

ABSTRACT

An Examination of English Catholic Preaching Under Queen Mary I, 1553-1558

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An examination of English printed sermons during the reign of Queen Mary I, showing their similarities to other Catholic Reformation sermons and demonstrating their place in the evolution of English homiletics.

An Examination of English Catholic Preaching Under Queen Mary I, 1553-1558

by

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A Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER Two.....	6
Late Medieval Sermons, 1380-1500	6
Thematic Sermons	6
English Wycliffite Sermons.....	7
Festial.....	11
CHAPTER THREE	19
Renaissance and Edwardian Sermons, 1500-1553	19
Renaissance Sermons.....	19
Edwardian Protestant Sermons	31
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
Edmund Bonner's <i>Homelies</i>	37
CHAPTER FIVE	79
Additional Marian Sermon Collections	79
Thomas Watson	81
Leonard Pollard.....	88
Roger Edgeworth	92
John Feckenham.....	98
CHAPTER SIX.....	107
Conclusion	107
APPENDIX.....	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	113

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DEDICATION

To Bethany, the love of my life.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The English Catholic Church during the reign of Queen Mary I (1553-1558) has often been accused of being reactionary and ineffective in its attempt to turn the tide of the English Reformation back in a Catholic direction. Traditional historiography on the English Reformation dismisses the value of the Marian reforms, describing them as backwards looking and uncreative. However, in recent years scholars such as Eamon Duffy have challenged this traditional narrative, showing that the Marian hierarchy was highly innovative in its attempts to restore Catholicism.¹ Duffy's work has reignited the conversation surrounding Marian Catholicism, but there remain many facets of the Marian reform which have not been thoroughly examined yet. One of those areas is preaching.

The Marian Church has often been criticized for ignoring preaching as an apologetical tool. Reformation scholar Rex Pogson excoriates the Marian hierarchy, led by Papal Legate Reginald Cardinal Pole, for "a failure to make plans . . . for an attack on heretical doctrines."² Pogson states that Pole and other top Marian clerics believed "that preaching was useless for the time being, for people were corrupted by the schism and so

¹See especially Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009); Duffy, "Mary" in *Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580, Second Edition* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992), 524-564; and Duffy, "Cardinal Pole Preaching" in *Reformation Divided* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 99-131.

²Rex Pogson, "Reginald Pole and the Priorities of Government in Mary Tudor's Church," *The Historical Journal* 18, no. 1 (March 1975): 6.

listened with avarice in their hearts and were untouched by God's Word.”³ Pogson posits that the Marian church was more concerned with restoring ceremonial and sacramental practice among the English people, and would only consider a preaching campaign once their flocks had returned to the correct practice of the faith. The Marian hierarchy’s “assessment of the needs of the people ruled out a strong preaching campaign to work parallel to the slow revival of ceremonial and the old order.”⁴ Since the Marian restoration only lasted a few years, Pogson does not believe that Pole and his collaborators ever moved beyond encouraging ceremony and into a strong program of preaching.

Other prominent English Reformation scholars, such as A. G. Dickens, David Loades, and Diarmaid MacCulloch,⁵ agree with Pogson’s assessment of the Marian Church’s attitudes towards preaching. However, in recent years scholarly opinion has begun to shift towards looking at Marian preaching in a more favorable light. Eamon Duffy vehemently disagrees with the idea that Reginald Pole did not value preaching. “Pole did not distrust preaching as such; he distrusted heretical preaching by self-appointed evangelists who operated without proper authority,” Duffy writes in his 2017 *Reformation Divided*.⁶ Arguing that Pole’s critics have either misread or mistranslated a key letter Pole sent to his friend Bartolomé Carranza in 1558, Duffy thinks that Pole

³Pogson, “Priorities”, 13.

⁴Ibid., 16.

⁵See, respectively, A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); David Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor* (London: Longman, 1991); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001).

⁶Duffy, *Reformation Divided*, 110.

wanted to put an equal emphasis on preaching and ecclesiastical discipline due to his belief that one was useless without the other.⁷ Through an examination of Pole's own sermons, Duffy concludes that Pole was not averse to preaching and that it was in fact an integral part of his program for the restoration of Catholicism in England.⁸

Although preaching has been briefly discussed by these scholars in their work on Marian England, Marian sermons themselves have never been given their own study. An examination of these sermons shows some characteristics which they all share, which could be said to make up the "Marian style". Marian sermons are doctrinally focused, condemning Protestantism in no uncertain terms and fiercely defending traditional Catholic dogmas. They all frequently cite Scripture, shoring up their points with Biblical quotations to provide universally accepted authority to their sermons. They all have a deep knowledge of church fathers, quoting and paraphrasing them often throughout. Finally, they all share a scholarly tone, avoiding colloquial language and the popular *exempla* that were characteristic of many medieval sermons. In fact, these sermons exhibit traits which indicate that they were influenced by the humanist and Protestant sermon trends popularized in England in only the prior fifty years. They are remarkably similar to the style promoted by the famous humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam in his *Ecclesiastes*, and although no explicit link can be found between Marian sermons and Erasmus, they could possibly have been influenced by his writings. Without a doubt there was a high level of attention and care given to the crafting of sermons in the Marian church, and that this care was widespread throughout England, not just under the

⁷Duffy, *Reformation Divided*, 105–106.

⁸*Ibid.*, 127.

watchful eyes of Bishops Bonner and Gardiner in London and Cardinal Pole in Canterbury. Marian sermons throughout the country were forward-looking and modern in their structure, themes, and citation of authority. The Marian church did not merely attempt to establish a sophisticated program of preaching as part of its restoration of Catholicism; educated and eloquent preaching actually existed throughout England during Mary's reign, and it was an integral part of the attempted Marian restoration.

In this thesis, I will examine Marian sermons and contrast them with earlier English sermon trends in order to show how they developed from these trends rather than reverted to them. Marian sermons have a unique style, similar to previous sermons in some ways and vastly different in others. I will first discuss the two hundred years of sermons before the Marian restoration to provide context for Marian homiletics. Then I shall contrast them with Marian sermon collections, determining through close readings of the texts what the "Marian style" is and how it differs from what came before it. This examination will start in the late Middle Ages, assessing the highly stylized Thematic sermons, the monotonously Biblicist English Wycliffite sermons, and the colloquial popular sermons of John Mirk's *Festial*. Then I will discuss the Renaissance period in England, looking at John Fisher's sermons and Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes*, which predicted and perhaps influenced many Catholic Reformation sermon trends on the continent and, I argue, in England. Finally, we will discuss the Edwardian Protestant sermon style, as exemplified by the homilies of Thomas Cranmer. After providing this context, I will spend the bulk of the paper closely examining five printed Marian sermon collections to determine what characteristics define the "Marian style". First I will analyze the most widely circulated sermon collection, Edmund Bonner's *Homelies*, which constituted the

official body of Marian sermons during the second half of Mary's reign. Then I will discuss four other sermon collections, written in four cities spread across England, to show that this style was not unique to the *Homelies* but rather was used throughout the Marian church. Finally, in my conclusion, I will reiterate the facets of the Marian style evident in the works and connect it to the greater Catholic reformation officially promulgated at the Council of Trent. Far from looking backwards to pre-Reformation sermon trends, Marian sermons share many stylistic aspects with post-Tridentine sermons. An examination of the various aspects of the Marian style, including a doctrinal focus, frequent biblical and patristic citation, and an approachable yet scholarly rhetoric, proves that Marian preachers were using cutting edge Tridentine sermon techniques, rather than reactionary pre-Reformation methods of teaching and persuasion.

CHAPTER TWO

Late Medieval Sermons, 1380-1500

Thematic Sermons

Preachers in late medieval England often used a slightly different style in the composition of their sermons than their continental counterparts. Medieval homiletics in continental Europe generally followed a thematic style, influenced by scholastic methods of teaching. Thomas Worcester gives a succinct outline of the typical thematic sermon in his “Catholic Sermons”: thematic sermons have

a Scriptural verse as theme, normally from the liturgical texts of the day; a related “protheme,” perhaps a prayer or second Scriptural text; then an introduction to the theme and what the preacher is going to do with it; announcement of division of the theme into parts, usually three or four; amplification of the parts, including subdivisions of each; a summary or peroration; and a final exhortation to the congregation.¹

These thematic sermons were organized around a specific verse of scripture, which was developed by the preacher across his different sections. The preacher would then embellish the sermon with more quotes from scripture or with short stories, known as *exempla*, to inform and entertain his audience.² Medieval preachers highly valued the thematic structure, with some medieval texts likening a well-structured sermon to a house built from a strong foundation or a tree with roots, trunk, and branches.³ This love of

¹Thomas Worcester, “Catholic Sermons”, in Larissa Taylor, ed., *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4.

²Worcester, 3-9.

³Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval “Artes Praedicandi”* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 48.

order helped propel the thematic sermon to become the most popularly used sermon style in medieval Europe.

This well-ordered template for sermons was popular among preachers in Europe, especially mendicants like Bernardino of Siena, and England was no exception to this rule. The majority of sermons which have survived in manuscript form from late medieval England, whether recorded in English or Latin, follow the thematic style.⁴ Thematic sermons were especially popular in monasteries and in universities; in fact, the style is so closely identified in origin and usage with medieval universities that some scholars call it “university style”.⁵ Most of the authors of extant medieval English sermons received university training, and the thematic style would have been transmitted as part of their education.⁶ The style, therefore, was popular among educated preachers and audiences, providing the ordered beauty and scholastic structure that university training valued. Among less educated audiences, however, two outliers would be much more popular: the English Wycliffite sermons and John Mirk’s *Festial*.

English Wycliffite Sermons

The English Wycliffite sermons are a set of sermons composed and published in the late 1380s and 1390s. They are heavily influenced by, and in some cases directly translated from, the Latin sermons of John Wycliffe, the heterodox figurehead of the Lollard movement. However, most scholars now agree that Wycliffe himself was not the

⁴Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

⁵Wenzel, *Artes Praedicandi*, 46.

⁶Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections*, 313.

author of these sermons, but rather they had an anonymous author or authors.⁷ There are 294 Wycliffite sermons, with each sermon assigned to a specific day in the liturgical calendar. Sermons are included for the Sunday Gospels, the Sunday Epistles, the Common of the Saints,⁸ the Proper Feasts of Saints, and the Ferial days.⁹ The idea of the collection was to provide a complete book of sermons for preachers to read verbatim to their flocks from the pulpit at Mass. The primary audience of the manuscript collection was preachers, but the audience of the sermons themselves was the attending laity.¹⁰

We can see from the number of surviving manuscripts that the Wycliffite sermons were quite popular in late medieval England. Pamela Gradon and Anne Hudson note 36 different manuscript copies of all or part of the Wycliffite sermons in their edited collection.¹¹ There are more copies of these sermons extant than any other medieval English sermons with the exception of *Festial*. The popularity of this collection in contrast with the thematic sermons noted above shows that there was a market for non-thematic material among the less educated people of England, especially in the rural areas where Lollardy was ascendant. Thematic sermons abounded in late Medieval England, but these non-thematic Wycliffite sermons were more popular than any individual thematic sermon or sermon collection.

⁷Pamela Gradon and Anne Hudson, eds., *English Wycliffite Sermons*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 19-35.

⁸These were general liturgies for saints who were not given their own “proper” scriptural readings. They had names such as “Common of a Martyr”, “Common of a Confessor and Bishop”, etc.

⁹Days of the week which had no saint’s feast assigned to them.

¹⁰Grabon and Hudson, Vol. 4, 33-35.

¹¹Ibid., xiv-xv.

The structure and style of the Wycliffite sermons are vastly different from the thematic sermon. Each sermon takes the scriptural text for its accompanying liturgy, usually the Gospel but sometimes the Epistle, and walks through it verse by verse, giving a thorough exegesis of the passage. Seldom will the preacher divert away from the scriptural text at hand; gone are the *exempla* used in other medieval sermons to illustrate the point. The Wycliffite author rarely quotes patristic sources, although his familiarity with some of them is evident.¹² The author does not even allude to other scripture passages often, remaining focused on the text for the liturgy of the day to the almost total exclusion of all other sources. Due to Lollard rejection of many of the saints venerated by the Catholic Church, only the feasts of scriptural saints are included in the Proper of the Saints sermons, thus eschewing the need to recount extra-biblical saints stories and allowing the preacher to remain firmly entrenched in Scripture itself. This total focus on the Scripture passage at hand was novel in the late Middle Ages, and would not be seen again until the coming of the Reformation.

The author of the Wycliffite sermons was as uninterested in rhetorical flourish as he was in extra-scriptural sources. There are some passages, especially when he rails against perceived abuses in the Catholic Church, where his style becomes more embellished,¹³ but in most of his sermons he uses plain language to expound upon the passage at hand. Add to this plain language the lack of outside sources, including the popular medieval *exempla*, and the effect of the sermons is remarkably focused, but also

¹²Gradon and Hudson, Vol. 4, 31.

¹³See, for example, the St. Andrew's Day sermon, Pamela Gradon, *English Wycliffite Sermons*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 186-192.

dull. On the one hand, this lack of rhetorical flourish and memorable *exempla* keep all of the preacher's (and therefore the listeners') focus on the Scripture. On the other hand, the Wycliffite sermons are stylistically uninteresting, and lack typical tricks of orality such as alliteration and tricolon that would keep a listener's attention and burn the message in his memory. However, the sermons were short, and they may have been meant to be elaborated upon by the individual preachers reading them,¹⁴ so perhaps that explains the dearth of rhetorical elaboration.

