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THOMAS CROMWELL AND WILLIAM MARSHALL'S PROTESTANT BOOKS*

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ABSTRACT. *Thomas Cromwell's association with various writers has long been noted, but how these authors' writings might reflect his personal religious beliefs has not been closely studied. An examination of one such author, William Marshall, and of his work, reveals not only that Cromwell was likely a Lutheran, but that he used the press to promote doctrinal Protestantism in England. Through Marshall, Cromwell sponsored English translations of doctrinally radical texts by Martin Luther, Joachim von Watt, and Martin Bucer. And when these books got Marshall into trouble, Cromwell protected him. The picture that emerges substantiates John Foxe's description of Cromwell as a 'valiant soldier and captain of Christ', but also the charge made in his bill of attainder, that he had circulated heretical books.*

This valiant soldier and captain of Christ, the foresaid lord Cromwell, as he was most studious of himself in a flagrant zeal to set forward the truth of the gospel, seeking all means and ways to beat down false religion and to advance the true; so he always retained unto him and had about him such as could be found helpers and furtherers of the same; in the number of whom were sundry and divers fresh and quick wits, pertaining to his family; by whose industry and ingenious labours divers excellent both ballads and books were contrived and set abroad, concerning the suppression of the pope and all popish idolatry.[1]

No contemporary of John Foxe's credibly contradicts his portrayal of Thomas Cromwell as a confessionally committed, evangelic personality, yet historians have treated him most often as a statesman and practical politician only, with little personal stake in the religious conflicts of his time.[2] This perspective is presently changing, and Cromwell's interest in Protestantism is now widely acknowledged.[3] The passage from Foxe suggests a way of approaching the question of religion's influence on his character, and politics. Who were the 'helpers and

* I would like to thank Brian Levack for reading and commenting on a version of this article, and for supervising much of the research on which it is based.

[1] J. Foxe, *The acts and monuments of John Foxe*, ed. J. Pratt (8 vols., New York, 1965), v, p. 403.

[2] See, e.g., R. B. Merriman, *The life and letters of Thomas Cromwell* (2 vols., Oxford, 1968), i, pp. iii, 301–2; J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Berkeley, 1968), p. 303; G. W. Bernard, 'The making of religious policy, 1533–1546: Henry VIII and the search for the middle way', *Historical Journal*, 41 (1998), pp. 321–49, at 341–6.

[3] See, e.g., G. R. Elton, *Reform and renewal: Thomas Cromwell and the common weal* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 34–6; B. W. Beckingsale, *Thomas Cromwell* (London, 1978), pp. 73–7; J. A. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 178–82, 188; S. Brigden, 'Thomas Cromwell and the "brethren"', in C. Cross, D. Loades, and J. J. Scarisbrick, eds., *Law and government under the Tudors* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 31–49.

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furtherers' who contrived 'both ballads and books … concerning the suppression of the pope and all popish idolatry'? Foxe appears to have had particular writers in mind, and knowledge of specific instances of Cromwell's support and encouragement of them. What was the character of these authors' writings? To what extent can Cromwell be thought to have identified with their works? Finally, what light does the study of these authors throw on his conduct as minister to the king, and his own fate?

A number of historians have recognized in Thomas Starkey the archetype of Cromwell's writers.[4] A more convincing case can be put for William Marshall. This article will examine what is known of this somewhat shadowy figure, and of his relations with the minister. It will conclude that Cromwell played a vital part in sponsoring his publication in London of patently Protestant books.

I

William Marshall was not a printer. He was a well-regarded lawyer and minor royal official. From the first years of Henry VIII's reign, he served on various commissions of the peace and commissions for gaol delivery, and in 1523 and 1524 helped to collect the subsidy for the war against France.[5] In 1527, he bought office as secretary of the compter. Marshall had arranged terms with the holder of this office, but could not take possession because the mayor and alderman of London, who owned the reversion, had promised this interest to a Robert Dakers. No less a person than Cardinal Wolsey intervened to straighten things out. He wrote to Dakers's father that Robert had been advanced to the office of clerk of assize to compensate him for loss of his interest in the other office. Accordingly, he desired Robert to resign this interest to Marshall, 'clerke to … Sir Richarde Broke', the chief baron of the Exchequer and Marshall's main backer. Sir Thomas More and Thomas Elyot also interceded with Wolsey on Marshall's behalf. Thomas Cromwell acted as Wolsey's intermediary in the matter.[6] A few additional early references further connect Marshall and Cromwell. In 1530, Marshall liquidated property pertaining to Wolsey's suppressed college at Ipswich, forwarding £26 to the king's agents in the matter, Thomas Cromwell and William Burbanke.[7] In 1533, he wrote to Cromwell, then a great figure, on behalf of a Nicholas Stathum

[4] G. R. Elton and S. E. Lehmberg have argued that the *adiaphoric* thrust of Thomas Starkey's *Exhortation to unity and obedience* reflected Cromwell's own moderate outlook (Elton, *Reform and renewal*, pp. 50–2; S. E. Lehmberg, 'The religious beliefs of Thomas Cromwell', in R. L. DeMolen, ed., *Leaders of the Reformation* (Cranbury, 1984), pp. 134–52, at 143–9). See also W. G. Zeeveld, *The foundations of Tudor policy* (London, 1969), pp. 148–56.

[5] Commissions of the peace: *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry* VIII, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R. H. Brodie (London, 1862–1932) (*LP*), I, 1051, 1122, 2045, 3501, 4700; II.I, 457, 1176; IV.I, g.137(4), (14), g.1136(4), g.1377(16), g.1610(11); IV.III, 5510, g.6135(16) g.6751(24); V, 838(9). Commissions for gaol delivery: *LP* I, 3694; IV.III, 6490(20); V, g.278(16), 457(2); VI, g.196(41). War subsidy: *LP* III, 3282, 3504; IV.I, 214, 547.

[6] Public Record Office (PRO), SP I/59 fos. 123r–124r (*LP* IV.III, App., 133, p. 3129). Abbreviations have been expanded and punctuation modernized in all quotations from period sources.

[7] PRO SP I/57 fo. 17r (*LP* IV.III, 6222).

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about a monastic lease that Stathum had acquired from Cromwell.[8] In the second half of 1533, a student, Martin Tindall, sought Marshall's opinion of his translations of Erasmus's lives of John Colet and John Vitrari before presenting them to the minister. His approach demonstrates that Marshall was already known, even before he had published, as a person possessing influence with Cromwell in literary matters.[9]

Marshall's start as a publisher began a short time later, with his translation of Lorenzo Valla's *Donation of Constantine* in March 1534, although it is clear that he had worked on various other books before this time.[10] From his letters to Cromwell, we know that, by the spring of 1533, he had already finished translating Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor pacis*. On 3 January 1534, Eustace Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, noted that this work had been translated into English, and was 'now being printed … so that all the people may see and understand it'.[11] An extensively edited English version of the *Defensor* was published only in July 1535. It will be discussed further below. Marshall must have been working on other books in the second half of 1533. In all, he published eleven titles, and the first editions of ten of these appeared between March 1534 and September 1535.[12] Many of these books express a militantly Protestant doctrine, with translated authors including Martin Luther, Joachim von Watt, and Martin Bucer. About 40 per cent of his *Primer*, the first domestically printed book to include extensive passages from the Bible in English, derives from various writings of Luther.[13] Marshall also translated and published an entire work of Luther's that has hitherto gone unrecognized. This appeared under the title *The images of a verye chrysten bysshop, and of a counterfayte bysshop*.[14] All of these works will be discussed further below. For Marshall to publish them at all, several things appear to have been necessary. First of all, some guarantee that he would not be arrested. Merely possessing such books could be a serious offence. More mundanely, he needed suitable versions to translate into English. It seems certain that Cromwell played the decisive role in meeting both of these requirements.

Many of Marshall's books were translations of works originally written in German, a language he is not likely to have known. One who did was Cromwell's servant, Christopher Mont, a native German, and Lutheran. In the summer of 1533, Mont is reported to have been in Cromwell's house, translating certain unnamed German books into English. For this work, Cromwell paid him ten marks from funds at his disposal as master of the jewels.[15] Mont was not able to

[8] PRO SP I/81 fo. 124r (*LP* VI, 1665).

[9] *LP* VI, 752.

[10] *A treatyse of the donation gyven vnto Sylvester pope of Rhome, by Constantyne emperour of Rome* (*STC* 5641, 1534), listed in W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, eds., *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English books printed abroad, 1475–1640* (3 vols., London, 1976–91) (*STC*).

[11] *LP* VII, 14.

[12] *STC*, 'William Marshall'.

[13] C. C. Butterworth, *The English primers, 1529–1545* (New York, 1971), p. 59.

