. The overall effect is somewhat muted, for Cressy is ultimately more interested in evidence than in the interpretive framework that he erects around it. Interpretive remarks occasionally float to the surface, only to disappear under the tide of evidence. A chapter on Charles’s accessibility promises to steer ‘between traditional and revisionist positions’

(p. 153) by focusing on how well Charles ‘coped with his people’s expectations’ (p. 161), but never reconstructs those expectations or measures how well Charles met them. And when Cressy concludes that Charles ‘was the author of his own troubles’ (p. 312), I was uncertain just how this assessment was reached given how little space was devoted to Charles’s performance of kingship. The book, in short, conclusively shuts the door on a pernicious error but never substantiates its final judgment.

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*Richard Baxter’s ‘Reformed Liturgy’. A Puritan alternative to the Book of Common Prayer.*

By Glen J. Segger. (Liturgy, Worship, and Society.) Pp. xii + 282 incl. frontispiece. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. £65. 978 1 4094 3694 2

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Puritan grievances against the Book of Common Prayer in post-Reformation England are well known: Elizabethan critics of Cranmer’s liturgy maintained that it was ‘picked out of that dung-hill, the Mass’ and so, not surprisingly, ‘stinketh in the nostrails of God’. What has been less explored by historians is the range of views about public worship contained under the broad umbrella of early modern Puritanism. It was not simply a matter of not liking the Book of Common Prayer but a range of views from wanting a ‘Prayer Book lite’, replacement by another set of liturgical texts such as the Reformed Book of Common Order, or the promotion of extempore prayer as the only authentic form of corporate prayer. In England the Prayer Book was suppressed and replaced by *The directory of public worship* (1645) which represented a victory for the extempore party as long as the person being extempore was the minister. In fact, Parliament’s suppression of the Prayer Book created a space between 1645 and 1662 for significant liturgical experimentation, which was taken advantage of by churchmen across the spectrum: from conservative High Churchman like Jeremy Taylor to radical Protestants.

This period of *de facto* liturgical deregulation also allowed moderate Presbyterians comfortable with the Reformed tradition of ‘set prayers’, like Richard Baxter, the opportunity to improve and reform the Prayer Book. As a result, when a conference of Presbyterians and episcopalians was called in 1661 at the Savoy to deliberate on matters of liturgy and ministry, Baxter was able to produce his *Reformed liturgy* in a fortnight (p. 213) as a way forward to establishing a restored national Church that could ‘comprehend’ both episcopalians and Presbyterians. It failed (or at least it did within the bounds of emerging Anglicanism), as did appeals for non-episcopally ordained ministers to remain in post without undergoing re-ordination by a bishop.

Glen Segger has produced the first modern edition of Baxter’s important liturgical ‘minority report’ as a lengthy appendix with detailed chapters preceding it analysing key elements such as Sabbath worship, the eucharist and baptism, and pastoral rites. Segger’s analysis is, at times, perhaps too uncritical of Baxter’s perspective. For example, his discussion of Baxter’s life and ministry is highly indebted to his autobiography – a remarkable seventeenth-century source – but surely the very portrayal of Baxter as an apostle of irenicism that he wished future generations to have. The assessment of the conflicts between episcopalians and Presbyterians