The Wycliffite sermons were undoubtedly a popular collection in late Medieval England, and they would exhibit several trends which would become dominant in the Protestant period of homiletics under Edward VI. They heavily focus on Scripture, to the exclusion of all other sources of inspiration or authority. They use plain language to communicate their message rather than rhetorical flourishes, teaching the Scriptures to uneducated folk in language that they would have readily understood. Finally, they eschew thematic structure, following the liturgical readings of the day verse by verse in an exegetical manner rather than following the rigid rules of sermon construction popular in the universities. However, despite their popularity the heterodox teachings in the sermons would prevent them from influencing future generations of orthodox preachers, and the sermons would not receive a printed edition in Catholic England. Thus, it seems that their popularity largely died out by 1500, and although Protestant homiletics would exhibit some of the same trends seen in the Wycliffite sermons, I have found neither evidence indicating nor scholarship arguing that these sermons directly influenced or

¹⁴Gradon and Hardon, Vol. 4, 35.

inspired English Protestants.¹⁵ The popularity and influence of the Wycliffite sermons seems to have vanished sometime in the fifteenth century.

Festial

The same cannot be said of the final Medieval sermon collection to be examined in this thesis: John Mirk's *Festial*. Composed in the late fourteenth century by John Mirk, an Augustinian canon from Lilleshal Abbey in Shropshire, *Festial* proved to be wildly popular, with many manuscript copies and over twenty printed editions in existence. In fact, *Festial* remained in print until 1532, the year of the English Church's break with Rome. Susan Powell estimates the *Festial* "is probably the most printed English work before the Reformation."¹⁶ This work was the primary influence on many English preachers in the late Middle Ages, and thus can be considered exemplary of the style and content of late Medieval English sermons.

The *Festial* was a collection of sermons intended to be read by parish priests as a guide for composing their own sermons throughout the church year.¹⁷ *Festial* would be

¹⁵I could find little scholarship on the English Wycliffite sermons. What I did find either focused on specific doctrinal aspects of the sermons, as in Jennifer Illig, "Preparing for Easter: Sermons on the Eucharist in *English Wycliffite Sermons*, in J. Patrick Hornbeck and Michael Van Dussen, eds., *Europe after Wycliffe* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 247-264, or used the sermons in a greater exposition of Wycliffite thought and spirituality, as in J. Patrick Hornbeck, Stephen E. Lahey, and Fiona Somerset, eds., *Wycliffite Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013). If any work has been published trying to determine the influence of the English Wycliffite sermons on the later Reformation in England, I have been unable to find it.

¹⁶ Susan Powell, "The *Festial*: The Priest and his Parish", in *The Parish in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (Donington, Lincolnshire: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 160-161.

¹⁷ John J. Thompson, "Preaching with a Pen: Audience and Self-Regulation in the Writing and Reception of John Mirk and Nicholas Love", in *Preaching the Word in Manuscript and Print in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Susan Powell*, ed. Martha W. Driver and Veronica O'Mara (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 103.

used in this manner throughout England, reaching learned and unlearned audiences alike. Mirk's colloquial style and frequent use of *narrationes* and *exempla* would have appealed to the commoners in the audience of those who adapted and imitated his sermons.¹⁸ Mirk's sermons were meant to be accessible to all who heard them and engaging enough to hold a crowd's attention throughout the sermon. They were also fairly short, giving his audience enough substance to remember but ending before they became bored. By writing his sermons as models to be copied by unlettered priests, Mirk would reach a great number of unlettered people to whom those priests ministered.

Mirk's style was remarkably approachable. He almost invariably started his sermons with "Good men and woymen" or "Cristen men and woymen", addressing his audience with familiarity rather than authority. He did not use the language of the universities or string many Latin phrases or words through his sermons; rather, he spoke colloquially, using language that would have been readily understood by a less educated audience. *Festial* is laced with *exempla* which illustrate complex doctrinal issues with earthy metaphors, such as stories about farming or trading at the marketplace.¹⁹ These stories put the teachings Mirk wished to emphasize into the context of the people he wished to reach, helping them to understand deeper truths through language and examples they could easily grasp.

Another aspect of Mirk's style is his frequent use of *exempla*. These *exempla* were short stories meant to illustrate the point Mirk is making in his sermon. They always had a moral in them which directly related to the subject of the sermon, and Mirk would

¹⁸Thompson, 164-165.

¹⁹See, for example, John Mirk, *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies*, ed. Theodor Erbe (London: Early English Text Society, 1905), 173-175.

often explicitly spell out his intended lesson at the end of each story. The subject material of the *exempla* varied widely, from saints' lives (drawn often from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*) to historical events to local tales passed down to Mirk orally. Often the *exempla* were fantastical stories, dealing with miracles and marvels, saintly wonderworkers and fiendish demons. Mirk included between two and four *exempla* in nearly all his sermons, leaning heavily on them as proofs for his lessons.²⁰ In his saint's day sermons, Mirk would tell basically one long *exemplum* in the form of the story of the saint's life, sometimes punctuated by other *exempla* for good measure. As stated before, many of the *exempla* took as their theme rustic situations, allowing Mirk's audience to relate to them relatively easily. Others had a specifically local setting, with Mirk specifying in which town or shire the marvelous event took place.²¹ Mirk took special care to ensure that his sermons were memorable and relatable to his audience by placing these *exempla* throughout.

However, Mirk's sermons were not merely series of entertaining stories. He always considered the *exempla* as means to the end of the sermon.²² His sermons were always meant to educate his flock in either doctrine or virtue. Most of his sermons attempt to instill a deeper sense of morality in his audience, inciting them to change their lives and act in a more Christian way. His saint's day sermons encouraged his flock to imitate the Christian virtues of the holy man or women being remembered; the sermons for the rest of the liturgical calendar often also exhorted the people to prayer, the

²⁰Joseph Albert Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religious and Didactic Literature of England* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 108-110.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

²² *Ibid.*, 108-109.

sacraments, and acts of charity. As entertaining as Mirk's sermons were, their memorable elements were always in service of his goal of education and edification.

As an example of Mirk's popular style, I will examine one of his sermons in greater detail. In *Festial* John Mirk included a sermon to be preached on the feast of Corpus Christi, which falls on the Thursday two weeks after the feast of the Ascension.²³ This is his most explicitly Eucharistic sermon, dealing with the sacrament, its institution, and the benefits to be gained from attending at its celebration. Mirk begins his sermon by telling his flock of the institution of the feast by Pope Urban IV and the indulgences attached to it. He then briefly relates the story of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, emphasizing that Christ passed the power to celebrate the Eucharist onto every priest, whether or not he be "a good lyuere." The rest of the sermon is divided into four parts, each dealing with a reason Christ left the Eucharist to the Church. These are "for manes gret helpyng, for Cristis passion mynnyng, for gret loue schowyng, and for gret mede getyng."²⁴ Each of these reasons is supported by a *narratio* (or two, in the case of the fourth), and the first and second reason are further bolstered by quotes from Augustine. Each point flows well into the other, and roughly half the sermon consists of the *narrationes*, keeping the listener engaged with amusing stories meant to make an impression on him that would remain long after the sermon was finished.

The doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, is continually emphasized in the sermon. Mirk expounds on the doctrine three times, in addition to the *exempla*: first, during his retelling of the Last Supper story, when he says that Christ

²³John Mirk, "De Solempnitate Corporis Christi Brevis Sermo ad Parochianos", in *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies*, ed. Theodor Erbe (London: Early English Text Society, 1905), 168-175.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 169.

“toke bred and wyne, and made hit his owne flessch and his blod, and 3af hit to his discyples, and bade hem ete hit and drynk hit in mynde of hym. And so 3af hit to hem and to al oþyr prestes, 3ee and to al oþyr prestes, power and dignite forto make his body of bred and wyne yn þe auter”; second, during a discourse on the benefits of the Eucharist for the dying: “he beleueth stedefastly þat hit is þe same flessch and blod þat Crist toke in mayden Mary, and was borne of hyr verray God and man, and aftur soffreth deth on þe crosse, and was buried, and ros from deth to lyue”; and third, when he discusses the merits to be gained by a communicant, when he uses almost exactly the same formula as in the previous exposition of the doctrine.²⁵ Mirk dwells on the doctrine, ensuring that his audience knows exactly what Catholic belief about the Eucharist is before moving on to the spiritual benefits one could gain by attending Mass and seeing the Eucharist offered by the priest. In addition to these explicit descriptions of the doctrine, two of his *exempla* tell of people who do not believe the doctrine completely and their embarrassment and conversion. In one story, certain priests expressed their unbelief to their bishop, and at his Mass blood poured out of the Host, dispelling their doubts.²⁶ In the second, a woman laughed at St. Gregory calling the Eucharist “Godis body” since she herself had baked the bread. In response, Gregory prayed, and the Host turned to “raw flessch bledyng” right in front of the unbelieving woman.²⁷ Mirk uses these *exempla* to reinforce the doctrine which he was trying to instill in his flock, repeating the theme over and over again to ensure belief, even if comprehension was beyond the capacity of most in his audience.

²⁵Mirk, “Corpus Christi”, 169-170; 173.

²⁶Ibid., 170-171.

²⁷Ibid., 173.

There are some interesting absences in Mirk's Corpus Christi sermon. The first is that of scripture. With the notable exception of his paraphrase of the Last Supper narrative, Mirk does not reference scripture directly at all, besides one allusion to Proverbs 23.²⁸ Even his brief rebuttal of the Lollards eschews the use of scripture.²⁹ He uses five *exempla* instead to prove his point of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the blessings to be gained by believing in it, and the shocking conversion of unbelievers. Mirk seems to have believed that his audience would be better convinced by lively stories than scriptural exegesis and would be enticed to communion by promises of blessings, rather than by a greater understanding of the doctrinal and scriptural underpinnings of the sacrament. To this end, Mirk uses only two scriptural references and two appeals to the authority of Augustine, but tells five *narrationes* to back up his point. Mirk's goal was not doctrinal comprehension on the part of his flock; it was rather a hope that they would attend Mass and communion more often. This end was better served by *exempla* than scriptural references, and so Mirk used *exempla* as the cornerstone of his Corpus Christi sermon.

A second interesting absence in this sermon is that of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Mirk focuses entirely on the real presence, but does not explain how this real presence actually functions nor does he attempt to defend the doctrine from Lollard attacks on it. Indeed, he only mentions Lollards once in passing, and then to dismiss out of hand their thoughts on images in church.³⁰ Mirk makes no attempt to

²⁸Mirk, "Corpus Christi", 172.

²⁹Ibid., 171.

³⁰Ibid.

engage opponents of his position, nor does he try to initiate his audience into the more complex doctrine of transubstantiation. He seems content to merely instill in the audience a belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist on mostly his own authority, without doing any apologetical work or pushing his flock intellectually in a way that might have ultimately confused them.

John Mirk's *Festial* is an engaging read and one can imagine that the sermons would have been interesting and enlightening to hear from the pulpit. The frequent *narrationes* give the hearer a memorable application of the weighty doctrines which Mirk is trying to get across to them. Mirk's colloquial style made his sermons accessible to most Englishmen of the time, allowing for their spread throughout the country as the most popular sermon collection of the late medieval and early modern periods in England. Mirk's focus on instilling morality in his listeners would have been attractive to the late medieval cleric, more concerned with the "good lyuing" of his flock than their doctrinal comprehension. The popularity of *Festial* would continue from its composition in the late fourteenth century all the way to the English Reformation, when religious upheaval would try to push these very Catholic sermons into obsolescence. However, even post-Reformation, there is evidence that some people were still preaching *Festial* with the more overt papist references removed.³¹ From its first publication all the way to the Reformation and beyond, *Festial* was the most popular collection of late medieval English sermons and is exemplary of what the uneducated English people were seeking in their preachers.

³¹Lucy Wooding, "From Tudor Humanism to Reformation Preaching", in Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 333.

Medieval homiletics was had several different strains, but there are some general trends that can be seen across the time period. First, medieval sermons were often tied to the liturgy, with the cyclical nature of the Wycliffite sermons and *Festial* closely tied to the liturgical calendar and many thematic sermons also taking their texts from the accompanying feast days. Secondly, scripture figured heavily in English medieval sermons, but was not always the only focus of the sermon. Thematic sermons were built around the *thema* text, and Mirk quotes scripture in his cycle. However, in both of these cases many extra-biblical sources were also featured, more scholarly in the thematic sermons and the *exempla* stories in *Festial*. The exception to this is the Wycliffite sermon collection, which are focused almost exclusively on scripture. Finally, medieval sermons have a moral rather than doctrinal focus. In a religious environment that was for the most part homogenous, more emphasis was put on inspiring better moral practices in the audience than teaching complex religious doctrines. Again, the Wycliffite sermons lean further toward doctrine given their heterodox nature, but they are outliers. Overall, medieval sermons are a diverse category, but a few trends are shared, and medieval-style sermons would continue to be popular until the eve of the Reformation.

CHAPTER THREE

Renaissance and Edwardian Sermons, 1500-1553

Renaissance Sermons

After the Wars of the Roses finally ended with the accession of the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, in 1485, the Renaissance was able to arrive and flourish in England. With the advent of the Renaissance came an *ad fontes* approach to theology and philosophy as well as the rise of Humanism among the educated elite in England. Many of the intellectual leaders of the English Renaissance were laymen. Lord Chancellor Thomas More and his friend Erasmus are among the most recognizable names in the English humanist movement, and both contributed greatly to both theology and philosophy. Later in this chapter I will discuss Erasmus' contribution to homiletics, *Ecclesiastes*, but first I will examine actual popular sermons preached in the English Renaissance period. The leading preacher of the English Renaissance was John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and his sermons will give us an insight into the state of English preaching in this period.

John Fisher's most popular sermon collection was a series of sermons expounding upon the seven penitential psalms. According to Richard Rex, this collection was printed seven times in the early sixteenth century, making it one of the most popular devotional works in early Tudor England. Their popularity was probably due to the fact that they were among the only sermons printed in English at the time. The only other printed English sermons available when Fisher's sermons were published in the early sixteenth

century were some by John Alcock and the ever-popular *Festial*.¹ The availability and popularity of this collection of Fisher's sermons means that they were probably influential on other preachers in early Tudor England. An examination of this collection can give us a better understanding of the evolution of English homiletics from the late Middle Ages into the Renaissance.