[14] *STC* 16983.5. Below, it is argued that this was published shortly before or after March 1536.

[15] PRO SP I/80 fo. 114r (*LP* VI 1448); *LP* VI, 717.

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finish this work before he was forced to leave England to take up an ambassadorial assignment in Germany. Stephen Vaughan, Cromwell's friend and agent in Antwerp, accompanied him on his trip. Vaughan also was a Lutheran.[16] By 21 November 1533, Vaughan was back in Antwerp, and wrote to Cromwell:

> Sir Marshall wrot me a lettre whiche cam withe yours and in it he wrot me that your will was that I shulde by half a doseyn cronycles lately translated out of the Almayn tongue into the latten. But serche can I fynde none. And I am surer it was neuer translated here. I know the booke well that you wolde haue. [Christopher] beganne in your house to translate the same.[17]

In the preceding years, Vaughan had already sent Cromwell various Protestant books published abroad, including works by William Tyndale, Robert Barnes, and one by an unidentified German author.[18] The books he searched for in late 1533 may have been the sources for some, or all, of Marshall's translations of German texts. The *Short title catalogue* (*STC*), identifies Marshall's editions of Bucer and von Watt as translations from Latin translations of German originals.[19] The *Primer* and the *Chrysten bysshop* also derive from German texts, many if not all collected from mediating Latin sources. Vaughan states that Marshall had instructed him to buy the books *for Cromwell*. He was reporting *to Cromwell* on his success. Unless Cromwell can be shown to have been interested in a different set of German books, the implication must be that he employed first Mont, then Vaughan, to procure many of the texts that Marshall would publish in the coming two years.

Two of Marshall's letters to Cromwell confirm the latter's involvement in his literary work. These concern Cromwell's promise to lend Marshall £20 towards printing his translation of Marsilius, the *Defence of peace*. The second letter is dated 1 April 1534, the first precedes it by a short period. The first letter reads:

> This ys to aduertise your mastership, that where before this tyme (of your more goodnes) yt pleased you to offre to lende to me £20 for and towarde the printing of defensor pacis whiche boke hathe byen this xii monethes redy translated, and kept from the presse for lack of money, and nowe vpon trust of your saide offre I haue begone to prynte the same. Sir so yt ys I haue made an ende of the gifte of Constantyne, and of another boke made by Erasmus vpon the comen Crede, whiche be assuredly two goodly workes, I haue allredy layed oute vpon the said boke of Constantyne (besydes myn owne labor) alle the money

[16] For Mont and Vaughan's religious affiliations, and their mission to Germany, see 'Christopher Mont', in L. Stephen, and S. Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (22 vols., London, 1967–8) (*DNB*), XIII, p. 651; 'Stephen Vaughan', *DNB*, XX, p. 179.

[17] PRO SP I/80 fo. 114r (*LP* VI, 1448).

[18] *LP* V, 532; PRO SP I/68 fos. 56r–57r (*LP* V, 533). See Elton, *Reform and renewal*, pp. 39–43. Cromwell may have specifically asked Vaughan to keep him informed of books published abroad. See PRO SP I/66 fo. 144r (*LP* V, 311).

[19] *A treatise declaring and showing that images are not to be suffered in churches* (*STC* 24238 (1535)) (trans. by W. Marshall from the Latin trans. by J. Bedrote of M. Bucer's *Das einigerlei Bild*); *A worke entytled of the olde god and the newe* (*STC* 25127, 1534 (15 jn.)) (Anon. … from H. Dulichius' Latin trans. of Watt's *Vom alten und neuen Gott*.).

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that I can make, and nowe am not able to fett the said bokes from the prynters for lacke of money. yt may therfore please your mastership to lende to me £20, and I wille welle and truly repay you agayne before the feaste of alle saintes next commyng. And in your so doing you shall not only make me able to ffetche home my said bokes, and to fynyshe the said boke of defensor pacis, but also to putt in prynte the worke de veteri et novo deo the whiche I entende (god willing) to doo ymmediatly after easter.[20]

Marshall had finished his translation of Marsilius a year before, and had begun printing an edition of it with his own money, so confirming Chapuys's report. He wished to publish other books besides, but lacked the necessary funds. Already, the printer was holding the completed *Donation* for lack of payment. Marshall must have counted on recovering his costs, or many of them, from his books' sales, but in March 1534, he had not yet sold any books, and was in the midst of an ambitious publishing effort. With editions competing for funds, he reminded Cromwell of his promise to lend him £20. This promise had concerned the *Defence of peace* specifically, but Marshall's actual plans included paying off the printer of the *Donation*, and of the edition of Erasmus, and publishing his translation of Joachim von Watt's *Vom alten und neuen Gott*, which he had in Latin translation. The money was not to enable the printing of a single book, the *Defence*, but to help pay the cost of a whole series of books, and Marshall did not hide this from Cromwell. His candid account reveals that, in his mind at least, Cromwell had agreed to be a financial backer for all of his books.

Marshall repeated his request for £20 in his second letter. He referred to a series of conversations the two had had regarding his literary work.

I am the bolder thus to write to you partly for that before this tyme of your owne goode mynde you offred to lende to me £20, and partly for that you of your accustumed goodnes, haue saied to me many tymes before this, that I shulde be merie and take no thought, for I shulde neither lak money ne yet other thynges whereof honestly to lyve, you woulde (or yt shulde be longe) so provyde for me, whiche if you doo, shall be of your goodnes and not of my desert.

Marshall must have feared that his new activities as a publisher would leave him destitute. Many times, Cromwell had sought to relieve these fears. Marshall was to 'be merie and take no thought, for [he] shulde neither lak money ne yet other thynges whereof honestly to lyve'. Cromwell had promised £20 for the *Defence*, but more might become available, maybe much more, if Marshall ever needed it. At the close of his letter, Marshall discusses the two books he was then completing.

By this bringer my seruante I sende to you two bokes nowe fully fynyshed of the gifte of Constantyne. surely I thinke there was neuer better boke made and sett forthe, for the defasing of the pope of Rome then this. Erasmus lately wrote a worke vpon our comen Crede and ten commaundementes dedicate to my lorde of Wilshire, whiche I wille haue from the prynters assone as god sendeth to me money wherwith to fett theym, and assone

[20] PRO SP I/83 fo. 58r (*LP* VII, 423).

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as I can gett theym to be bounde I wolle sende to you a cople. I trust you wolle lyke the translation of the saide two bokes, they haue cost me bothe labor and money and that largely. Nowe sir I beseche you by your olde and most assured servante Master Williamson sende to me £20 this present tenebre wednesday. In whiche doing you shalbe the causer of many goode thinges, and your money you shall well and truly haue agayne.[21]

A short time later, Marshall was indeed paid £20 from royal funds. The debt was secured by property of Marshall's brother, Thomas, with repayment to occur by 2 February 1535.[22] The *Defence* was published only in July 1535. Marshall must have used the money to finance his other books, as he had told Cromwell he would. He published his edition of Erasmus in the spring of 1534, and that of von Watt, as planned, soon after Easter, on 15 June.[23] The first edition of the *Primer*, and one of another work, appeared before the end of the year.[24] Five more new texts appeared in the next year, as well as second editions of two books.[25]

Cromwell clearly knew that Marshall intended to translate and publish Protestant books, and, in fact, assisted him. The doctrinal character of these texts will be discussed in the next section. But Cromwell officially financed only one of Marshall's books, the *Defence of peace*.[26] One must wonder what his special interest in this text was, and why it was published only in July 1535, more than two years after Marshall had finished translating it. The *Donation* is easily understood. It was one of many tracts issued to justify the break with Rome. The *Defence* may be seen in this light too, but it also had an assertive purpose, distinct from its value as anti-papal propaganda. This was setting out a comprehensive theory of authority in church and state – a theory which may well describe the polity that Cromwell believed he was helping to create. To serve this purpose effectively, Marsilius's text had to be extensively altered. Marshall identifies the original text's faithful and human legislators with parliament.[27] He falsely represents Marsilius as advocating hereditary over elective monarchy, and ascribes to the ruling part of the state (the king) far greater powers of ecclesiastical governance than Marsilius had done.[28] But more was involved than just editing Marsilius. Choosing the right time to publish him also mattered. Marshall had finished the work of translation

[21] PRO SP I/83 fo. 57r (*LP* VII, 422).

[22] *LP* VIII, 169. In a letter dated 22 Dec. 1536, Marshall wrote to Cromwell that he had borrowed £20 from him, 'aboute two yeres passed'. PRO SP I/113 fo. 23r (*LP* XI, 1355).

[23] *A playne and godly exposytion or declaration of the commune crede and of the. x. commaundementes* (*STC* 10504 (1534)).

[24] *A prymer in Englyshe, with certeyn prayers and godly meditations, very necessary for all people that vnderstonde not the Latyne tongue* (*STC* 15986 (1534)); *An exposition after the maner of a contemplacyon vpon the. li. psalme, called Miserere mei Deus* (*STC* 21789.3 (1534)).

[25] *STC* 10498, 15988, 17817, 21798.5, 24238, 24239, 26119.

[26] *The defence of peace: lately translated out of laten in to englysshe* (*STC* 17817, 1535 (jy.)).

[27] 'In all this longe tale he speaketh not of the rascall multytude, but of the parlyament'; 'Where soeuer he speketh of such multytude he meneth when it is assembled in the perlyamente, remembre this to auoyde captyousnes' (ibid., fos. 28v, 35r).

[28] See William Underwood, 'The Cromwellian group: Thomas Cromwell and government propaganda during the 1530s' (M.A. thesis, Texas, 1988), ch. 5, 'Marshall and the *Defence of peace*'.

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by the late winter or early spring of 1533, and began printing an edition no later than March 1534. If the book's purpose was to set out a theory for the new national church, publishing at either of these times would have been premature. The new national church did not yet exist, and the *Defence* could not credibly appear before the thing that it was to justify and explain. A more appropriate time would have been November 1534, after parliament had passed the Act of Supremacy, and an act making it high treason to deny the king's titles. But the Royal Supremacy was only truly established when the Act of Supremacy had been enforced by means of oath-taking. This was by the summer of 1535. June and July saw the last executions of the recalcitrant. In the latter month, Cromwell's agents were starting their inspections of the smaller monasteries. The church was irrevocably changed. It was only after this change had been made evident to all that Marshall published the long-ready *Defence*.

Marshall performed a series of other tasks for Cromwell touching on the religious controversies of the day. He addressed the surviving Carthusians at Charterhouse in London and, on one occasion, distributed twenty-four copies of his newly published *Defence*. Many of the monks took copies only to return them later at the order of their president.[29] Marshall also kept watch on the doings of various conservative preachers. On 18 August 1536, he sent Cromwell a summary of the sermon recently preached at St Paul's Cross by Simon Symonds, a canon of Windsor and associate of John Stokesley, the conservative bishop of London. He recommended that action be taken against him.[30] In the same year, he was apparently privy to an intrigue against Christopher Plummer, another canon of Windsor, who was deprived later that year.[31] In May 1534, Dr Thomas Bagard, chancellor of the diocese of Bristol, wrote to Cromwell to dissociate himself from the conservative preacher, William Hubbardine. Bagard had never thought Hubbardine fit to preach, and had said as much to Marshall, a man 'much waiting upon your mastership'.[32] Through a Mr Benbowe, Marshall solicited, and then forwarded to Cromwell, the report of Michael Drome, a student at Oxford. In his 9 March 1534 letter, Drome denounced the provisor of Barnard College for harassing a godly colleague. There were many 'pryvy undermyners of the trueth' besides, including the preacher of the sermon that Sunday, whom Drome suggested should be summoned and investigated.[33]

II

In his letter, Drome recommended a 'litle boke that came forthe of a shete of paper intitled of faith and workes'.[34] That same year, Marshall published a

[29] Marshall's visits began in late April, and continued into the summer (PRO SP I/92 fos. 95r–v (*LP* VIII, 600); IX, 283). The story regarding distribution of copies of the *Defence* is told to Cromwell by his servant, Jasper Fyloll (*LP* IX, 523).

[30] PRO SP I/106 fos. 22r–v (*LP* XI, 325). Symonds is described as being 'of the popishe sorte' by John Whalley, custodian of the monks at Charterhouse (PRO SP I/92 fo. 95r (*LP* VIII, 600)).

[31] PRO SP I/104 fos. 71r–v (*LP* X, 997).

[32] *LP* VII, 722.

[33] PRO SP I/82 fos. 273r–274r (*LP* VII, 308).

[34] Ibid., fo. 274r.

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translation of Girolamo Savonarola's *Contemplacyon upon the 51st psalme*. Appended is a five-page statement on the theme of faith and works, which Marshall states he had included merely 'to fyll vp the lefe'.[35] Possibly, this is the work Drome had mentioned. Whether it is, or whether Marshall composed it himself, the addition is significant because it expresses the Lutheran position on justification. Faith is a sure persuasion in God's promises. 'It can neither be goten by mannes power, nether yet retayned … it is god that worketh in you both the wil and also the dede, euen at his own pleasure.'[36] Its power 'is to iustefye vs: that is, to dispoyle vs frome all our vices and laye them on Christs backe … and to endue vs with an others ryhtwysnes, that is Christs'.[37] These views agree with Savonarola's own treatment of justification, as given in Marshall's text.[38] In fact, Luther thought so highly of Savonarola's original text that he published an edition of it, together with Savonarola's exposition on the 31st Psalm, and a preface of his own extolling the doctrine of both works.[39] Marshall also published an English version of this latter Savonarola text.[40] It seems that Luther's advocacy must have led him to take up both works, and that he translated from a copy of Luther's Latin edition. Marshall bound the *Contemplacyon* with the first edition of his *Primer*, and incorporated it, along with his translation of Savonarola on the 31st Psalm, within the text of his second *Primer*. The postscript appears in the first, but not the second of these works.[41] It appears in only two of the many subsequent editions of the *Contemplacyon* printed over the next ten years.[42]

Marshall's *Primer* (1534) was the first domestically printed book to contain extensive English passages from the Bible. Texts from various Lutheran sources, including Luther's primer, the *Betbüchlein*, form about two-fifths of this work. These texts were all available in Latin translation.[43] Marshall took much of the remainder of the *Primer* from William Joye's *Hortulus animae*, an English primer printed abroad in 1530.[44] The preface, from Luther, discounts the tales of the saints, and decries pardon rubrics, the large red-lettered headings found in traditional primers promising the remission of sins. The body of the text omits the litany of the saints, and the 'Dirige', so indirectly attacking prayer to saints, and the doctrine of purgatory.[45] These omissions, and Marshall's overall editing, appear to have provoked a backlash. When the second edition appeared, in June 1535, it included a litany and a 'Dirige', but not the Lutheran postscript to Savonarola's *Contemplacyon*, on faith and works. Marshall appears to have made

[35] *Contemplacyon upon the 51st psalme*, sig. D6v. [36] Ibid., sig. D6v.
[37] Ibid., sig. D7r. [38] See, e.g., ibid., sigs. A3r–v.
[39] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke; kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar, 1883–), XII, p. 248.
[40] *A meditation of the same Ierome, vpon the psalm of In te domine speraui* (*STC* 21798.5 (1535?)). This text too anticipates the Lutheran position on justification. See, e.g., sig. A3r.
[41] *Contemplacyon upon the 51st psalme*, sigs. D6v–D8v, bound with *A prymer in Englyshe, with certeyn prayers and godly meditations, very necessary for all people that vnderstonde not the Latyne tongue* (*STC* 15986, 1534).
[42] The postscript is included in *STC* 20193 and 21793. It is absent from *STC* 21789.5, 21790, 21790.5, 21791, 21792, 21794, 15998, 16018, 16021, 16027, and 16029.
[43] C. C. Butterworth discusses the Lutheran texts Marshall used in editing the *Primer* (Butterworth, *English primers*, pp. 279–85). [44] Ibid., p. 59. [45] Ibid., p. 60.