John Fisher's sermons were quite different from John Mirk's. They actually hew closer to the thematic model of sermons than the more colloquial style employed by Mirk, with a theme, antitheme, and often a tripartite division to develop several topics which Fisher wished to cover. However, rather than being rigidly faithful to this model, Fisher also conducts verse-by-verse analysis of the psalms, keeping the original context of the psalms in the mind of his audience. His weaving together of a three-fold thematic structure with a verse-by-verse exposition of the psalm being discussed creates a new style, not entirely thematic, but not purely exegetical either.² This structured yet fluid method of organization would be influential on the preachers educated in the thirty years before the English Reformation, especially those who were trained in universities such as Cambridge, where Fisher was for some time a vice-chancellor.³

Another difference between the style of Fisher and that of Mirk is the absence of the *exempla*. Rather than use short stories to illustrate his points in the same way that Mirk does, Fisher prefers to use similes, likening things such as men's souls, sin, and God's mercy to other earthlier things.⁴ Sometimes these similes can be quite extended,

¹Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48.

²*Ibid.*, 33-35.

³*Ibid.*, 17.

almost to the length of Mirk's *exempla*; however, Fisher rarely tells a story in the same way Mirk does, instead explaining a drawn-out image and relating it to the topic at hand.

In addition to similes, Fisher used quotations from scripture and the church fathers to undergird his arguments. He quotes scripture voraciously, at least once or twice per printed page, and his patristic sources range from Augustine to Chrysostom to Origen. He is not afraid to use even non-Christian sources, including traditionally used pagan authorities like Plato and Aristotle but also rather unorthodox choices such as the Jewish Kabbala. His humanist training also appears in citations of Cicero and Seneca.⁵ Fisher's language is slightly more elevated than Mirk's, using longer words and including many Latin phrases, something Mirk rarely did. Fisher prefers to quote scripture in Latin first, then translating it into English for his listeners. In this way, his sermons would still have been accessible to a literate Englishman who was not a Latin scholar. Overall, the sermons on the penitential psalms do seem fairly accessible to the average English churchgoer, although they were clearly written for a more educated audience than *Festial* was targeting. Still, the language and the similes would have been understandable by the commoners, even if less accessible and entertaining than John Mirk's colloquial style and frequent use of *exempla*.

Fisher's first sermon on Psalm 51, *Miserere mei deus*, is a good example of the style he employed throughout the penitential psalms sermons. The sermon follows the verses of the psalm, giving an exegesis of each of them in their original order. But Fisher

⁴John E. B. Mayor, "Advertisement", in John Fisher, *The English Works of John Fisher*, John E. B. Mayor ed. (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1973), xxiv-xxviii. John E. B. Mayor provides us a list of these similes in his collection of Fisher's works. I have not examined the list to see if it is exhaustive, but it is certainly long.

⁵Mayor, xxviii.

has also split his sermon into three sections, denoted by “in this seconde membre” and “thyrdly now” at the beginning of the latter two parts.⁶ In a vivid introduction, Fisher warns of how precarious a position our souls are in because of our sins and our great need of God’s grace to wash away our transgressions. Then in the first part of the sermon, Fisher shows how David makes his suit before God, asking for mercy, and teaches his audience how to follow David’s example. The second part gives reasons for why God should grant us forgiveness of sin if we ask for it and demonstrate true contrition. Finally, Fisher tells his audience that there is great reason for hope that we will be cleansed of our sins, for it is certain that God will show mercy to his people if they ask for it. The mood of the sermon begins with great seriousness and a sobering warning of our soul’s situation, but ends on a hopeful and joyous note, certain that God will pardon his penitent children. The journey out of the darkness of sin into the hopeful certitude of God’s mercy is striking, showing Fisher as a masterful manipulator of emotion as well as a scholarly preacher.

Fisher opens this sermon with a vivid simile describing the peril of the human soul:

If now under me were suche a very depe pytte, wherin myght be lyons, tygres, & beres gapyng with open mouth to destroye and deuoure me at my fallynge downe, and that there be noo thyng wherby I myght be holden vp onely by the handes of hym, to whome I haue behaued myselfe as an enemye and aduersarye by grete and greuous iniuries and wronges done vnto hym. Wolde ye not thynke me in peryllous condycyons?⁷

⁶John Fisher, *The English Works of John Fisher*, John E. B. Mayor ed. (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1973), 100; 107.

⁷Fisher, 91.

So, Fisher argues, is one's soul suspended above the beasts and demons of hell, sustained only by the grace of God, whom we have by our sins treated as an enemy. Man's life is fleeting, and his flesh is in need of constant repair by means of food and drink. As we sit in the breaking clay pot of our bodies, suspended above this pit of hell, our sins hover before us, our lost opportunities to do good behind; to our right, all of the good things given to us by God, to our left, all of the bad things from which he has shielded us. We sit shivering in the bucket, the very image of God inside us deformed into a "moost stynkyng abhomynacyon" by our sins. By all rights, God should drop the rope from which we are suspended, allowing us to be devoured by demons below. Only by swift penance can we be saved, and so Fisher exhorts us to cry out with the psalmist "miserere mei deus. God haue mercy on me."⁸

Fisher then moves to his first point: how David, and by extension all Christian penitents, should bring their case before God, pleading for his mercy. According to Fisher, the judges of earth exact vengeance strictly according to the law, having little mercy within in them, for no one is good but God. However, in God "he is so meke and so mercyfull, and aboue is lawes, also in [no] condycyon subiecte to them, he may forgyue and be mercyfull vnto whome he wyll, and so shall he do, for he may not haue lytell mercy but alwaye grete and plenteuous."⁹ Our case is so hopeless that, in strict justice, we merit to go to hell. But God's mercy, Fisher says, is greater than human comprehension, and so he will be merciful to those who call upon him. Even so, we have a duty to show contrition for our sins, praying for mercy and washing our souls with

⁸Fisher, 90-94.

⁹Ibid., 95.

tears. This is how we plead our cause before God, showing sorrow and firm resolution to avoid sin in the future. Fisher meditates on this sorrow for a time, saying that sorrow, confession, and satisfaction are all in themselves gifts of God. However, to earn God's mercy we must accept these gifts and use them, showing God our contrition and our determination to give satisfaction for our sins.¹⁰

In the second part of the sermon, Fisher details reasons why God should heed our sorrowful cries and extend his mercy to us. He posits that God is pleased when we call to mind our sins, meditating upon their magnitude and injustice towards others. If we have the self-reflection to truly know our sins and feel contrition for them, God himself forgets them, blotting them out from his mind as if they never existed.¹¹ Quoting scripture, Fisher assures his audience that God does not will the death of the sinner; if the sinner do penance for his sin it shall "neuer be cast in his tethe neyther layde to his charge."¹² Christ came to call sinners, Fisher reminds his listeners, not the righteous; therefore if we go to him humbly, freely confessing our sins and reminding him of his promise of mercy, Christ will surely forgive us.¹³

In the third part of the sermon, Fisher attempts to instill in his audience a confidence in God's mercy that will have them leaving the church joyfully, chastened by his reminder of their great sin but hopeful in the mercy of God. He begins the section by recounting the story of the Ninevites from the book of Jonah, how they heard Jonah's

¹⁰Fisher, 96-100.

¹¹Ibid., 100-101.

¹²Ibid., 103.

¹³Ibid., 106.

pronouncement of their upcoming chastisement and immediately began doing penance, even though they had no assurance that it would avert God's wrath. But Christians know that God will be merciful if they do penance, for they have been shown his mercy time and again, even unto the death of Jesus Christ; how much more ready should we be to do penance than the pagan Ninevites.¹⁴ Furthermore, Fisher states, we know that the saving power of Christ's blood is in every sacrament, and "as ofte as the holy sacramentes be yterated and vused accordynge to the commaundement of Crystes chyrche, so ofte is the blyssed blode of our lorde sprenched abroad to clense and put away synne."¹⁵ Knowing that we are cleansed of our sin by the power of the sacraments, we can be joyful whenever we partake of them, perceiving the cleanness of our soul and the peace of our conscience. This peace and joy, Fisher promises, will be everlasting as long as we are penitent, and eventually we will be welcomed into heaven. Therefore, Fisher exhorts all penitents to be thankful for the "sorowe of our contrycyon . . . wepynge in our confession, and . . . the grefe of our satysfaccyon."¹⁶ We shall be eternally overcome with joy for our temporal grief and pain at the confession and satisfaction for our sins. Fisher ends the sermon by restating his three points: what the penitent should ask for, why God should grant our petition, and why we can be confident that God will indeed be merciful. All of this he has explicated from the first half of Psalm 51, which he proposes to continue in his next sermon.¹⁷

¹⁴Fisher, 107-108.

¹⁵Ibid., 111.

¹⁶Ibid., 112.

¹⁷Ibid., 112-113.

Fisher's Psalm 51 sermon is a good representative of the rest of the sermons in his penitential psalms collection, as well as a good representative of the style of English Renaissance sermons in general. The sermon is highly structured, with an introduction and then three main divisions, but it also follows the first half of a psalm verse by verse. Fisher's primary scriptural proofs for each of his points come from Psalm 51; he then chooses other evidence from elsewhere in scripture as it is needed. He has begun quoting directly from scripture in Latin and then in English much more than Mirk did in the *Festial*, preferring to draw his authority and imagery from scripture rather than using other stories. In addition, he uses vivid metaphors, such as the bucket suspended over hell, to illustrate his points, preferring to make an impression in his readers through these shorter images rather than Mirk's lengthy *exempla*. His close adherence to scripture and patristics also sets him apart from Mirk. In these ways Fisher's style was different from the more colloquial style Mirk popularized a century before.

There are, however, some continuities between the sermons of Mirk and Fisher. Both sermons are heavily focused on morality, inciting Christian living in their listeners. Mirk's Corpus Christi sermon exhorted his flock to attend Mass and see the Eucharist more often; Fisher attempted to incite penitence in his hearers. Both are extremely sacramentally minded, with many of Mirk's sermons exhorting similar devotion to sacramental practice as the Corpus Christi sermon and Fisher's penitential psalms sermons often reminding his audience that God's mercy flows through the blood of Christ, and the blood of Christ flows through every sacrament. Neither focus too heavily on doctrine; Mirk is content to explain the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist but shies away from explaining transubstantiation. Fisher, meanwhile, barely touches on

doctrine at all, exhorting penance and devotion to the sacraments in his sermons. To be sure, once Martin Luther's teachings began crossing the English Channel, Fisher delivered sermons against them which focused heavily on doctrine; however, those sermons are less representative of Renaissance sermons and are more transitional into the era of Reformation sermons. Pre-Reformation English Renaissance sermons such as those delivered by John Fisher had in common with late medieval sermons a focus on morality and Christian living rather than doctrine.

John Fisher was a prominent preacher in his own right, and his sermons were often published, read, and imitated. However, he was also influential by encouraging his friend Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of the most famous Renaissance scholars in all of Europe, to write a treatise on preaching. Erasmus worked on this treatise for over a decade, finally publishing it in 1535, after Fisher's execution. This work was *Ecclesiastes, sive de ratio concionandi*.¹⁸ Many scholars consider *Ecclesiastes* to be Erasmus' greatest work, the culmination of all his scholarly and pastoral writings.¹⁹ Its influence can be seen across Europe in the Catholic Reformation, even though it is rarely explicitly mentioned due to the Church's official position blaming Erasmus for much of the Protestant Reformation. Ideas and even phrases from *Ecclesiastes* can even be found in the Council of Trent's official pronouncements on preaching.²⁰ *Ecclesiastes* would be

¹⁸Scholarship on Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes* includes John W. O'Malley, "Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric: The *Ecclesiastes* of 1535", *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 5 (1985): 1–29; Frederick J. McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy: *Ecclesiastes* and the Reform of Preaching at Trent", in Ronald K. Delph et al, eds., *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy* (Kirkville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2006), 93-112; and McGinness, "Introductory Note", in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Vol. 67, 77–237 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

¹⁹McGinness, "Introductory Note", 78-81.

²⁰McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy," 93-112.

instrumental in forming Catholic preaching post-Reformation, even if its influence would remain officially unacknowledged at the time.

One aspect of preaching that Erasmus was especially concerned with was the preachers themselves. He wanted bishops to personally set an example for the priests of their diocese by preaching often. Although bishops did have other functions in the church, Erasmus argued that preaching was their “chief duty.” Another important aspect of the life of a preacher was moral uprightness. A bishop or a priest who was teaching his flock had to also lead by example, so that his life would enhance rather than detract from the messages coming from his mouth. Preachers needed to be of impeccable virtue in order to effectively communicate God’s word to the people and make them understand its importance.²¹ Before instructing his readers in what ought to be preached, Erasmus discusses the importance of the example of the preacher himself.

One other important aspect of a preacher for Erasmus was his education. A good preacher must be well-educated in scripture, of course, but also in patristic thought. But a preacher’s education should not only encompass these intellectual disciplines, but moral ones as well. For this reason, a preacher’s training must start early in his life, and it was the responsibility of parents to recognize a talented boy and push him towards a clerical career: “it is the duty of parents or teachers, therefore, if they have marked out someone for the office of preacher, to prepare him right from infancy as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, to train him in morals and especially in those subjects that are most effective for the ability to teach.”²² Erasmus wanted likely candidates for the priesthood identified

²¹McGinness, “An Erasmian Legacy,” 98-101.

²²Erasmus, *Ecclesiastes*, Frederick J. McGinness, ed. Vol. 67-68 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 326.

from a young age and given a good education in all the intellectual underpinnings of good preaching as well as in morals. As Frederick McGinness points out, Erasmus' emphasis on education anticipates the seminary system that would be established across Europe in the wake of Trent,²³ and would be advocated by the Legatine Synod of 1555 in Marian England.²⁴ Here we can see some of the far-reaching, though silent, influence Erasmus may have had among Catholic reformers.