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these changes unwillingly. In a preface to the second edition's litany, he notes the 'diuerse persones of small iudgement and knowlege in holy scripture' who had been offended by his omission of this part from the earlier primer. He had removed it to counteract the 'wycked opinion' that prayers are more acceptable to God when first directed to saints as intermediaries. He restored it only 'for the contentation of suche weyke myndes' as had objected, 'trustynge that they by theyr olde vntrue opinion before alledged, ne yet by any other lyke, wyll abuse the same'.[46] Later, in an 'admonition' to readers before the 'Dirige', he disparaged the practice of praying for the dead. It was a work 'of darkenes, and deepe ignoraunce … that we haue ronge, and songe, mumbled, murmured, and pituously pewled forthe a certayne sorte of psalmes, hereafter ensuyng, … for the soules of our christen bretherne and sistern, that ben departed out of this worlde'.[47] He retained the preface from Luther, but in a more elaborate, and truculent form.[48]

The novelty of English Scripture must have made the *Primer* a widely noted book. Marshall and the second edition's printer, John Byddell, reprinted the second edition a number of times.[49] This appeared with a privilege to its author barring competition for six years. Such protection, prominently displayed on the title page, was not common, and according to C. C. Butterworth, demonstrates 'that Marshall had friends at court'.[50] It would be incorrect to view the *Primer* as the work of an isolated, fringe figure. It was instead a high-profile book by one closely linked to Cromwell, the king's most powerful minister. As such, it is reasonable to think that it reflected the latter's doctrinal views, as well as those of other influential figures. Indeed, lengthy passages from it were incorporated within the *Bishop's book* (1536), including whole paragraphs, sentences and phrases.[51]

Marshall's books did not shrink from criticizing Catholic doctrine and practice. They did so vehemently and repeatedly. *Of the olde god and the newe* (1534) depicts the Roman church as a composite of unscriptural idolatries.[52] The *STC* describes this as a translation by William Turner of Herman Dulichius's translation of Joachim von Watt's *Vom alten und neuen Gott*. The attribution to Turner appears to be wrong. The von Watt translation has a title similar to that of another book, which Turner did translate. This is *A comparison betwene the olde learnynge and the newe* (1537), by Urbanus Regius.[53] All of Turner's other books were published after 1537. The title to the Regius volume might easily be mistaken for a phrase from the complete

[46] *A goodly prymer in englyshe, newly corrected*, sigs. L2v–L3r (*STC* 15988, 1535 (16 jn.)).
[47] Ibid., sig. K4r. Note, after sig. R4v, the pagination starts again from A1r, but in a different script.
[48] Butterworth, *English primers*, p. 106.
[49] *A goodly prymer in Englysshe, newely corrected* (*STC* 15998 (1538?)); Butterworth, *English primers*, p. 105.
[50] Butterworth, *English primers*, p. 105.
[51] E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 382–3.
[52] *A worke entytled of the olde god and the newe* (*STC* 25127, 1534 (15 jn.)).
[53] *STC* 20840, 1537. See also *STC*, 'William Turner'.

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title to the Marshall edition. This is *A worke entytled of the olde god and the newe, of the olde faythe and the newe, of the olde doctryne and the newe, or orygynall begynnynge of Idolatrye*. The name of the Regius volume, and the short title of the von Watt, appear on adjacent lines in a list of banned books compiled by John Foxe.[54] Foxe's editor inserts the name William Turner in brackets next to the Regius volume. Perhaps the editors of the *STC* took this attribution to apply also to the similarly titled edition of von Watt, listed just above. In short, there is no reason to think that Turner was the translator, or to doubt that Marshall was. The style is certainly similar to that of Marshall's other texts.

Von Watt's argument is easily put: 'the chrysten faythe is the holy scrypture, which scrypture is the mother of the chrysten chyrche'.[55] This faith was that of the first Christians, and of the contemporary Protestant movement, their worship, that of the 'old god'. The 'new god' was the sacrilegious creation of centuries of monks and priests. Scripture alone provided the means for distinguishing between the two. 'What so euer thyng is approued by it, lette it remayne styll: and what so euer thynge doeth not abyde the tryall and iudgement of the scrypture, let it be refused as erroneous, let it be dyspysed as a thynge brought vp and begone by the newe goddes.'[56] This same test applied to people as well. Those 'not fortyfyed and borne vp by the scriptures, and grounded vpon it, they are euery one of them newe goddes, antychrystes, vayne, and nothynge worthe'.[57] Only Scripture could define the meaning of faith, and the nature of man: 'what is the true fayth, which be the very right and good workes, what man is, that is to wete vtterly nothyng, and whiche is able to do no good as of hymselfe'.[58] A person's act might be counted just only when it proceeded from faith: 'for a worke how so euer greate it be, or may be, yf it haue not a pure wyll and entente, and also good and godly cyrcumstaunces: verely it is nothynge worthe'.[59]

Marshall published *A treatise declaring and showing that images are not to be suffered in churches* in late summer, 1535. This is a translation of James Bedrote's Latin translation of Martin Bucer's *Das einigerlei Bild*.[60] Here, Bucer wrote to justify the putting down of images at Strasbourg in 1530. His chief argument was that images could only detract from the true worship of God, and that, indeed, their veneration often substituted for this worship.[61] It was not true that images must be abused. They could be treated merely as depictions of religious events and figures. However, teaching all their proper use was not practicable. As long as images were allowed, there would always be some who would abuse them. Therefore, removing them entirely was a legitimate measure.[62] This was a radical view, and nothing like it had been seen in print in England before, but Bucer went

[54] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, v, p. 567. William A. Clebsch also attributes the translation to William Turner, but appears to base his claim on no evidence other than the *STC* attribution (William A. Clebsch, *England's earliest Protestants, 1520–1535* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 253–4).

[55] *Of the olde god and the newe*, sig. P2r. [56] Ibid., sig. P8r.

[57] Ibid., sig. P7v. [58] Ibid., sigs. Q7v–Q8r. [59] Ibid., sig. Q8r.

[60] *A treatise declaring and showing that images are not to be suffered in churches* (*STC* 24238 (1535)).

[61] Ibid., sigs. A7v–B2v. [62] Ibid., sigs. C3r–C6v.

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further.[63] He attacked the mass. Communion had a commemorative significance – not a sacrificial one – and this only for the godly. Christ had instituted it

> to thentent, that his discyples (that is to say, they which wil lyue accordinglye to his doctryne and commaundement) assemblynge togyther, shuld take that misticall breed and misticall drinke in comen, and eueryone put other in remembrance of that incomparable charytie of christ, by which he suffred deth for their saluation: and by the reason therof, their fayth and trust in god beinge encreased, shuld be enflamed both with the hatred of sines, and also with loue of all vertues, professyng themselues to be one body and one breed in Christ. By this meanes onely, holy men ar nourysshed with christ the meate of lyfe.[64]

Catholic practice was not just mistaken, it was blasphemous and venal. The priest pretended to re-enact Christ's unique sacrifice, then offered remission of sins and worldly benefits to those who 'by gyuyng any thinge to the prest do make themselues partakers of the masse'.[65] The ceremony thus enriched an avaricious clergy, but worse, taught people that God's favour could be bought. There was 'neuer anye superstityon in tymes past, which had in it selfe so great impyetie and wickednesse, so gret contempte of god, so gret distruction of all vertues, as hathe the masse, so as it hath ben used to be had nowe these certayne yeres'. Once they knew how 'nothing is so moch to be hated and abhorred of cristen men' as this mass, faithful people would 'perceyue that all remembrance of it is vtterly to be taken away: and therfore that the alters, which were the forgers of such ydolatry, and in dede the rich wyues of prests but very hurtfull to all crysten people wer in no wyse to be suffred'.[66]

Marshall's book generated widespread comment. The Imperial ambassador, Chapuys, noted it in September 1535: 'A book against images has lately been printed with royal license. It also is directed against mass and canonical hours.'[67] Early next year, Dr Pedro Ortiz, the Spanish ambassador to Rome, wrote to the empress about current events in England: 'Books are publicly printed against purgatory, images, and worship of saints.'[68] In mid-September, the lord chancellor, Thomas Audley, wrote to Cromwell, noting the book's potential to enflame public opinion on what were already dangerously contentious matters: 'worshipping of saints and images, creeping at cross, and such ceremonies, which discord it were well to put to silence'. Audley thought the proper course should be to contain public discussion of such difficult questions until the king and bishops had settled what practice would be. If allowed to go forth, the *Treatise* would 'make much business', and so only promote an unwelcome diversity of opinion. He stated his intention to stop the printer from distributing further copies.[69] A second letter, from Thomas Broke, chief clerk of the exchequer at Calais, but

[63] For a discussion of iconoclasm in the *Treatise on images*, see Margaret Aston, *England's iconoclasts* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 203–10.
[64] *Treatise on images*, sigs. F4r–F4v.
[65] Ibid., sig. F5v.
[66] Ibid., sig. F6r.
[67] *LP* IX, 357.
[68] *LP* X, 528.
[69] *LP* IX, 358.

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writing from London, further warned Cromwell. 'William Marshall (whom ye knowe) hath caused a boke lately to be prynted under the kinges priuilege, where it is suspected that there is no suche priuilege graunted for the same.' The book's colophon states: 'Printed for W. Marshall, with the kynges moost gratiouse priuylege.'[70] Some people, including Broke, and perhaps Chapuys, seem to have taken this statement to claim royal endorsement of the book's contents. Actually, it indicated no more than that the book had been legally printed. The *Treatise*'s contents made this misunderstanding especially worrisome. In Broke's words, it 'enveieth gretly ageynst worshipping of Images, wheryn eny reasonable body knowith howe to ordre theym self, but most specially ageynst the masse wheryn the sacrament of the Auter is consecrate'. Broke refers specifically to the passage denying the sacrificial consecration of the Host at the altar, noting its presence 'within iiii or v. leves of the latter ende' of the book. He invited Cromwell to inspect the same. 'The people murmure somoche therat I therfore according to my duetie send unto you worde therof and also the same boke, (for ye knowe what Marshall is).'[71]

Although told by at least two responsible and credible figures of the *Treatise*'s existence and inflammatory contents, Cromwell did nothing to stop the book from circulating. The printer was not sent for, copies were not confiscated. Audley had intended to take these steps himself, but did not in fact do so. Indeed, a second edition soon appeared, either later that year, or in 1536. In a note to the end of this edition, Marshall wrote that he had felt 'compelled agayne to printe this lytell treatyse' to respond to those who 'reporte me to haue dispysed the masse or the supper of the lorde'.[72] A number of changes seem aimed at conciliating the book's critics. The claim of royal privilege is removed from the colophon, and, in one place, Marshall modifies the text's call that all altars be removed, to one condemning only those 'erecte and dedycate vnto images or sayntes'.[73] This limitation makes little difference, for the text's denial of a sacrificial aspect to the ceremony applies to all masses and all altars – a point Marshall emphasizes in his endnote. Christ had died once, and once only, to make perfect his 'holy elect'. The priest could not re-perform his sacrifice, and behaved as Judas by offering him to be bought and sold at the altar. Scripture, impartially read, demonstrated all of this.[74] Cromwell must have agreed. After all, he very likely procured the Latin edition that Marshall translated into English, and he could have stopped circulation of the book for the reason that Chancellor Audley noted, but chose not to.

A still more combative text is Marshall's *Image of a chrysten bysshop*.[75] The authorship of this book has long been in doubt. The *STC* gives Luther, but then

[70] *Treatise on images*, sig. F8v.

[71] PRO SP I/96 fo. 146r (*LP* IX, 345).

[72] *A treatise declaryng and shewing dyuers causes that pyctures and other ymages ar in no wise to be suffred in churches* (*STC* 24239 (1535?)), sig. G3r.

[73] Ibid., sigs. G4v, F4v (cf. *STC* 24238, sig. F4r).

[74] Ibid., sigs. G1v–G4v.

[75] *The images of a verye chrysten bysshop, and of a counterfayte bysshop* (*STC* 16983.5 (1536?)).

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adds 'this does not appear to be a translation of any known work by Luther'. Luther's name does not appear on the title, colophon, or anywhere in the text. Dennis E. Rhodes thought the *STC* based its attribution solely on John Foxe's reference to the banned book, 'the Image of a counterfaite bishop made by Luther'. His analysis of the text led him to think an English author more likely than a German. He concluded: 'if the work has any connection with Luther at all, it is likely to be at most a free adaptation of his themes and arguments rather than a translation of anything that he wrote'.[76] The book is, in fact, a translation of Luther's *Wider den falsch genantten geystlichen stand des Babst und der bischoffen*, published in Wittenberg in 1522.[77] In 1528, a Latin translation of this text appears to have circulated at Oxford. The early Protestant, Thomas Garrett, sold heretical books to students there. Among those uncovered in a stash by Dr John London, warden of New College, were copies of a volume he recorded as 'Martinus Lutherus adversus falso nominatos episcopos'.[78] Marshall's text is a largely faithful translation of Luther's text. Various passages are elaborated, especially those dealing with clerical pomp and venality, and Marshall uses periphrasis when rendering passages with sexual or bodily references.[79] He removes all of Luther's references to himself, and to the German language.[80] In one of Luther's similes, he substitutes the River Thames for the River Rhine.[81]

The book denounces Catholic bishops as counterfeits of the church elders described by Paul, and condemns contemporary church belief and practice as products of a poisonous tradition. Singled out for special revilement are clerical celibacy and vows of chastity – institutions maintained in the English church throughout the life of Henry. Requiring clerics to be celibate violated Scripture, and celibacy itself was a way of life that most could not faithfully observe. By demanding celibacy anyway, the church drove clerics to sin, and so brought them to damnation. 'O you most cruell tormentours of consciences, howe do you embrue, how do you pollute and defyle your handes in the bloode of innocent persones?'[82] In the *Chrysten bysshop*, Luther did not view unscriptural church traditions as *adiaphora* – indifferent things to be practised or not, as custom might

[76] Dennis E. Rhodes, 'William Marshall and his books, 1533–1537', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 58 (1964), pp. 219–31, at 229–30.

[77] Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch translate Luther's text: *Against the spiritual estate of the pope and the bishops falsely so called* (*Gritsch*), in Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, general eds., *Luther's works* (55 vols., Saint Louis, 1955–86), XXXIX, *Church and ministry I*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 247–99. The editor believes that the original was first published shortly before 9 July 1522 (ibid., p. 244). Luther's original published text is at *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, X[II] pp. 105–58.

[78] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, V, App. VI.

[79] (Page numbers to *Gritsch* cited in brackets below, and in following notes.) Elaborated passages: see, e.g., *Chrysten bysshop*, sigs. C5r–C6v (254); G6r (265); I8v–K1r (271–2); K2r–v (272); M8r (279); N6r–N7r (281–2); N8r (282); O2r–v (283); Q1v–Q2v (287); T6r–T7v (296); U4v–U6r (299). Either Marshall invented the additions in these passages himself, or took them from the author of the Latin translation. Periphrasis: ibid., sigs. E8r–F1r (260–1); U2v–U3r (297–8).

[80] Luther's self-references: ibid., sigs. M3v–4r (278); O4v–O5r (283); P2r (285); Q6v (288); his references to the German language: ibid., sigs. F8r (263); O1v (282).

[81] Ibid., sig. H6r (268).

[82] Ibid., sig. S3r (292).

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recommend. They were all positive abuses. This was so partly because they led people to place their confidence in good works, when only faith could secure salvation – a point Luther makes repeatedly.

The very chrysten fayth is this, thou doste beleue that thou arte iustyfyed and saued not by any workes, but onely through fayth in Chryste, as medyator, and by the mercy whiche is frely gyuen in hym … so that a man do despayre of all his owne strengthe and power and of all his owne enforcementes, and all his owne workes, and do all togyther and holy truste and hange vpon the merytes and the Iustyce of an other man, that is to wyt of Chryst. It is not a Iudaycall fayth, to be wyllyng to be iustyfyed, to that is to haue remyssyon of synne and to be saued by works, by theyr owne propper strength and merites?[83]

More than this, traditions occupied the place of true religion entirely, and so formed an abominable idol.

Nowe why shuld Moyses put Baal Peor for an example moste specyallye afore all other thynges, when he doth commaunde that they shuld neyther adde any thynge to the worde of god, nor mynyshe any thyng therof: excepte it were because he wolde openlye shewe that humane tradycyons are nothyng els but an Idole Peor? For these do take away the lawe of god, and do adde humane thynges. Lykewyse as euen at these dayes the Pope hath suppressed, or at the least wyse hathe neglected and despysed almost all the commaundementes of god, and hathe added his owne humane abhomynacyons as patches sowed thereunto.[84]

Human invention was the same thing as human error, 'mere doctryne of deuylles', leading inevitably to the 'butcherye and slaughter of soules'.[85] It followed that churches must limit their practice of ceremonies to those expressly taught by the Bible. Thomas Starkey came to a different conclusion in his *Exhortation to the people* (1536). He noted that many ceremonies were of ancient, but not Biblical origin. For instance, prayer to saints

hath euer ben receyued of all the antiquitie, from whose steppes christen people, let vs not in euery thinge lyghtly slyppe, but rather folowe them in suche thynges as be good and conuenient, than without iugement to reiect al thinges whiche be of nature indifferent, approuyng onely them whiche be of hye necessitie, and by the expresse word of god to vs in his doctrin taught.[86]

At the end of his book, Starkey states his opinion that various indifferent practices – monasticism, pilgrimages, shrines, fasting, the keeping of holy days, the use of images, prayer to saints, and for the dead, and the concept of purgatory which underlay many of them – could be well used, and should be maintained.[87] The *Chrysten bysshop* condemns all such practices as harmful accretions at best, and as damnable vices when performed without faith.[88] In coming years,

[83] Ibid., sigs. Q3v–Q4r (287).
[84] Ibid., sigs. F3v–F4r (262). Cf. *Of the olde god and the newe*, sigs. A5r–v.
[85] *Chrysten bysshop*, sig. B7v (252).
[86] *An exhortation to the people, instructynge theym to vnitie and obedience* (*STC* 23236, 1536), sig. X3r.
[87] Ibid., sigs. U2r–Y1r.
[88] *Chrysten bysshop*, sig. F5r (262–3).