Turning from preachers to sermons, Erasmus gave instructions to his readers about how to craft a persuasive, doctrinally sound sermon. One of his principles for crafting a good sermon was to use classical rhetorical tactics to persuade one's audience. Unlike the Medieval sermons of preachers like John Mirk, whose authority as priests meant that they did not have to persuade their audience that what they taught was true doctrine, the sermons of Erasmus' era had to convince a potentially hostile audience of the validity of their points. To a humanist, the best tools for doing so were obvious: the centuries-old rhetorical principles laid down by the Greeks and Romans. Erasmus lays out a few of these principles, emphasizing especially the importance of tailoring one's sermon to one's audience.²⁵ Erasmus teaches that:

if we reflect how much variety of sex, age, condition, intelligence, opinion, lifestyle, custom exists within the same population, clearly a preacher must be endowed with great judgement. For he must so temper his speech that he does not give to some a handle for error while healing the errors of others, or teach vice while denouncing vice, or arouse sedition while boldly denouncing crime. Rhetoricians say that no one speaks well unless he speaks appropriately.²⁶

²³McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy", 101.

²⁴Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 196-197.

²⁵McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy", 103-105.

²⁶Erasmus, 280-281.

For Erasmus, rhetorical excellence was essential for effective preaching, and nothing was more necessary than ensuring that your sermon style was suited to your audience.

Finally, Erasmus discussed what topics preachers ought to take up as their subject matter. In fact, he drew up a list of good topics in Book 4 of *Ecclesiastes*. Most of these topics are morally focused, with very little doctrine included among his suggested themes. To be sure, he starts with the nature of God, but quickly moves into discussions of law, sin, virtue, and vice. Erasmus especially advocates preaching on virtue and vice, with more than half of his suggested subjects devoted to them. Conspicuously absent from Erasmus' list are topics hotly debated in Reformation Europe, such as the sacraments, justification, and the authority of the church.²⁷ Erasmus does not advocate a doctrinal focus in preaching; rather, Erasmian preaching would be morally focused, instilling virtue and good living in its people and eschewing heavy doctrinal subjects.

Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes* set forth some interesting principles for homiletics, and if he did not influence the development of Catholic preaching at Trent and afterwards, he certainly anticipated it. His insistence on education and moral rectitude among preachers would be echoed at Trent, with a seminary system beginning to form across Europe to ensure proper training of priests. Preaching as a form of persuasion became the norm, with more classical rhetorical flourishes being added to Catholic Reformation sermons. Trent would also take up Erasmus' cry for more scripturally based and morally focused preaching, although they would advocate for more doctrinal subjects in sermons as well. All of these trends would also be seen in sermons in Marian England, and although I have not found an explicit link between Marian homiletics and Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes*, I

²⁷McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy", 105-108; Erasmus, 1022-1104.

believe that Frederick McGinness' argument about the silent influence of Erasmus at Trent is true of Marian England as well.

Edwardian Protestant Sermons

The English Reformation caused as much change in homiletics as it did in many other aspects of English life. Up to this point, both John Fisher's sermons and John Mirk's *Festial* had remained popular in England, with each getting frequent reprintings. *Festial* was reprinted for a final time in 1532, the same year that Henry VIII broke from Rome. In fact, until the Reformation itself, the late medieval sermon style remained popular alongside the more academic Renaissance style, both coexisting strains of English homiletics. However, that would change with the advent of Protestantism.

With the declaration of the royal supremacy over the English Church, preaching in England became much more regulated. Certain topics became mandatory for preachers to cover at various points through Henry's reign, topics such as the evils of the Pope of Rome, the righteousness of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, and support of the royal supremacy. Two collections of sermons would be promulgated during Henry's reign: the Bishop's Book and the King's Book. Both of these books followed Renaissance conventions of preaching, although their subject matter was doctrinal rather than the pre-Reformation emphasis on morality. They were also doctrinally conservative, with much of their material composed by bishops such as Stephen Gardiner and Edmund Bonner who accepted the supremacy but were Catholic in every other way.²⁸ This was not

²⁸Ashley Null, "Official Tudor Homilies", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 349-351.

satisfactory to the more radical reformers of England, and they got their opportunity to remake the English Church when Henry died and his nine year old son Edward VI took the throne.

Protestant activists in England were ecstatic to have a child on the throne of England, particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer termed Edward “the second Josiah” during his sermon at Edward’s coronation, and was eager for the chance this reign would give him as the primate of England to remake the English Church.²⁹ A committed Protestant, Cranmer had chafed under the doctrinal conservatism mandated by Henry VIII and immediately began instituting more Protestant doctrine and practice. One of the areas in which Cranmer was eager to institute Protestantism was preaching.

Cranmer understood the importance of preaching. Perhaps as early as 1539, five years before Edward ascended the throne, Cranmer was working on a Protestant sermon collection but he could not publish it during Henry’s reign. Within six months of Henry’s death, Cranmer released these sermons to the public over the protests of the more conservative English clerics.³⁰ Cranmer was specifically reacting to *Festial* in composing his sermons, referring contemptuously to John Mirk’s magnum opus as “foolish lying legends.”³¹ His sermons would leave behind the *exempla* of Mirk and the elaborate similes of Fisher, preferring to expound on doctrine in a more straightforward fashion.

²⁹Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1996), 364-365.

³⁰Null, 352-353.

³¹MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, 311.

The style of Cranmer and his Protestant compatriots would take English sermons in a new direction which all of their successors would have to contend with.

A good example of Cranmer's preaching style is his sermon "A shorte declaracion of the true, liuely, and christian faith." This sermon demonstrates Cranmer's radical shift towards Protestant doctrine as he espouses salvation by faith alone, contrary to Catholic beliefs formerly dominant in England. The sermon is doctrinally focused, but with a heavily moral angle to it as well, reminding his audience that the presence of faith is manifest through good living and if you are living a sinful life you do not have a living faith. Rather than use stories or imagery to illustrate his points, Cranmer inserts many scriptural references throughout the sermon, with a mere two citations of Augustine to represent the Church Fathers.³² His language is plain and to the point, expositing doctrine with few lighter moments or rhetorical embellishments. Cranmer's intention is to teach his audience about faith, and he allows no tangents or stylistic flourishes to distract him from that goal.

At the beginning of the sermon, Cranmer distinguishes between a faith which is dead and a faith which is alive. The dead faith is the type of faith that Satan and his demons have in God; namely, they believe in his existence, but their actions are not aligned with his will. They believe, but their belief is barren. Such faith, Cranmer says, is the faith of sinners, referencing the epistle of James. A live faith, on the other hand, can be distinguished by works of charity, prayer, and other good deeds. It is through this faith

³²Thomas Cranmer, *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (1547), F iv. r.; G i. v.

that we obtain the grace of God, faith not merely spoken in words or accepted in the head but lived and received into the heart.³³

Cranmer goes on to expound upon living faith, calling it “not onely to beleue all thynges of God, whiche are co[n]teined in holy scripture: but also is an earnest trust, and confidence in GOD, that he doth regarde us, and hath cure of us, as the father of the child, whom he doth loue.”³⁴ This living faith cannot help but show itself in good deeds, and when a man does sin, this sort of faith will help him truly repent and turn back to the ways of God, who will welcome him back with great mercy. He then lists several figures from the Old Testament who showed forth their living faith through following God’s commandments. Some have suffered greatly for the sake of this living faith, but any tribulation is worth bearing when the reward promised is the grace and mercy of God.³⁵

But though these Old Testament figures had a living faith, Christians were even more blessed by God’s providence. Now in Christ, Cranmer reveals, “we haue receiued more abundantly the spirite of God in our hartes, whereby we maie conceiue a greater faithe, and a surer truste, then many of them had.”³⁶ He continues to belabor the point that a living faith will produce good works, and that if one wishes to be assured of the state of his faith, he ought to strive to conform his will to God as much as possible. Citing scripture passage after scripture passage in service of this proposition, Cranmer ensured that his audience would remember this point if nothing else in the sermon.³⁷ He then

³³Cranmer, F ii. r-v.

³⁴Ibid., F iii. v.

³⁵Ibid., F iv. v – G i. v.

³⁶Ibid., G ii. r.

³⁷Ibid., G ii. r – G iii. v.

spends some time warning of the dangers a dead faith put one's soul in, cautioning his flock not to deceive themselves that they had faith if their lives did not bear testament to it. As the sermon draws to a close, Cranmer exhorts his listeners to examine their lives and see if they lived by faith, or if their belief was merely dead and unsuitable for salvation. He asserts that if one is living rightly, doing good deeds, and conforming their will to God, they can rejoice and be confident in their salvation, knowing by their works that their faith is indeed alive and will be acceptable to God come judgement day.³⁸

Cranmer's sermon on faith is typical of many Edwardian Protestant sermons. He avoids what he saw as the excesses of late medieval and Renaissance styles, cutting out all the stories and imagery and remaining focused on doctrine and scripture. He meditates on one theme throughout, the theme of living and dead faith, continuously approaching it from different angles and relating different scripture passages to it. He eschews patristic sources, with the exception of two references to Augustine, preferring to use scripture as his proof-text in almost every situation. This straightforward, doctrinally focused method of sermon composition would be used by many Protestant preachers with some variation throughout Edward's reign and would be popular in the early Elizabethan period as well, although later in her reign a more flowery style would once more become popular.

Protestant preachers were focused on sharing the scriptures with their flocks almost to the exclusion of everything else, and they constructed their sermons accordingly.

In these first two chapters, we have examined three periods of English homiletics: the late medieval period, with its thematic sermons, Wycliffite sermons, and John Mirk's popular *Festial* collection; the Renaissance period, led by John Fisher; and the Edwardian

³⁸Cranmer, H i. r – H ii. r.

Reformation period, dominated by Thomas Cranmer. Each period had its own distinct style, and each period bled over into the others as the art of sermon giving progressed. *Festial* was still popular until the eve of the Reformation, even though Fisher's sermons were also gaining in popularity. While Cranmer was ascendant in the Reformation, Fisher's style was still employed by many of the more conservative English clerics, trained in universities in the early sixteenth century and familiar with the humanist style. However, with the death of Edward a new religious situation arose, with Mary returning England to the fold of Rome, deposing Cranmer and his cohorts, and returning many of the old conservatives to their positions of power in the English Church. Instead of reverting to an older sermon style, however, these conservatives implemented a forward-looking preaching program, in line with the Tridentine ideal of homiletics. In order to understand these innovative sermon techniques, we must delve into some Marian sermon collections to witness first-hand their style, subject matter, and use of authority. In the next two chapters, I will examine in detail the most popular Marian sermon collection, Edmund Bonner's *Homelies*, as well as four other printed collections written in various locations throughout England. These sermons share some characteristics, including a doctrinal focus, frequent citation of scriptural and patristic authorities, and a scholarly tone and argument style. By analyzing these works, we can gain a better understanding of the development of Marian sermons and how they fit into the greater evolution of English homiletics.

CHAPTER FOUR

Edmund Bonner's *Homelies*

With over two hundred years of context behind us, we can now examine Marian sermons and properly compare them with what came before. A fair number of Catholic sermons printed during Mary's reign have survived, given that these works would be outlawed in England under her successor Elizabeth. These sermons were printed almost exclusively in London, and mostly by Robert Caly, a printer who frequently collaborated with the Marian church.¹ However, the sermons were not all originally preached in London. There are collections from Worcester, Wells, and Lincoln, to name a few, showing that the Marian emphasis on preaching was not limited to the political and ecclesiastical centers of London and Canterbury but rather was spread throughout England. I shall analyze some of these sermon collections in the next chapter, but to get an understanding of the preaching style adopted by the Marian church, it is necessary to examine the official body of Marian preaching, produced under the watchful eye of its most influential clerics.

Up to this point, the English Reformation had been characterized by a series of official catechisms and statements of belief which were updated or replaced as regimes changed or new religious forces gained power. These included the doctrinally confusing Ten Articles of 1536; the 1537 *Bishops' Book*, composed by Thomas Cranmer to try and push the Church of England in a more Lutheran direction; the 1543 *King's Book*, which

¹Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 76.

was a conservative reaction to Cranmer's more radical document; and the 42 Articles, Cranmer's most ambitiously Protestant statement of faith promulgated in 1553 under Edward VI. With the accession of Mary later in 1553, the restored Catholic hierarchy saw a need for a new catechism which would serve as the official statement of faith for the English Catholic church, as well as a pedagogical tool for priests and bishops to use in educating their flocks.² This document would be provided by the Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner, in his *Profitable and Necessarye Doctryne*.

Profitable and Necessarye Doctryne was, in essence, a reworking of much of the material from the conservative *King's Book* of 1543, which had been composed in part by Bonner and Stephen Gardiner, now Mary's Lord Chancellor. However, the *King's Book* had been marked by compromise with the Protestant factions in Henry's church and was thus religiously conservative and not thoroughly Catholic. In *Profitable and Necessarye Doctryne*, Bonner was able to expand significantly on material in the *King's Book* in a wholly Catholic fashion, stretching the 115 folios of the *King's Book* into 204 folios in his new edition. Some of the new material included an expansion of the section on the Eucharist, an explanation of the seven deadly sins, and an exposition on the Hail Mary. But even in the sections of the *King's Book* which were kept in the *Profitable and Necessarye Doctryne*, Bonner made heavy edits and ensured that every sentence was an effective apologetical weapon of the new regime.³ *Profitable and Necessarye Doctryne* was meant to be the main theological reference book in England as well as a tool to teach correct doctrine to Mary's subjects.

²Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 65.

³Ibid.; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 534-535.

Alongside his new catechism, Bonner published a collection of sermons to replace Thomas Cranmer's Protestant *Book of Homilies*. He commissioned two of his chaplains, Henry Pendleton and John Harpsfield, to write a series of sermons on a variety of doctrinal issues. Harpsfield did the bulk of the work, composing ten of the thirteen sermons, with Pendleton adding two on the nature of the church and its authority and Bonner himself contributing one, "Of Chrysten Loue and Charitie". Intriguingly, two of the sermons, Harpsfield's "Of the miserye of al mankind and of hys condempnation to death" and Bonner's "Of Chrysten Loue and Charitie", are taken directly from Cranmer's *Book of Homilies* with only light editing.⁴ These topics were non-controversial enough that Bonner and Harpsfield did not have to compromise their conservative beliefs when writing them for a collection that was, on the whole, more radical. However, the other sermons in Bonner's *Homilies* were on issues which were much more contentious. There were two sermons on redemption and justification, three on the Eucharist, and four on the church and papal supremacy.⁵ Bonner intended to strike hard at some of the core issues being debated between Catholics and Protestants and give strong ammunition to Catholics assaulting Protestant teaching.