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Cromwell would express compatible views as government policy. His second injunctions to the clergy (1538) instructed clerics to give quarterly sermons warning listeners 'not to repose their trust or affiance in any … works devised by men's fantasies beside scripture'. In his address to a meeting of the House of Lords, convened in 1537 to discuss various topics, including the status of ceremonies, he declared that he would not 'admit any articles or doctrine not contained in the Scripture, but approved only by continuance of time and old custom'.[89]

The *Chrysten bysshop* violated numerous prohibitions against Luther's writings. Marshall published it anyway, to advance his vision of the truth. In his preface, he predicted that critics would claim that it incited sedition. However, he thought that 'vnto all good men, it shall appere, bothe meke and mylde, godly, and also vertuous, and an argument plentuous of profitable erudycion and learnynge'.[90] The edition is undated, but typographical evidence suggests a publication date in 1535–6.[91] An interpolation, referring to monks obtaining licences before leaving monasteries to take up secular lives, follows the provisions of the first Act of Dissolution of March 1536, which allowed monks from dissolved houses to assume secular identities when granted permission by the authorities.[92] The spring of 1536 may, then, be the correct date. The book was subsequently banned, perhaps several times. One such banning occurred in 1546. William Prynne, writing a century later, states that it had also been banned in 1539.[93]

III

The *Chrysten bysshop* was not the only one of Marshall's books to be banned. Others shared this fate, or were composed from sources that were themselves banned. The diocese of London issued lists prohibiting the major components of Marshall's *Primer* – Joye's *Hortulus animae*, and various Lutheran texts.[94] In 1542, this authority specifically banned the prefaces to the first and second editions of the *Primer*, translated from Luther.[95] It banned the Latin source for the *Treatise on*

[89] G. Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, ed. N. Pocock (7 vols., Oxford, 1969), IV, p. 343; Guy, *Tudor England*, p. 180.

[90] Ibid., sigs. A4v–A5r.

[91] P. B. Tracy, 'Robert Wyer: a brief analysis of his types and a suggested chronology for the output of his press', *The Library* (*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*), 6th ser., 2 (1980), pp. 293–303, at 298; Rhodes, 'Marshall and his books', p. 228.

[92] *Chrysten bysshop*, sig. Q6r–v (288).

[93] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, V, p. 568, App., pp. 838–9; Rhodes, 'Marshall and his books', p. 229, citing William Prynne, *Second part of the antipathie of the English lordly prelacie* (1641).

[94] The diocese banned *Hortulus animae* in or shortly after 1529, and then a second time in 1531 (Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, IV, p. 679, App., p. 765; *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, *Early English Text Society* (orig. series), XV (Oxford, 1965), p. 62). It was banned again in 1542 (Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, V, App. X). One likely Latin source for the Lutheran materials, the *Piae precationes*, was banned as early as 1526, and then again, along with other possible sources, over the next few years (Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, IV, pp. 667–8). See Butterworth, *English primers*, pp. 281–2.

[95] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, V, App. X.

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images in the early 1530s,[96] and that for *Of the olde god and the newe* as early as 1529.[97] Both Marshall's English edition of the latter and his *Chrysten bysshop* were proscribed, and publicly burned by bishop Edmund Bonner in 1546.[98] But between 1534 and 1536, Marshall issued book after book of a type whose open publication would have been unthinkable half a dozen years earlier, or later. He quickly became notorious. By July 1535, he could anticipate that the *Defence of peace*, published that month, would inspire criticism of its translator and publisher. In a defensive preface, he warned readers against those who 'iniustly, falsely, and secretly, in corners … slaunder and bely men'. These critics should be given no credit 'before suche tyme and untyll … they haue openly and suffycyently improued and confuted vs'.[99] All over the country, people complained of religiously themed books published *cum privilegio regali* – the tag typically appearing on the colophon of books. Marshall's work undoubtedly occasioned much of this discontent.[100] He was familiar enough to figure in the discussions of the northern rebels in December 1536. The instructions to one of the delegates to their meeting at Doncaster that month included the demand that his books be destroyed. These instructions also insisted that Bucer's 'heresies' be eradicated, a request possibly occasioned by Marshall's publication of the *Treatise on images* in the preceding year.[101]

The rebels might have drawn comfort from the fact, had they been aware of it, that by the time they were to meet, Marshall's publishing career was already effectively over. After 1536, he published only the third edition of his *Primer*, essentially a reissuing of the second edition.[102] His latest original work appears to have been the *Chrysten bysshop*. Reaction to this must have forced Cromwell, despite himself, to finally rein Marshall in. It cannot be coincidental that a gap occurs in the career of the book's printer, Robert Wyer, at just this point. Wyer was an established printer by mid-decade, but the *Chrysten bysshop* seems to be the only book that he printed in 1536. He printed nothing at all in 1537 or 1538, but resumed production in 1539 with twelve editions.[103] The outbreak of rebellion, in late 1536, destroyed whatever chance might have existed for Marshall similarly to resume his career. That November, he was one of a number of London

[96] Ibid., iv, p. 669. The item reads: 'non esse ferendas in templis Christianorum imagines et statuas coli solita, authoribus Ecclesiasticis Argentoraten'. The title to Marshall's second edition reads '*A treatise declaryng and shewing dyuers causes … that pyctures and other ymages … ar in no wise to be suffred in the temples or churches of Christen men … The authours of this litle treatise ar the open preachers of Argtenyne*' (*STC* 24239, sig. A1r). Bucer's book referred to events that occurred in 1530. Marshall's translation appeared in 1535.

[97] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, iv, p. 679; p. 667, App., p. 765.

[98] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, v, pp. 567–8, App., pp. 838–9.

[99] *Defence of peace*, fo. iv.

[100] See, e.g., PRO SP I/89 fo. 158r (*LP* viii, 196); *LP* xiii.i 981(2), p. 363; *LP* xiii.ii 817, p. 326; PRO SP I/139 fo. 80v (*LP* xiii.ii 831(2)(iii)). One report almost certainly refers to Marshall's *Primer* (Butterworth, *English primers*, pp. 53–4).

[101] PRO SP I/112 fo. 143r (*LP* xi, 1246).

[102] *A goodly prymer in Englysshe, newely corrected* (*STC* 15998 (1538?)).

[103] Tracy, 'Robert Wyer', pp. 298–9. Tracy writes of 'a pause of significant duration' in Wyer's work after 1535, 'and then a resumption of output in 1539' (ibid., p. 293).

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Protestants whom Henry had arrested, reportedly to placate conservative opinion at the time of the rebellion.[104] Fortunately, Marshall could rely on powerful friends at this dangerous moment. Thomas Cranmer took him into custody at Lambeth palace and, later that month, transported him to Kent where, according to John Gostwyk, the conservative treasurer of the First Fruits, he stayed 'in the bisshops owne house'. Such favourable treatment disgusted Gostwyk, who wrote to Cromwell on 1 December that the king should 'direct his moost honnorable lettres unto thesaid bisshop for the sending of thesaid Marshall hither to London, in whiche doing the people wilbe highly satisfied and contented'.[105] No such letters were issued, and Marshall was likely still in Canterbury three weeks later when he wrote to Cromwell asking for help in obtaining the king's pardon. His detention had hardly been onerous, and appears to have included intervals spent gossiping with other members of Cranmer's household. One tale he passed on to Cromwell had Bishop Stokesley taking 'laxatives, and thinges to make hym womett' so that he might be excused on grounds of illness from answering the statement recently put to him by Robert Barnes. Marshall was confident enough to ask that one of the benefices of the recently deprived Reginald Pole be bestowed, either on his brother or son.[106] Without his protectors, Cranmer and Cromwell, things might have gone very differently. Barnes had been arrested at the same time, but he had been sent to the Tower.[107] Twenty years later, Marshall's son, Richard, requited his father's debt to the archbishop. During his long confinement in the reign of Queen Mary I, Cranmer was transferred from the common gaol of Oxford to spend several weeks in the custody of the younger Marshall, who had become dean of Christ Church, Oxford.[108]

In his December letter, Marshall reported that he was working on several manuscripts, which he would send to Cromwell when complete. This activity resulted in nothing, at least that we know about. Cromwell continued to sponsor Protestant books after 1536, but not incendiary ones. His chief literary instrument in this period was Richard Taverner. Taverner was a penniless student when he first approached Cromwell in 1530, asking for aid. Cromwell responded favourably, by arranging for a pension to be granted to him, and then taking him into his own service some time later. In 1536, he raised him to the clerkship of the signet.[109] Between 1538 and 1540, Taverner translated or edited nine English titles, and two Latin ones.[110] Several of these works are translations of Protestant

[104] *LP* XI, 1097, 1250, XII.I, 181.

[105] PRO SP I/112 fo. 68v (*LP* XI, 1220).

[106] PRO SP I/113 fo. 23r–v (*LP* XI, 1355). Robert Barnes, arrested at the same time as Marshall, was newly released from prison in July 1537 (S. Brigden, 'Popular disturbance and the fall of Thomas Cromwell and the reformers, 1539–1540', *Historical Journal*, 24 (1981), pp. 257–78, at 269).

[107] *LP* XI, 1097.

[108] Jasper Ridley, *Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 386–8; Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, VIII, p. 80; A. B. Emden, *A biographical register of the University of Oxford, A. D. 1501–1540* (Oxford, 1974), p. 381.

[109] *LP* V, 1762, 1763. See Elton, *Reform and renewal*, pp. 61–2, 62 n. 78. A student, Martin Tindall, refers to Taverner as Cromwell's client in a letter from the summer of 1533 (PRO SP I/77 fo. 148v (*LP* VI, 751)).

[110] *STC*, 'Richard Taverner'.

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writers on doctrinal and evangelical subjects. His intended audience seems to have embraced the whole range of the reading public, from the unsophisticated, with his *Catechisme or institution of the christen religion*, to the learned, with *Common places of scripture ordrely set forth* – a translation of the Protestant Erasmus Sarcerius's systematic doctrinal treatise. He reports that he had translated the latter 'by the impulsion and commaundement of my said old maister my lord priuy seale'.[111] Other texts, like his translation of the reformer Wolfgang Capito's *Epitome of the psalmes*, or the *Epistles and gospelles with a brief postyl vpon the same*, seem aimed at clerics and pious laymen.[112] In the dedicatory epistle to the former, addressed to the king, he states that Cromwell had engaged him 'with dyuerse translacions and other exercises', for more than three years, including the *Epitome*.[113] A remarkable feature of his work, as with Marshall's earlier in the decade, is that so much of it came out in so short a time. Just as remarkable is how much of it seems calculated at affecting the public's reception of the English Bible, which was being released concurrently in a series of editions, one of them Taverner's own.[114] One might guess that one of Taverner's purposes was to persuade his readers that the English Bible was part and parcel of a larger Protestant reform, and that, as such, it should be read in a Protestant light. If so, then his work would constitute a second instance of a publishing campaign conducted under Cromwell's auspices, whose aim was to further Protestantism in England.[115]

Marshall fades from view after 1536. We learn from his 22 December letter that Cromwell had forgiven the £20 debt he had incurred two years before, ostensibly for printing the *Defence of peace*, but now, John Gostwyk was harassing his brother, and co-obligor, Thomas, for payment. A year earlier, Gostwyk had named both in a suit at common law over the matter. At this time, Cromwell had discharged William from the debt, and had promised to do the same for Thomas. He did not, in fact, do the latter. This mistake allowed Gostwyk to revive the claim against Thomas a year after it had been dropped.[116] All of this should be connected to the arrest of the London Protestants that November, over which Henry appears to have put Gostwyk in charge.[117] The most likely sequel is that Cromwell now

[111] *A catechisme or institution of the christen religion* (*STC* 23709, 1539); *Common places of Scripture ordrely set forth* (*STC* 21753, 1538 (12 au.)), sig. A6r.

[112] *An epitome of the psalmes, or briefe meditacions with diuerse other prayers* (*STC* 2748, 1539); *The epistles and gospelles with a brief postyl vpon the same* (*STC* 2967.2, 1540).

[113] *Epitome of the psalmes*, preface (unpag.).

[114] *The most sacred bible, … newly recognised by R. Taverner* (*STC* 2067, 1539). Taverner also issued a separate edition of the New Testament, *The new testament in Englysshe: after the Greke exemplar* (*STC* 2844, 1539).

[115] For the theory that Taverner wrote to further 'German Protestant humanism', see John K. Yost, 'German Protestant humanism and the early English Reformation: Richard Taverner and official translation', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 32 (1970), pp. 613–25. See also Underwood, 'The Cromwellian group', ch. 8, 'Richard Taverner'.

[116] PRO SP I/113 fo. 23r (*LP* XI, 1355); PRO SP I/112 fo. 242r (*LP* XI, 1316).

[117] *LP* XI, 1097; PRO SP I/120 fo. 172 r (*LP* XII.I, 1260). Earlier that year, Gostwyk interfered with Robert Barnes's receipt of funds that Cromwell had authorized be paid to him as reimbursement for costs incurred during his service as an ambassador (PRO SP I/113 fo. 221r (*LP* XI, 1488)).

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formally released Thomas from the debt as well, although this is not known. Such a step would agree with the pattern of good relations that he kept with the Marshalls throughout the decade. In May of the preceding year, he had written in support of his 'frende master Thomas Marshall', for the position of president of Magdalen College, Oxford, although unsuccessfully.[118] On 3 January 1540, Richard Marshall wrote to him, appealing for financial support to continue his studies. His father was still living, but, 'through increasing poverty', was no longer able to maintain him. Richard desired to 'share in Cromwell's bounty, and hereafter be reckoned amongst those in his pay'. A Latin poem in five cantos entitled *Sustine et abstine* accompanied the plea. Marshall took his master's degree on 3 August 1541, so perhaps Cromwell responded favourably.[119] If he did, his help recognized the elder Marshall's past services, not current ones. After 1536, William Marshall was far too controversial to be of further use to him as a London publisher.

IV

Marshall's history verifies the sketch John Foxe set out a generation later of Cromwell's writers. Marshall was one of the 'sundry and divers fresh and quick wits' who helped Cromwell to 'beat down false religion and advance the true', by translating and publishing Protestant books. Cromwell's role consisted of more than standing by, as one generally well disposed toward the work of his writers. He actively participated in it. Taverner describes him as having 'animated and impelled' him to translate the *Augsburg Confession and Apology* of Melanchthon, from a 'mooste circumspecte godlynes and moost godly circumspection in the cause and matter of our Chrystyan relygyon'. Cromwell himself strove to advance the new faith, and inspired others to this same end. In Taverner's words: 'your selfe to the vttermoost of your power do promote and further the cause of Chryste and not onely that, but also do animate and incourage other to the same'.[120] Cromwell encouraged Marshall by helping to gather materials for him to translate. With Stephen Vaughan, he worked to import Latin versions of some, and perhaps all, of Marshall's German texts. Marshall kept him informed of the progress of at least one of these texts, Joachim von Watt's *Vom alten und neuen Gott*. His loan of £20, later forgiven, helped Marshall to publish not only the *Defence of peace*, but a number of other books that openly inculcated Protestantism. He paid Christopher Mont to translate the German originals of some of these texts. He assured Marshall repeatedly that he 'shulde be merie and take no thought', for he should not lack money. Later in the decade, he extended similar support and

[118] PRO SP I/92 fo. 236r (*LP* VIII, 790; Merriman, *The life and letters of Thomas Cromwell*, I, pp. 406–7); Emden, *Biographical register*, pp. 381–2.

[119] PRO SP I/156 fos. 5r–6r (*LP* XIV.II, 758); Emden, *Biographical register*, pp. 381. The *DNB* gives 5 October 1540 as the date of Marshall's M.A. ('Richard Martial', *DNB*, XII, p. 1154).

[120] *The confessyon of the fayth of the Germaynes. To which is added the apologie of Melancthon* (*STC* 908, 1536), fo. A2r.

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encouragement to Richard Taverner. In 1539, Taverner reports that Cromwell, his benefactor and former master, had 'enured [him] with dyverse translacions and other exercises' during the three preceding years.[121] Marshall and Taverner both published large numbers of books in short periods of time, a fact which suggests that both men completed much of their work well in advance. This circumstance, in turn, suggests the presence of a larger force, Cromwell, planning and guiding their work. The curious delay in the printing of the *Defence of peace* supports this understanding. It is best explained by supposing that Cromwell himself decided when this book should finally appear. Its physical production had already begun in March 1534, with Marshall eager to complete it. However, if the *Defence* was to stand as a theoretical statement of the new national church, its release at this time would have been premature. It was published only sixteen months later, a time better suited for it to serve this purpose – after the Royal Supremacy had been established by coercive sanction.