However, such ammunition, persuasive or not, would be fruitless if it were not actually disseminated to its intended audience. So who was the intended audience for the *Homelies*? It is unclear if they were ever preached by their original authors. There are no indicators in the book itself that these were taken from sermons given by Harpsfield, Pendleton, or Bonner personally. Rather, they were meant to be preached by other

⁴Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 536.

⁵See Appendix One for full table of contents.

unlearned priests throughout the London diocese, and they were later authorized by Reginald Cardinal Pole for use throughout England.⁶ In his preface to the book, Bonner laments that “there is not now a dayes that multitude, and plenteth of preachers, which in tymes past hath ben.” Many parish priests were unable to compose a weekly sermon to give to their flocks every week. Bonner wished to rectify this situation, but until such a time as he could get better educated preachers, he would have to settle for preachers reading off of an approved script: “I have laboured with my chaplaynes and frends, to have these Homelies printed, that ye maye haue somewhat to instruct, and teach your flocke withal, requyryng and charging euery one of you, that dilygentelye, upon the Sondayes and holydayes, ye reade to your flocke, fruitefullye, and deliberately, one of the said Homelies.”⁷ These sermons were meant to be distributed by unlearned priests to their (presumably) unlearned flocks, and were meant to be read and not adapted. Their audience would vary from educated city-dwellers to the rural populace of the countryside around London and throughout England. Thus Bonner would have to ensure that the sermons in his *Homilies* were written in a style which would be engaging and informative to both potential audiences.

Bonner seems to have succeeded, as the *Homilies* became highly popular across England. The success of the *Homilies* is attested to by leading Marian scholar David Loades, who posits that the *Homilies* and the accompanying catechism “form the most effective instruments of Catholic evangelization to appear in print during the

⁶Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 64-65.

⁷Edmund Bonner, *Homelies Sette Forthe by the Right Reuerende Father in God, Edmund Byshop of London, not onely promised before in his booke intituled, A Necessary Doctrine, but also now of late adioyned, and added thereunto, to be reade within his diocese of London, of all persons, vycars, and curates, unto theyr parishioners upon Sondayes and Holydayes* (London: Jhon Cawodde, 1555), fol. 2r.

restoration.”⁸ This is especially true after 1556, when Cardinal Pole endorsed their use throughout England until the catechetical materials ordered by the December 1555 Legatine Synod were completed.⁹ Due to the encouragement and in some areas requirement for parish priests to read them from the pulpit, the *Homelies* reached a high level of popularity throughout England, running through at least ten printed editions in two years. There are even some extant manuscript editions, including one translation of the *Homelies* into Cornish, showing that this collection was being spread all over England, reaching even its farthest corners in places like Cornwall.¹⁰ Bonner’s *Homelies* were indisputably popular, and would have been influential on Marian homiletics throughout England from 1555 to the end of Mary’s reign.

Given their level of popularity, approval from the highest authorities in the Marian church, and verbatim reading from the pulpit in many places, the 1555 *Homelies* can be reasonably taken as examples of Marian sermon style. In the next chapter I will provide further examples, but in this chapter I will closely examine all of the sermons included in the *Homelies* to try and understand what Marian homiletics was. These sermons pertain to some of the most controversial topics of the Reformation, including justification, scripture, the Church, and the Eucharist. By examining these sermons, we can see some of the general stylistic and rhetorical patterns of Marian preaching, and thus better understand their place in the development of homiletics from the Middle Ages through the Protestant Reformation.

⁸David Loades, “The Marian Episcopate”, in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 50.

⁹Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 65, 68.

¹⁰William Wizeman, *The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor’s Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 29.

The first sermon in the *Homelies* is from John Harspfield, and he starts at the very beginning with “Of the creation and fall of Man.” Most of the first part of the sermon is a joyful burst of praise to God for the invaluable gift of creation: “in dede, who that diligently wayeth the creation of man, can not but therin most highly laude, & prayse almighty god, his creator.” God called the animals into being, but he took “great solempnitie” with the creation of man, both signifying man’s primacy over the animal world and meriting extra praise and thanks to God on the part of men.¹¹ Scattered throughout are appropriate quotes from Genesis, giving a mostly straightforward narrative of the creation story. However, Harpsfield breaks into the narrative frequently to explicate certain points, explaining doctrines like the Trinity in some and in others exhorting his listeners to greater praise and gratitude towards God.

One scriptural phrase Harpsfield particularly dwells on is “let us make man to our owne similitude & likenes.” He first uses this verse as an opportunity to dwell on the beneficence of God: “He made us in very dede like untio himself; & in so doynge what could he haue done more for us? A wonderful excellent benefite & comfort is it unto us, to consider that man was made like unto god.” Of course, this is not a bodily similitude, God being pure spirit, but rather a similitude in our souls, “with most heuenly & god-like qualities, as understanding, memory, and wil; with sondry gyftes also of grace.” But these godly qualities of man were not the only things which Harpsfield gleaned from this verse. The mystery of the Trinitarian God was present here as well, since God said “let us” create man, implying multiplicity, in our “similitude & likenes,” not our “similitudes and

¹¹Bonner, *Homelies*, 2v.

likenesses”, implying unity.¹² Using this one phrase of scripture, Harpsfield is able to both incite gratitude for God’s incomparable gifts and explain a complex theological doctrine for his audience.

Harpsfield moves through the rest of the creation story, emphasizing the great gifts God gave to man and how grateful and obedient man should be to God for all of these favors. He does this to further emphasize the gravity of man’s sin in the fall of Adam and Eve. Some have argued that the punishment of man was unjust, says Harpsfield, because all that Adam and Eve did was eat an apple, and for this offense man lost his innocence, the body was no longer obedient to the soul, pain and death were introduced, and finally eternal damnation of body and soul. Harpsfield argues that the punishment of mankind for this sin was just, for four reasons. First, obeying God was easy for Adam and Eve. They did not need to eat of that tree, since they had the whole garden for food. Second, they knew the consequences would be grave, and yet they sinned anyway. Third, “the lesse inclynatyon a man hath to any synne, the more he synneth yf he doo the same.” Adam and Eve were created with no concupiscence, so their sin was very great. Finally, going against God’s express will after all of the benefits he gave them was “an high disobedience” and ingratitude toward God. All of these factors made Adam and Eve’s sin inexcusable and their punishment justified; and from them we were all infected by sin, just as the whole tree is infected by a poisoned root.¹³ Because of God’s beneficence, man owed God complete love, gratitude, and obedience; by trespassing against God’s will, man committed an unthinkable transgression.

¹²Bonner, *Homelies*, 3r-v.

¹³Ibid., 3r-6r.

Harpsfield ends this sermon on a note of hope, promising in a future sermon to speak of the “exceding great mercy of god, in deliuering mankind by a meruelous maner, out of the estat of this dampnation.” What Harpsfield wants his listeners to do until then is “fayle not daylye and howrelye to geue most harty thanks to almighty God” for his great gifts to mankind, and “be circumspecte in auoiding of al kynde of sinne, and disobedience, be the thyng in his owne nature neuer so smale a thyng.” Finally, Harpsfield warns of the attacks of the devil, who is “mooste subtyl and wilye” in tempting people.¹⁴ Harpsfield succinctly reminds his audience of the main themes of his sermons: God’s great goodness in creation and man’s great ingratitude in sin.

Harpsfield’s creation narrative is meant to inspire two feelings in his audience: gratitude towards God for his great gift of creation, and sorrow for the sins by which they offend him daily. Other than his explanation of the Trinity, Harpsfield includes little doctrine in this sermon, allowing it to be mostly narrative and exegesis. He paraphrases heavily from Genesis and quotes other scripture passages liberally to inspire the intended emotions in his audience. In this easier and more visceral way, he introduces his audience to the topic of original sin and redemption, the doctrines of which he will discuss more fully and intellectually in the following three sermons.

The second sermon continues the discussion of sin and humanity’s need for redemption. It is once again by Harpsfield and is called “Of the miserye of al mankind and of hys condempnation to death.” This sermon is one of the two edited sermons that had previously appeared in Cranmer’s book of homilies.¹⁵ It is here reproduced basically

¹⁴Bonner, *Homelies*, 6r-v.

¹⁵For comparison, see Cranmer, *Certayne Sermons or Homilies*, 10r-15v.

verbatim, with only slight edits throughout. These edits do not change the substance of the sermon, and mostly have to do with word choice. This shows that the Edwardian Protestants and the Marian Catholics were in basic agreement about the subject matter that Harpsfield tackles here: the awful condition of humanity due to sin.

“The holye ghoste, in wrytyng the holy scripture, is in nothyng more diligent, then to pull downe mannes vayne glori, and pryde.” This is the thesis Harpsfield takes up in this sermon, and he works in concert with the Holy Ghost in this task. In Genesis, we sinned against God and thereby brought upon ourselves great misery. The human estate is so lowly and humble that Old Testament figures such as Jeremiah, Judith, Esther, and Job approached God in sackcloth and ashes, bewailing their sinful condition. Harpsfield dwells on this at great length, quoting numerous Old Testament passages to pound into his listeners their lowliness as members of the human race.¹⁶

But even this is not enough reminder of mankind’s sinful condition. Harpsfield posits that Christians should be especially mindful of their abasement. John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Paul all confess their sinfulness and lowliness, despite the fact that these three are considered among the most righteous of all early Christian saints. Repeatedly, Christ favored repentant sinners who humbled themselves before God over the haughty Pharisees who gloried in their self-righteousness. He taught his followers to ask forgiveness of their sins in the *Pater Noster* itself. Throughout scripture, in the Old and New Testaments, Christians are reminded of their own sinfulness, and ought to be

¹⁶Bonner, *Homelies*, 7r-8v.

constantly humble and repentant, following the teachings of Christ and the example of his apostles.¹⁷

All of this discussion of mankind's misery is meant to inspire gratitude towards Christ for the redemption of the world. No man can become righteous on his own; therefore Christ's gift of righteousness was great indeed. "He is the God," Harpsfield exclaims, "whiche of hys owne mercy saueth us and setteth oute his charitie, and exceeding loue towards us, in that of his owne voluntary goodness, when we were perished, he saued us." Owing us nothing, Christ brought us grace. Therefore his is most worthy of praise, which Harpsfield then gives to him at length. Finally wrapping up the sermon, Harpsfield exhorts his audience to "learne to knowe ourselues, our frailtie, and weakenes, withoute anye ostentation," and to "[ac]knowledge the exceedynge mercye of God towarde us."¹⁸ Knowledge of the humility of our human estate and the greatness of God's grace towards us is essential, Harpsfield teaches, to the attaining of eternal life.

After a sermon and a half of dismal statements about the sinfulness and misery of man, Harpsfield is ready to give his audience hope. His next sermon, "Of the redemption of Man", discusses the coming of Christ and the salvation of humanity. He begins by reminding his audience once again of the corruption of body and soul which was brought on by original sin. Through sin, humanity owed a debt to God which it could never repay, so God appointed from the very beginning his son, the second person of the Trinity, to become man and redeem the human race. Christ would become man not as Adam was made man, through the dust of the earth, but through the Virgin Mary, thereby being a

¹⁷Bonner, *Homelies*, 8v-12r.

¹⁸Ibid., 11r-12v.

descendent of Adam and Eve and inheriting their debt to God. Harpsfield quotes Hebrews 2 to back up this point, arguing that Christ was just like every other man in all things except for sin. Christ also must have come of the seed of Adam and Eve due to God's promise to the serpent in Genesis 3, "I wyll set enmitie betwixt the, and the womans sede, and it shall treade downe thy hedde," and his promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, "in thy sede shall all the nations of the world be blessed."¹⁹ Harpsfield wanted his audience to believe that scripture was absolutely clear that Jesus Christ was indeed human, and thus was able to redeem humanity from original sin.

Harpsfield recognizes that some might ask that if God had planned to send his son from the beginning to save humanity, why did he wait "the space of foure thousande years or therabout"? This was not, argues Harpsfield, because God lacked good will towards us or wished to punish us vindictively. Rather, it was because of "unredines, and lacke of good disposition, to recceyue hym on oure partes." Humanity was not ready to be saved immediately after the fall. Mankind needed to understand that without special help from God they could never be cleansed of their sin. In order to prove this to them, "god suffred mankynde to trauel, first by the light of nature, secondly by the lawe of Moyses, and yet man ranne styll farther, and farther, into damnation." There was not a lack of knowledge of God that caused the Israelites to fall again and again into idolatry, as Paul testified in Romans. Knowing God, the Jews still deliberately turned away from him.²⁰ By allowing this apostasy, God proved to humanity that they could not redeem themselves, and that they needed divine intervention to save them.

¹⁹Bonner, *Homelies*, 13r-14v.

²⁰Ibid., 14v-16r.

This divine intervention came in the person of Jesus Christ, uniting two natures, God and Man, in one person. He fulfilled all of the prophecies which pointed to him over thirty-three years on earth, and then suffered and died for the redemption of humanity. While emphasizing Christ's innocence, Harpsfield goes into some detail describing the torments Jesus endured, trying to prompt greater sorrow for sin and gratitude for redemption in his audience. In a taste of the next sermon, Harpsfield warns that "hys passion, though it be in it selfe a sufficiente raunsome, for the synnes of the whole worlde, yet it taketh not place in all men: not for insufficiencie in it selfe, but for defaulte in them, that shoulde condignely receaue the merites thereof." He closes by exhorting his audience to "lyft up your hartes, and open them awyde, to receaue in unto them, a great loue towarded God" and to remember God's great gift to us in the person of his only son, Jesus Christ.²¹

In his sermon "On the redemption of Man" Harpsfield gives his audience some rudimentary Christology, discussing the union of humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus Christ in terms accessible to an unlearned audience. Having discussed the need for redemption in the previous two sermons, Harpsfield focuses mostly on the ability of Christ to deliver humanity, then on the severity of the passion he underwent in doing so. These dual emphases fulfill a threefold purpose: teaching doctrine to his audience, giving them surety of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, and inspiring gratitude towards Christ for his sacrifice. He supports his claims solely with scriptural citations in this sermon, pointing to prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament, the fulfillment in the gospels, and Paul's commentary on redemption in his epistles. This is not to say that patristic

²¹Bonner, *Homelies*, 16r-17r.

influence is not present; however, Harpsfield does not explicitly point to the church fathers as authorities to reinforce his arguments. Having presented his audience with soteriology and Christology over the previous three sermons, Harpsfield is ready to explain to them how Christ's redemption applies to them personally, and what role the church must play in that application.

The next sermon is Harpsfield's "How the redemption in Christ is apliable to man". In this sermon, Harpsfield begins by discussing justification, but turns from that into a discussion of scripture and the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. It builds off the last sermon, continuing the discussion of mankind's fall from grace and Christ's redeeming sacrifice. Whereas previously Harpsfield expounded upon Christology and the necessity for salvation, here he explains to his audience how Christ's sacrifice is applied to them and what they personally must do to participate in it. His goal is to convince his listeners that the only path to salvation is through the Catholic Church.

Harpsfield begins his sermon acknowledging that Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to redeem the entire world. However, this does not mean that the whole world is, in fact, saved, "for neither Turke, Jew, nor infidel, wanting beleif in Christe, can take good by the death and passion of christ." He briefly cites Mark 16 to back up this point, but then moves onto a controversial statement: "euyll lyfe, bryngeth to the euyll lyuer, eternal death, beleue he neuer so wel." This point merited a much longer citation from Galatians 5, with Harpsfield pointing to this passage where Paul enumerates a long list of sins which would disqualify one for heaven.²² Faith alone is not enough to get one into heaven, Harpsfield teaches, if one does not also live uprightly.

²²Bonner, *Homelies*, 17v-18r.

Harpsfield then turns to the question of determining what right belief and good living is. This can only be known, he posits, by adherence to the Catholic Church. According to Harpsfield, this “catholike church, oure sauioure Chryste hath appoynted to be the onely scoole, for al men to come and repayre unto, to learne such truth, as is mete for them to know, for the attaining of euerlastyng life.” He cites John 16, Matthew 18, and Matthew 16 to show places Christ references this church, as well as Paul in 1 Timothy. The true church of Christ “must in al ages nedes be an open known church, and such a companye as among which the trueth is openly preached,” for Christ described his church as a city on a hill and a candle not hidden under a bushel basket.²³ Since the Catholic Church is the only church which has continuously and openly operated since the time of the apostles, Harpsfield argues, it must be the true church of Christ which he spoke about in the gospels. Thus, the Catholic Church is the only way to know what is necessary for salvation.

From this argument, Harpsfield turns to the interpretation of scripture. Heretics, “thoughe they be neuer so diligent in reading of scripture, yet shall they neuer truely understand scripture, but runne continually farther and farther into errour and ignoraunce.” There is no private interpretation of scripture, as evidenced by 2 Peter 1; only by following the reading of the Catholic Church can you be sure that you have gotten true understanding. Leaning heavily on long citations from 2 Peter, Harpsfield warns of the dangers of improper scriptural interpretations, which can destroy a steadfast faith and “peruerte” the truth into error. Turning from Peter to Paul, he cites both letters to Timothy, explaining that Paul was handing the tradition and the authority over the

²³Bonner, *Homelies*, 18r-v.

church to Timothy, counselling him to “auoide newe fangled termes, and bosting of science, falsely so called,” which could lead to erring from the true Catholic faith. Rather than turning to these “newe fangled termes”, Paul counsels Timothy and thus, according to Harpsfield, every Christian to “continue thou in the things which thou hast learned which also were commytted unto the.”²⁴ In other words, do not follow the new teachings of the Protestants, but only the ancient wisdom of the Catholic Church.

Harpsfield then turns to his first patristic reference of the entire collection, a lengthy quotation from Irenaeus’ third book against Valentine. “We must not seke the trueth among other,” states Irenaeus, “seing we may easily take it of the church, for as much as the Apostels haue fully lefte with it (as in a rich treasury) all truth.” Harpsfield uses Irenaeus to argue that from the very earliest days of the church Christians have recognized the need for authority in interpreting scripture and in arbitrating disputes where scripture is silent. Anyone who teaches doctrine against this authority are the false prophets and wolves in sheep’s clothing Christ warned about in Matthew 7, “for they deuoure the soules, of so many as giue credite unto them; he sayeth farder of them, that they come in lambes skins, because they pretend the woord of God, and therewith bleare the eyes of pore simple men.” To say that what “al christendome”—that is, the Catholic Church—“openly teacheth” is in error is to call Christ himself a liar, for he promised to remain with the church and send the Holy Ghost to guide it.²⁵ Harpsfield here weaves a combination of patristic and scriptural sources into an argument for the sole legitimacy of the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

²⁴Bonner, *Homelies*, 19v-20v.

²⁵Ibid.

It is particularly interesting that this passage from Irenaeus is the *Homelies*' first explicit reference to patristic sources. Through the first three and a half sermons Harpsfield has relied solely on scripture verses to shore up his arguments. From this point on, the *Homelies* will with few exceptions include frequent patristic citations as well as biblical references to provide authority to their points. It is significant that this trend begins here, with this quote from Irenaeus. Just before, Harpsfield had quoted Paul's letters to Timothy as scriptural proof that tradition and interpretational authority was handed down from the apostles to their followers, and from them would be passed on generationally throughout the history of the church. Harpsfield explicitly links Irenaeus as one of the earliest links in this chain of authority: "S. Ireneus also [was] a blessed martyr, and very nyghe to the tyme of the Apostles." Harpsfield also points to Irenaeus as a universally recognized authority on scripture. He was "suche a one, as by the consente of all men, had the perfyt knowledge and understandyng of scryptures." If Irenaeus, an early follower of the apostles and an undisputed biblical expert, argued in concert with Paul that traditions passed down through the church were more valid than private contrary biblical interpretations, then it would be difficult to maintain the opposite. Until now, the authors of the *Homelies* had used only scripture in their arguments; now, they had both a scriptural and early patristic basis to continue using patristic sources through the rest of the collection.

Finally, Harpsfield brings his sermon back to the point at which he started: how to attain eternal life. "No other doctrine," Harpsfield asserts, is "auayleable to eternall lyfe, but that which the catholyke church teacheth, therefore all christen people are required, to make a solempne vow at theyr baptisme, to beleue the catholyke churche. And he that so

doeth is in an assured trade of saluation, if in his conuersation, he folowe the same; but contrarywise, he that beleueth it not, is in a moste certayne estate of euerlastyng dampnation.” To learn true belief and upright practice, one must follow the teachings of the Catholic Church.

And so that these teachings might be known, Harpsfield promises that he will set forth in the rest of the sermon cycle “the seuerall matters, requisite to be beleued, & practiced of all Chrysten people, that no man, may haue iuste cause hereafter, to pretende ignoraunce; but al men beyng sufficiently instructed, maye, by folowinge such doctrine, attayne to euerlasting lyfe.”²⁶ To gain eternal life, people must believe and practice the Catholic faith, but to do so, they must first be instructed. This is what Bonner, Harpsfield, and Pendleton intend this sermon collection to accomplish. In this way, Harpsfield is claiming a divine mission for the *Homelies*: not only are they combatting Protestantism, but they are fighting for the salvation of their audience.

This sermon began by examining redemption and justification in a continuation of the previous three sermons, but it quickly evolved into a discussion of the veracity and authority of the Catholic Church. By including both topics in this one sermon, Harpsfield makes membership in the Catholic Church into one of the most important topics in these sermons. It is quite literally a matter of spiritual life or death. Harpsfield explicitly links membership in the Catholic Church with justification, setting the stage for the full discussion of the church and its supremacy later in the collection. First, however, the *Homelies* take some time to discuss Christian charity, a topic Edmund Bonner considered so important that he contributed a sermon on it personally.

²⁶Bonner, *Homelies*, 21r.

Bonner's "Of Chrysten Loue and Charitie" is the second sermon in the *Homelies* to have appeared earlier in Cranmer's 1547 collection. In this case, there is almost no editing done to the earlier sermon, with the exception of a slightly longer introduction giving more scriptural passages emphasizing the importance of charity.²⁷ This might explain why Bonner's sermon is devoid of explicit patristic references, since these would have been out of place in Cranmer's book. Even a passage at the end of the sermon which sounds like a direct defense of the Marian policy of burning Protestants appears in Cranmer's earlier volume, suggesting that Bonner, one of John Foxe's arch-villains, had held the same position on executing heretics long before Mary took the throne. Bonner had been a religious conservative in the days of Henry and Edward, and it seems from this sermon that most of his religious convictions remained unchanged under Mary.

Bonner begins his lesson on charity by restating Jesus' teaching in Matthew 22 that the whole of the law and prophets were contained in two commandments: "thou shalte loue thy Lord God, with al thy harte, with all thy soule, and with al thy hole minde, this is . . . the greateste and firste commaundement. And the seconde is like unto it. Thous shalte loue thy neighbour as thy selfe." These two precepts go together, Bonner argues, since without loving God you cannot love your neighbor, and if you do not love your neighbor, you do not truly love God. He cites John's first epistle as evidence of this, and also points to John's statement that those who do not love in this way are "iudged to be in death." Charity, then, is of utmost importance in the Christian life, producing all goodness and virtues in its presence and "the ruyne of the world, the banyshement of virtue, and the cause of all uice" in its absence. Since every man can persuade himself

²⁷For comparison, see Cranmer, *Certayne Sermons or Homilies*, 43r-48r.

that he has charity in his ignorance, Bonner proposes to set forth “a true, and playne descrypcion of charity, not of mens ymagination, but of the very words, and example” of Christ himself.²⁸ Bonner hopes that his audience will aspire to live up to this example in their own lives, striving for true charity rather than their imagined form of it.

Bonner gives a traditional definition of charity: “charitie is to loue God, with al oure harte, with all our life, with al our powers, & with al our strength.” He explains how each of these clauses are to be applied, instructing his audience to dedicate their whole lives to the service of God. But this is not the only part of charity, albeit the first and most important part. “Charitie,” Bonner relates, “is also to loue every man, good, and euyll, frende, and foe.” As Christ taught in Matthew 5, it is not enough to love only one’s friends, for even “theues, adulterers, homicides, and all wycked persons” love their friends; Christians are called to love all men, even their enemies.²⁹ To have Christian charity, one must love God and neighbor completely, notwithstanding any perceived slights or wrongs done by them.

Christ not only taught how to be charitable, Bonner posits, but he left us an example in his deeds. He united his will with that of God, seeking not to accomplish his own desires but the will of the Father, thus exhibiting the total love of God commanded by charity. He sought to change the ways of his enemies, and when he could not, he prayed for them. He lived among those who hated him, preaching and exhorting them constantly, even unto the time of his death. He did not flee his enemies when they sought his life, suffering all of their wrongs and indignities “wythoute anye repugnance, or

²⁸Bonner, *Homelies*, 21v-22r.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 22v-23v; 25r.

openynge of hys mouthe, to saye anye euyl.”³⁰ Christ did not strike nor curse his enemies, even when they unjustly condemned, tortured, and killed him. This, Bonner contends, is the ultimate example of true charity.

Quoting John’s Gospel and the first epistles of John and Peter, Bonner exhorts his audience further to follow the example of Christ. To love one’s enemies may be difficult, but it should become easier if we keep in mind God’s love for us. We have offended God over and over again, setting ourselves up as enemies to him, and yet he forgives us every time we ask him to, showing us great love and mercy. If God can forgive and love us despite our great faults, we should be able to love our enemies despite the little faults they perpetrate against us. Even when our enemy does not deserve to be forgiven, Bonner reminds his audience, we should consider how much we do not deserve God’s forgiveness.³¹

Now arises a question which seems very pertinent, considering Bonner’s role as one of the chief prosecutors of heresy during Mary’s reign: how charity applies to those in governing roles in society. Magistrates take the property, liberty, and sometimes the lives of evil doers; how does this practice comply with Christ’s commandment to Christian charity? Bonner’s answer is simple: “plages and punishmentns be not euell of them selues . . . to an euyl man, they are bothe good and necessarye: and may be executed accordynge to charitye, and with charity should be executed.” Charity, contends Bonner, has two offices. The first is to “cherishe” good men and encourage them with words and rewards. The second is to “rebuke, correcte, & punish vyce”, in hopes to turn

³⁰Bonner, *Homelies*, 23v-24r.

³¹Ibid., 24v-25v.

evildoers from their wickedness and put them on the path to righteousness. After all, Bonner points out, Paul tells Christians in both Romans and 1 Timothy to rebuke evil doers. Every loving father corrects his son and teaches him right from wrong, with punishments if necessary; so should those in power correct their subjects, “the preacher with the woorde, and the Gouvernoure with the swoorde.”³² It is in fact charity to the evildoer to stop him from sinning and point out to him the path to righteousness.

The authorities, both ecclesiastical and legal, also have a duty in charity to the community. If a wrongdoer is not punished swiftly enough, he will commit more misdeeds, harming himself and the community. After all, Bonner posits, “one thief maye bothe robbe manye men, and also make many theues” by his example. In this manner, charity demands that such evildoers “be cut of, from the body of the commonweale lest, they corrupte other good, and honest persons,” like a surgeon amputates an infected limb to save the whole body.³³ Although Bonner does not explicitly mention execution for heresy in this passage, he clearly means it as a defense of the practice.