Cromwell's interaction with Marshall, a known Protestant, allows for more than a case of affiliation by association. It makes a strong case, based on Cromwell's own actions, that he was himself a partisan Protestant. Cromwell helped Marshall to find Latin versions of his most controversial texts, provided him with money, and protected him when he got into trouble. When the lord chancellor, Thomas Audley, told him that he intended to suppress the *Treatise on images*, a book he believed could only cause trouble, Cromwell not only failed to support his colleague, he appears to have thwarted him, for a second edition soon appeared. He resisted pressure from John Gostwyk to have Marshall harshly punished. The effect of these actions was to help Marshall in his work as the most notorious Protestant publicist in England. Later, Cromwell sponsored Richard Taverner, a second prolific Protestant author, thereby demonstrating that his assistance of Marshall was no aberration or mistake. Little weight might be given these connections if Cromwell sponsored a larger group of writers, expressing a variety of doctrinal opinions. The views of the doctrinal conservatives might then be thought as likely to reflect his own beliefs as those of the radicals. But Cromwell's support for conservative writers has never been reliably demonstrated, and seems wholly doubtful.[122] The only religious moderate with whom he has been convincingly connected is Thomas Starkey, whose *Exhortation to the people* was issued by the royal printer in April 1536. With its semi-official character, and Starkey's own status as a royal chaplain, it is hardly surprising that this book expresses a moderate outlook. But crucially, the *Exhortation*'s main point was that people should wait for the authorities to settle indifferent points of doctrine and practice, and then abide by their determinations.[123] This was the only way to stop dissension, and preserve unity. The book is less advocacy than admonition to obey. By contrast, Marshall's writings concern themselves very much with

[121] *Epitome of the psalmes*, preface (unpag.).
[122] See Underwood, 'The Cromwellian group', ch. 2, 'Defining the group'.
[123] See, e.g., *Exhortation*, sigs. B4r–C1r.

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ultimate religious questions. The two authors' approaches need not even be thought incompatible. For Cromwell, the purpose of the *Exhortation* may have been to dissuade conservatives from speaking, while Marshall's books steadily expanded the currency of Protestant doctrine.

Obviously, dealing with doctrinally radical books in the 1530s was a risky enterprise. Marshall's arrest, in the wake of the Pilgrimage of Grace, finished his career as a writer and publisher. A second political change ended Taverner's. After Cromwell's attainder and execution, Taverner never published again. In 1541, he, his wife, and mother-in-law were all arrested and briefly confined in the Tower of London on charges of retailing scandalous gossip about the king.[124] His *Common places* and *Augsburg confession and apology* were banned in 1546, pursuant to a royal proclamation of that year against heretical books.[125] Indeed, Cromwell's own fall was connected to his patronage of radical authors, a support that his accusers argued demonstrated his own heretical beliefs. The act of attainder made against him on 29 June 1540 charged that he had 'secretly set forth and dispersed into all shires … great number of false erroneous books, whereof many were printed and made beyond the seas, and divers other within this realm'. The articles speak particularly of one book said to induce its readers to refuse the sacrament of the altar. This work Cromwell had caused 'to be translated into our maternal and English tongue'. Almost certainly, this book was the *Treatise on images*. The articles continue that 'upon report made unto him by the translator thereof, that the matter so translated hath expressly been against the said most blessed and holy sacrament; yet the same Thomas Crumwell, earl of Essex, after he had read the same translation, most heretically hath affirmed the same material heresy so translated, to be good'.[126] From this, it seems that Marshall must have co-operated with Cromwell's accusers, undoubtedly unwillingly. A sign of his possible rehabilitation appears just weeks later. In July, the name 'Willmus Marshall' appears in the list of witnesses to the judgement of convocation annulling Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves.[127] As for Cromwell, the heresy his accusers charged him with disseminating would appear to be that denying a sacrificial aspect to the mass, as expressed in the *Treatise on images*, not the sacramentarianism some modern historians have supposed.[128] This view accords with the report made the day after Cromwell's arrest by the French ambassador, Charles de Marillac, that Cromwell had been removed because he was a Lutheran and had favoured heretics.[129]

Robert Hobbes, the last abbot of Woburn Abbey, was another victim of the religious politics of the late 1530s. In May 1538, he was interrogated about the following statement he was said to have made: 'though the Lord Privy Seal seems

[124] 'Richard Taverner', *DNB*, XIX, p. 395.
[125] Foxe, *Acts and monuments*, V, p. 568; App., pp. 838–9.
[126] Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, IV, pp. 417–18.
[127] Ibid., p. 438.
[128] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp. 379–80; G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (London, 1977), pp. 293–4; Beckingsale, *Thomas Cromwell*, pp. 140, 142.
[129] Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p. 379.

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to be the maintainer of these wretched heretic books that he set forth *cum privilegio regali*, neither the king nor he knows the pestilent doctrine that is in them'.[130] The abbot's alleged statement records one response to the upheavals of the day, and to the part played in them by the circulation of Protestant books. It raises also a perplexing question. What did Henry know of it all? Indeed, what significance should be attached to Cromwell's support of Protestant books? The king disfavoured many of the doctrinal opinions Marshall and Taverner expressed – for instance, the denunciation of clerical celibacy in the *Chrysten bysshop*, and of the mass in the *Treatise on images*. Both writers' works contain expositions of the theory of justification by faith alone, a doctrine the king abhorred. Might Henry have tolerated books expressing such views? The answer may be, perhaps – at least for a time. One purpose for Taverner's translation of Sarcerius (1538), as also his translation of Melanchthon's *Augsburg confession and apology* (1536), was that of impressing the Lutheran princes, with whom Henry intermittently discussed entering into alliance.[131] *Of the olde god and the newe* (1534) undermined papal prestige at the time of the break with Rome. The *Treatise on images* (1535), and the *Chrysten bysshop* (1536) heralded attacks on the shrines, and monasticism. These were all causes that Henry had chosen, and he may have accepted that a certain amount of Lutheran doctrine would be present in books advocating them.

Another, and not necessarily contradictory, assessment is that Cromwell took advantage of opportunities presented by the series of transforming events in the English church to insinuate Protestant propaganda into what should have been more purely political tracts. There is no doubt that much of the offending material in Marshall's work could have been removed without impairing the desired political message. For instance, the attack on the mass in the *Treatise on images* could have been removed without affecting the book's defence of iconoclasm. Marshall knew how to edit. The *Defence of peace* is extensively edited to reflect the political interests of the king. Not only did Marshall not remove needlessly controversial doctrinal passages, he intruded them – in his preface to the litany of the saints and 'admonition' to readers in the second *Primer*, in his faith and works postscript to the *Contemplacyon upon the 51st psalme*, in his endnote to the second edition of the *Treatise on images*, and in other places.[132]

A third possibility is that Cromwell did not know, or approve of, the views expressed in Marshall's books. This seems impossible. Marshall, a man described by one of Cromwell's correspondents as being 'much waiting upon your mastership', made a constant practice of being controversial.[133] Despite this, Cromwell did nothing to hinder him in his work. Even the tumult occasioned by the

[130] *LP* XIII.I, 981(2) (16). Hobbes was later executed as a foe of the Royal Supremacy ('Robert Hobbes', *DNB*, IX, p. 931).

[131] See H. E. Jacobs, *The Lutheran movement in England during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI and its literary monuments* (Philadelphia, 1916), pp. 144–5, for a discussion of Sarcerius's role in the English–German diplomatic manoeuvres.

[132] For instance, Marshall made incongruous glosses to the *Defence of peace* attacking the doctrine of purgatory (*Defence of peace*, fos. 62v, 66r).

[133] *LP* VII, 722.

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Treatise on images did not prompt him to act, and Marshall continued to publish, despite Chancellor Audley's specific counsel that he be stopped.

The most convincing conclusion is that Cromwell shared the radical views expressed in Marshall's texts. Like Marshall, he would then have been a committed Protestant and Lutheran. Such a view agrees not only with Foxe's description of him as a promoter of the new faith, but with those of other contemporaries. The articles of attainder accuse him of 'erroneously persuading and declaring', to persons drawn to him by his retainers, that the heretical books he was said to be responsible for were 'good, true, and best standing with the most holy word and pleasure of God'.[134] This is only a hostile version of Taverner's friendly description of him as one who worked to 'promote and further the cause of Chryste', and who 'animate[d] and incourage[d] other to the same'. The prevailing historical view has been that Cromwell was no more than the king's able servant.[135] G. R. Elton believed that he played the key, creative role in effecting the political transformations of the 1530s.[136] The study of his dealings with Marshall suggests a third perspective. This is that, in matters of religion, Cromwell had strong opinions of his own, and that he used his influence to advance these opinions through the press, even when he knew that the king disagreed.

[134] Burnet, *History*, IV, p. 419.

[135] See, e.g., Bernard, 'The making of religious policy', pp. 339–46; Jasper Ridley, *Henry VIII* (New York, 1986), pp. 296–7; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp. 304, 383.

[136] See, e.g., G. R. Elton, 'King or minister? The man behind the Henrician Reformation', in his *Studies in Tudor and Stuart politics and government* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1974–92), I, pp. 173–88; Elton, *Reform and Reformation*, pp. 294–5.

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