Bonner completes his sermon with one final exhortation to charity, pointing his flock once more to the example of Christ. Throughout the sermon, Bonner has been using Christ as a positive example of charity, giving his audience a role model to look up to and a promised eternal reward if they persevere in Christian charity. He explains the true nature of charity, that all actions must be done out of love of God and neighbor, even if in some cases the loving action is rebuke and punishment. He defends the practice of removing certain sinners from society, either through imprisonment or death, so that the

³²Bonner, *Homelies*, 25v-26v.

³³*Ibid.*, 26v.

rest of the people may not be injured by their actions or seduced by their example.

Throughout the sermon, Bonner uses positive precepts of charity to engender a greater love for God and neighbor in his flock.

Bonner's sermon provided a positive example of charity in Jesus Christ, exhorting his audience to examine their lives and work on increasing charity in themselves for love of God. John Harpsfield continues Bonner's exhortation to charity in the next sermon, but does it in a more negative fashion, warning in the title "Howe daungerous a thing the breake of Charitie is". Using Matthew 5 as a base text throughout the sermon, Harpsfield explains how much further Christians are expected to practice charity than the Jews were. Christ warned his followers that "except your ryghtuousnes exceed the ryghtuousnes of the Scribes, & the Pharyseis, ye cannot entre into the kyngedome of heauen." Since the scribes and the pharisees fully observed the Law of Moses outwardly, yet inwardly had not charity, Harpsfield exhorts his listeners to cultivate the inward charity that the Jews lacked.³⁴

To further illustrate this point, Harpsfield continues recounting Christ's words in Matthew 5. Whereas in the Old Law anyone who committed murder was liable to judgement, in the New Law of Christ anyone who is angry with his brother is liable to judgment. "Behold, good Christen people," Harpsfield exclaims, "how perfit a charity Christ requireth in us. For to us he maketh the leaste breache of Charitie, as daungerous, as in olde tyme, was the greatest breache to the Jewes." Anger is only the smallest uncharitable act, and yet Christ proscribes to Christians the punishment that for the Jews would have been reserved for the greatest uncharitable act, murder. And if the Christian

³⁴Bonner, *Homelies*, 27v-28r.

should go further, expressing by an outward sign his uncharity, he was liable to the council, a greater punishment than mere judgement. And finally, if a Christian were to call his neighbor an evil name, he would be liable to hellfire, the greatest punishment of all. This once more causes Harpsfield to exclaim “behold Chrystian people, your lyfe in thys lesson, as in a glasse, and you shall see what daunger you stande in. Who is there almost emongst us, but that uncharitable calleth hys neighbour fole, or som like euyll name? Yea who is ther in maner that doth not far passe thys degree of uncharitablenes?”³⁵ Harpsfield is exhorting his audience to examine their own lives and see how great of a danger they stand in if they do not strive to cultivate greater charity towards their neighbor.

Some men, Harpsfield states, do not believe that they must be bothered by such “streytnes of lyfe.” After all, Christ said “my yoke is swete, and my burden lyghte.” Therefore a Christian should have less obligations placed on him than a Jew. Not so, argues Harpsfield. Certainly, the Christian does not have to obey the law of Moses in such outward matters as avoiding pork or circumcision. However, when it comes to the Ten Commandments and the moral precepts of the Old Testament, “we Christyans are bounde to the obseruation of them, & of all other thynges, belongyng to the estate of the new testamente and so bounde, as that in performance, and fulfilling of them, we muste be muche more perfyt, and more exacte, then euer was the Jewes in obeyng Moyses lawe.” The yoke of Christ is sweet because we are given much more grace than the Jews were, and because our promised reward is greater. Harpsfield cites the church father Oecumenius on this point, saying “now nether possession of earth, & earthelye goodes,

³⁵Bonner, *Homelies*, 28v; 29r-30v.

nor longe lyfe, nor fecundite of chyldren, nor victorie agaynst oure mortal enemyes, is promised, but the kingdome of heauen, adoption to God, and victory against deuels. Therefore of good reason, great fyghts are required of us.”³⁶ For these reasons, Harpsfield contends, the Christian’s yoke is easier than the Jew’s. Even though much more is required of the Christian, much more help is given and reward is promised.

One other question remained: if hellfire is the punishment Christ set for calling one’s neighbor an evil name in anger, what greater punishment could possibly be meted out to a murderer? In answer, Harpsfield references Cicero, who relates that the Athenian lawgiver Solon did not lay down a punishment for patricides. When asked why he neglected this crime, Solon answered that Athenian raised under his set of laws would not think of committing patricide. So too, Harpsfield explains, Christ did not set down any punishment for a breach of charity greater than calling one’s neighbor a fool, since anyone raised as a true Christian would never consider any further acts of uncharity.³⁷ Harpsfield is setting a high standard of charity to which his flock should aspire.

Harpsfield closes his sermon by reflecting that there are some instances in which becoming angry with one’s brother, verbally confronting them, and calling them evil names might be justified. These can only be considered good if all uncharity is thoroughly absent from the words and actions. Echoing some of Bonner’s arguments about charity and the use of punishment by the law, Harpsfield teaches that to “rebuke trespassoures, & offenders, thereby to make them ashamed of there euyl doynge” is perfectly justified, provided we are doing so solely for their benefit and not to vent our

³⁶Bonner, *Homelies*, 28v-29v.

³⁷Ibid., 30r.

own anger. As long as uncharity is not present in the Christian's heart, rebuke and even name-calling are not sinful, as evidenced by the actions of John the Baptist, Paul, and Christ himself.³⁸

In this sermon, Harpsfield reveals a high bar of charity for Christian people, set by Christ himself in the gospels. For Christians, mere uncharitable anger is as bad as murder was under the Old Law. Taken together, these two sermons on charity follow from Harpsfield's earlier teaching that justification comes from upright living as well as from faith. There are duties laid on a Christian by his faith, and the greatest of these is charity, both towards God and neighbor. Having expounded upon a Christian's duties towards his neighbor in general, the authors of the *Homelies* move forward into the Christian's duties towards the church, and the church's authority over the Christian. The next four sermons pick up where Harpsfield left his discussion of the church in "How the redemption in Christ is apliable to man", seeking to prove that the only way to salvation is in the Catholic Church.

The next sermon is Henry Pendleton's first offering, "Of the Churche What it is, and of the commoditie thereof." Pendleton's main concern in this sermon is steering his flock away from schismatic sects and keeping them steadfastly adhering to the Catholic Church. Pendleton defines the church as "a conuocation of all people throughout the whole worlde, professyng one faith of God, and one use of all the holy sacraments." He also calls it the "body mysticall of Chryste," following Paul in Ephesians 4. It is also the spouse of Christ, as attested by several scripture passages including Canticle of Canticles

³⁸Bonner, *Homelies*, 30v-31r.

and Ephesians. The true church of Christ is united with him as one flesh, exceedingly dear and highly favored.

But there is another church operating in the world, as attested by Psalms 25: “*Ecclesia malignantium*. The church of the malignaunt & noughtye people.” How can one tell whether the church they adhere to is the church of Christa and not this other church? For the rest of the sermon, Pendleton lays out some key identifiers of Christ’s church, all of which are fulfilled in the Catholic Church. Firstly, the Creed calls the church of Christ the “catholyke” church, “that is to saye, the uniuersall church.” It is not “lurkyng” in any specific country or region, but is spread throughout the world. He repeats Harpsfield’s argument from Matthew 5 that the church of Christ must be known, like “a citie upon an hyll.” Thus the church could not have ever been secret, but always openly recognized among Christians. Augustine testifies to this in his writing against the Donatists. Speaking of the Donatists, Pendleton argues, they ascribed all salvation to themselves, although they were only spread through a small part of Africa, and considered those who clung to the Catholic Church damned. By Pendleton’s time, they were universally considered heretics. They share this regional limitation, Pendleton declares, with the Protestant sects of the 1550s: “some saying in germany here is Chryst, here is the church, some in Heluetia, here is christ, here is the church: other in Bohem, here is Chryst, here is the church, and we in Englande, here is chryst, and here is the church.”³⁹ Only one Christian Church, the Catholic Church, is universally recognized, and thus must be the church of Christ.

³⁹Bonner, *Homelies*, 31v-34v.

Another argument against the emerging Protestant churches is that they are all called by the proper names of their founders. All previous sects identified with their founders' names are considered heretical, teaches Pendleton: "se how gloriously some haue used the name of Marchion, Ebion, Arrianus, Manicheus, Pelagius, Donatus, and in our tyme lykewise the name of Luther, Zwinglius, Carolstadius, with thousandes such other." This practice is condemned not only by Augustine but by Paul himself in 1 Corinthians, chiding the Corinthians for identifying themselves by the names of their intellectual leaders. The Catholic Church is identified with its universality, not with the name of some earthly founder; therefore it has more validity than these new churches.⁴⁰

Finally, Pendleton turns to apostolic succession as a proof of the validity of the Catholic Church. Paul made Timothy and Titus bishops, Pendleton points out, and they in turn were able to make more bishops to succeed them, and so the chain continued until the present day. The apostles established a hierarchy in the church, since various people had different talents they could use in different capacities to spread the gospel of Christ. Even though the church may have some bad bishops, which Pendleton does not deny, it has not thereby lost its validity. Christ compared the church to a net which brings in good and bad fishes. He also exhorted his followers to obey the Scribes and Pharisees, who "syt in Moyses chayre", even though he often rebuked them.⁴¹ If even the Scribes and Pharisees were to be obeyed by virtue of their office, then the Catholic Church cannot be invalidated by the evil living of some of its ministers.

⁴⁰Bonner, *Homelies*, 34v-35v.

⁴¹Ibid., 35v-36r.

Finally, Pendleton points to a passage from Vincent of Lerins in which he proposes three ways to test the validity of a church: “the first is antiquitie, the second, is uniuersalitie, the third, is unitie,” whereas heresy will “lateli arise, & lurk in priuate corners & neuer agre with itselfe.” The Catholic Church fulfills the first three of these criteria in Pendleton’s estimation, whereas the Protestant churches fulfill the second three. Pendleton posits that he could go on at length proving these points, but he has reached the end of his sermon. In the next sermon, he intends to address the authority of the Catholic Church, as well as the profit its members gain through their adherence to it.

In the next sermon, “Of the aauthoritie of the Church,” Pendleton continues the work of the last sermon. He sets out to prove that the Catholic Church has the proper teaching authority to interpret scripture and make rules for Christian life. First, he points to the numerous times through the gospel that Christ gives authority to his apostles, citing Matthew and John as examples. Since Pendleton and Harpsfield have taught in earlier sermons that the Catholic Church has kept the apostolic succession, Pendleton posits that this authority has been passed down from generation to generation of Catholic bishops. Whatever authority Christ gave to his apostles now resides with the priests, bishops, and pope of Rome.

Pendleton then explains the scope of this authority. First, the Catholic Church has “the true sense, and understandyng, of the holy Scrypture.” Christ sent the Holy Ghost to the church “that he should abyde . . . with you foreuer.” As the very author of scripture, the Holy Ghost would guide the church in its interpretations of it, ensuring that it would never err in its teaching. For this reason, the patristics turned to the church for authoritative interpretation on disputed questions. Pendleton points to Irenaeus (earlier

quoted by Harpsfield to illustrate a similar point) and Augustine as examples of this. One of the quotes from Augustine against the Manicheans is particularly striking: “truly, I would not beleue the Gospel, onles that the authoritye of the catholyke church did moue me thereto.”⁴² If such an esteemed church father as Augustine felt so strongly about the authority of the Catholic Church, Pendleton argues, how could Christians in the present day presume to go against it?

The church also in years past determined which early Christian works should be included in the canon of scripture. Pendleton informs his audience that, besides the four canonical gospels, there were others written by other disciples, such as Bartholomew and Nicodemus. These two were present to witness Christ’s deeds and teachings; there is nothing in and of themselves that sets them apart from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. However, Pendleton argues that the Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, discerned which gospels were truly inspired and added them to the official canon, omitting the others.⁴³ Pendleton asserts that since the church had the authority to determine the canon of scripture, it had the sole authority to interpret it.

Moving on from the power to interpret scripture, Pendleton inspects another mode of authority granted to the church: the authority to forgive sins. Christ gave this power to his apostles in John 20, and Pendleton assures his audience that it has been passed down to the present church. The church father Cyril testifies as such, as do the actions of Ambrose, who excommunicated the Roman Emperor Theodosius and would not forgive

⁴²Bonner, *Homelies*, 37r-39r.

⁴³Ibid., 39r.

him until he had done great penance.⁴⁴ Therefore this is a mighty power reserved to the church of Christ, and one which further shows that the Holy Spirit is with the Catholic Church.

Pendleton now leaves off his discussion of the authority of the church to expound upon the spiritual benefits of being in communion with it. Christ has promised to abide with the church, and thus with every Christian within the church. The believer can take comfort knowing that God is his father and the church his loving mother, as attested by Cyprian. Those outside the church, “although he think himself to lieu neuer so worthely,” according to Augustine, “shal not haue life, but the wrath of god abideth upon hym.” Those who tear down the church have brought not only spiritual but also temporal strife. Pendleton cries out “alas, what Christen bloude wythin this Realme, euen by our owne countreimen, hath bene shed? Oh Lorde, how many poore wydowes wythout comforte haue bene lefte? Howe many fatherlesse children without soccoure?” England is in sore straights due to its embrace of schism: “Abbais, are poullled downe: Collegis, and Chantrees are ouerthrowen: churches are robbed, and pore Christ, (that is to saye,) the hungry and nedefull people, famishe, and crye oute therefore.” All of this carnage could be reversed, Pendleton urges, if the English people were to do penance for their schism and return to full communion with the Catholic Church.⁴⁵

In his two sermons on the church, Pendleton tried to convince his audience of the authenticity and authority of the Catholic Church, its bishops, and its priests. He deployed frequent scriptural and patristic arguments in doing so, at times overlapping with

⁴⁴Bonner, *Homelies*, 39v-40v.

⁴⁵Ibid., 40v-42r.

passages earlier used by John Harpsfield to make similar points. Although occasionally repetitive, Pendleton nevertheless composed an impassioned defense of his church and brought together several reasons designed to compel his audience to abandon their schism and submit to the authority of the Catholic Church.

Pendleton had made his arguments for the authority of the Catholic Church; now John Harpsfield takes up the task of defending the authority of the papacy in the next two sermons, both entitled “Of the Supremacy.” He opens by stating that “as in euery naturall, and polytyke body, so in the churche militant, (whych is a misticall body) superioritie, and inferioriti, must neds be amongst the members thereof, of ells it cannot endure.” For this reason, Christ appointed the apostles to govern the church, and they passed their authority to their successors, the bishops. He points to Ephesians 5’s discussion of the different roles held in the church and Cyprian’s exhortation for all Christians to respect and obey the priests put in authority over them. Having a centralized authority is necessary, Harpsfield argues, for the church to remain unified and to avoid falling into heresy.⁴⁶

According to Harpsfield, the best way to provide this centralized authority was the way Christ chose to do it: appoint one bishop to be his vicar on earth. His first scriptural passage in support of this comes from John 21, when Christ takes Simon Peter aside and tells him to “fede my lambes” and “feede my shepe.” This indicates Peter’s special authority, Harpsfield contends, for three reasons: first, Peter was taken apart from the other apostles present; second, Christ asked Peter if he loved him more than the other apostles; and third, Christ entrusted both lambs and sheep, that is, the whole church

⁴⁶Bonner, *Homelies*, 42v-44r.

militant, to Peter. Peter's primacy is confirmed, says Harpsfield, in the leadership role he takes throughout the early part of the Acts of the Apostles, speaking on all of their behalf at Pentecost and coordinating the election of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot.⁴⁷ For Harpsfield, scripture clearly testified that Peter was given a special role as the head of the apostles. Scripture was not the only arrow in Harpsfield's quiver, however. The whole rest of this first sermon on papal supremacy was taken up by patristic quotes. One after another he quotes Origen, Cyprian, Basil, Ambrose, and finally Augustine, all agreeing that Peter had special authority over the rest of the apostles. He closes his sermon exhorting his audience to remember if nothing else that scripture and all the ancient fathers were in agreement on this point.

In the next sermon, Harpsfield continues his relentless barrage of citations of scriptural and patristic authorities pointing to Petrine primacy. He begins by relating the tale of Simon Magus, as told by Acts, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Eusebius. Peter confounded Simon Magus twice, once in Samaria and once in Rome, proving the power of Christ over Simon's "enchauntementes". But this story has extra significance for Harpsfield, because it brings Peter for the first time to Rome, sent specifically by God to defeat Simon. After doing so, Peter took up the bishopric of Rome for twenty-five years until his martyrdom under Nero. Harpsfield cites Jerome as his source in this story, and in case he alone was not enough of an authority, he references Ambrose, Hegesippus the Nazarene, Dionysius, Zephyrinus, and Eusebius for good measure.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Bonner, *Homelies*, 44v-45v.

⁴⁸Ibid., 47v-49r.

With it well and truly established that Peter was the Bishop of Rome and died there, Harpsfield then claims for all of Peter's successors the same primacy over the rest of the bishops that he maintained Peter had over the apostles in the previous sermon. He returns to Irenaeus to support this claim, quoting him as saying that "the church of Rome is the greatest, the eldest, and the best knowen, of al churches, and that it was founded, by the most glorious Apostles, Peter, and Paule. & that through the succession of the byshops of Rome, from Sainct Peter, untill hys tyme, the truth was deryued, from hande to hande." He then quotes Augustine and Cyprian chastising those who did not recognize the primacy and authority of the bishop of Rome, then returns to Augustine claiming that the succession of bishops of Rome from Peter kept him in the Catholic Church. Finally, he quotes Jerome and Ambrose as two more fathers who explicitly regarded Rome as the primary see of the church. Harpsfield goes to great lengths to show that all of the major church fathers were in agreement that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and that because of that lineage, Rome held pride of place among all the bishoprics of the world.

Harpsfield briefly reflects on the misery of all the sees of the church which fell away from allegiance to Peter, from the Eastern Orthodox churches "in captiuitie under the gret Turke" to the political and religious chaos in contemporary Germany. But he does not spend too much time on this point, as he is eager to get to his most controversial authority for the primacy of the bishop of Rome: Martin Luther. He quotes a 1519 tract by Luther, composed just after a disputation with Johannes Eck and entitled *Resolutio Lutheriana super propositione sua decima tertia, de potestate papae*. Harpsfield quotes this tract at length, taking up two full pages of the printed sermon. In Harpsfield's translation, Luther states that he believes "the Romaine Byshoppe to be superior to all

other” and that “it is not lawefull folyshly, or hedelye to make resystence unto the said Romaine Byshope.” Luther quotes Cyprian in defense of Petrine primacy, before the quote ends with Luther saying “I doo not se howe they be excused from the offence, or synne, of scysme, who doing, or cominge agaynst this will, doo withdrawe, or pull themselves, from the Authoritie of the Romaine Bysshoppe.”⁴⁹ Harpsfield presents this quote without any context as evidence that Luther once argued in favor of the papacy, and he was inconstant in his beliefs. Even heresiarchs, Harpsfield argues, at one point acknowledged the authority of the pope.

Harpsfield ends his sermon reminding his audience that England has a special allegiance to Rome. Citing Bede, he tells his audience that the see of Rome sent missionaries to convert Britain twice, first under the Romans and then under the Saxons. England enjoyed prosperity in the days before the schism, and since has known nothing but strife and division. Unity with Rome will breed unity at home, Harpsfield argues. If England wished to return to the good and prosperous days after the end of the War of the Roses, it must return to allegiance to the pope.

Harpsfield’s two sermons on papal supremacy are interesting windows into what he and the other authors of the *Homelies* thought would be convincing to their listeners. Harpsfield fires citation after citation to scripture and the church fathers at his audience, barely pausing to add his own commentary in some places. He even includes a lengthy quote from Martin Luther, albeit without context, to try and convince his audience of the truth of papal primacy. Harpsfield, and the Marian church in general, seem to think that

⁴⁹Bonner, *Homelies*, 51r-52v.

constant citations to a wide variety of authorities will be their most persuasive tool in tackling some of the most controversial issues of the Reformation.

From this discussion of the church and the papacy, the *Homelies* turn to another hotly debated topic of the English Reformation: the Eucharist. Harpsfield's first Eucharistic sermon, "Of the true presence of Chrystes bodye & bloud in the Sacrament of the Aultar", sets out to convince its audience that the bread and wine of the Eucharist is really changed into the real body and blood of Christ at every Mass. He begins by saying that the people must approach the sacrament in both fear and faith. He then connects the promise Christ made in John 6, "the breade or food that I will geue unto you, is my fleshe, whyche fleshe I wyll geue for the lyfe of the world", with the later deeds of Christ at the Last Supper, when he says "take eate thys is my Bodye whiche walbe geuen for you."⁵⁰ Harpsfield then connects the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist with the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover meal.

He notes that Matthew, Mark, and Luke's gospels all agree in their account of the Last Supper, and that they do not expound upon what Christ says nor try to explain it. This is significant, in Harpsfield's estimation, because generally the evangelists will illuminate the true meaning of Christ's words when he is not meant to be taken strictly literally, and he gives four examples of the gospels providing such explanations. Since no explanation is given of these Eucharistic passages, Harpsfield argues, they must have been meant to be taken literally.⁵¹ He then argues from I Corinthians 11 that since Paul took proper preparation to receive the Eucharist worthily so seriously, the Eucharist itself

⁵⁰Bonner, *Homelies*, 55v-r.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 56r-57v.

must be much more than a merely symbolic meal.⁵² He concludes by briefly touching on all of his earlier points and summing up the doctrine of the real presence in terms which are almost word for word the same as John Mirk's: "there is under the fourmes of breade & wine, the selfe same body of our Sauour Christ in substance, which was borne of the Vyrgin Mary, and suffered death on y crosse for us."⁵³ Although Harpsfield's approach differs considerably from Mirk's, there is continuity in the doctrine which they were trying to transmit.

The final sermon from Bonner's *Homelies* that I will analyze is once again one of Harpsfield's, "Of transubstantiation". In this sermon, Harpsfield delves deeply into the Catholic belief of transubstantiation. He starts by stating the doctrine of transubstantiation: that the bread and wine are substantially transformed into the body and blood of Christ while remaining under the appearances of bread and wine. He then states that the fact that the Church teaches this ought to be enough authority for his listeners to believe it but given the "doutes and scruples" recently raised concerning this doctrine, he will go further and give a scriptural and theological explanation of it.⁵⁴ Harpsfield first moves through the Old Testament, giving several examples of God or angels appearing to men under different forms. If God could come to Moses under the appearance of a burning bush, could not Jesus come to contemporary believers under the appearance of bread and wine?⁵⁵ He then uses patristic authorities to argue for

⁵²Bonner, *Homelies*, 57v-r.

⁵³Ibid., 58v.

⁵⁴Ibid., 58r.

⁵⁵Ibid., 58r-59r.

transubstantiation, turning to Augustine, Cyprian, and Eusebius of Emesa. He returns to the Old Testament to show that it is easy for God to change the properties and substances of physical objects, before going back to patristic authorities for more support.⁵⁶ This is the most heavily sourced section of any of the three sermons on the Eucharist, pointing to the hotly debated nature of the question.

Harpsfield then addresses the objection that the Bible calls the sacrament “bread” in several cases. He attributes this to a mistranslation, claiming that this word means “all kynde of fode, whether it be the fode of the body, or the fode of the soule.” He turns to the Our Father to prove his point, arguing that the phrase “Give us this day our daily bread” does not ask of God merely physical bread but everything necessary for our life.⁵⁷ He ends the sermon by restating the doctrine itself and using one last quote from Augustine to exhort his audience to proper reverence and honor when in the presence of the sacrament. In this sermon, Harpsfield couched an obscure theological debate in layman’s terms, giving his flock the tools to understand a complex doctrine.

The final sermon in the *Homelies* completes Harpsfield’s examination of the Eucharist by preaching “Of certen Aunsweres against som common obiections made agaynst the sacrament of the Aultare”. As the title suggests, Harpsfield addresses some of the attacks commonly made by Protestants against the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist. This is by far the longest sermon in the *Homelies*, extending over 24 pages or roughly one-sixth of the volume, and is also the only one which is unsigned. Most scholars credit it to John Harpsfield, and I agree with their attribution. “Of certen

⁵⁶Bonner, *Homelies*, 60v-61v.

⁵⁷Ibid., 61v-r.

Answers” is Harpsfield’s most explicitly apologetic sermon, dealing directly with Protestant objections in a way that was not done for the other main topics of the *Homelies*. He decided that shying away from heterodox opinions on the Eucharist, as had been the approach of medieval preachers such as Mirk, was not an option in his immediate audience of London, where Protestant doctrine had spread widely. Rather, a direct approach was needed, raising their objections and intellectually vanquishing them in turn. Whereas up until now, the authors of the *Homelies* had given perhaps a paragraph or two in a sermon to contrary opinions, Harpsfield felt he must dedicate a whole sermon to attacks on the Eucharist, given the fact that the Eucharist was perhaps the most controversial subject of the English Reformation. Preaching a Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist had landed conservative bishops such as Edmund Bonner and Stephen Gardiner in prison less than a decade before the publishing of the *Homelies*. Many competing beliefs had been circulating in England since the break from Rome, and Harpsfield intended to set them all straight in this final sermon.

Harpsfield begins with a brief discourse of the importance of faith, citing both of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians as well as Romans. There are many mysteries in which Christians believe, and their unintelligence to natural reason should not disturb their faith. As important as faith is in the life of a Christian, many people have strayed from faith in Catholic teaching on the Eucharist “through the iniquitie of these later euyl years,” swerving from true belief. Harpsfield intends to answer the most common objections to the Eucharist, “that from hence forthe no man shal nede to be seduced by them, or other lyke.”⁵⁸ Due to number of objections and answers Harpsfield included in this sermon, I

⁵⁸Bonner, *Homelies*, 62r-63r.

will choose three to summarize, giving a sample of his argumentation and style in this sermon.

One objection Harpsfield answers arises from the words of Christ in John 6, when he says “it is the spirite whych geueth lyfe, and that the fleshe profiteth nothing.” This must mean, the Protestants argue, that Christ is not present in the Eucharist in the flesh, but only in the spirit. Harpsfield responds that something can be both spiritual and corporal at the same time, such as the body and soul comprising the human person. He refers to 1 Corinthians 10, where Paul states that the children of Israel wandering in the desert ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink. Harpsfield points out that this spiritual food and drink were also physical manna and water from the rock. Further, Paul in Galatians calls “mortall men, liuing then on the earth” spiritual beings. Harpsfield further cites Cyril, Augustine, and Chrysostom as authorities who interpreted this passage in the same way he does.⁵⁹ A thing having a spiritual aspect does not automatically preclude it having a physical aspect; thus the Eucharist can contain Christ’s presence spiritually while at the same time physically being Christ’s body.

Another objection which Harpsfield addresses is that the Eucharist is not mentioned in either the Apostle’s Creed or the Nicene Creed. He dismisses this objection rather harshly, saying that this “obiectiō doth procede of an ignoraunce & lacke of knowledge of the fyrst institution of the crede.” These creeds were meant to be taught the basics of the Christian faith to catechumens, who were not admitted to any sacraments. Therefore the higher mysteries of the Eucharist were not included in the creeds, being reserved for baptized and fully initiated Christians. Indeed, catechumens were not

⁵⁹Bonner, *Homelies*, 65r-67r.

allowed to be present for the sacrificial portions of the Mass, being ushered outside the church after the sermon. Harpsfield points to the practice of Chrysostom and Augustine in the sermons alluding to the Eucharist as that “which the faithful, or they that be already baptised know.”⁶⁰ The early church judged catechumens as not ready to understand the mystery of the Eucharist; therefore they did not include it in their common creeds.

One final objection that Harpsfield answers has to do with the worthiness of those who receive the Eucharist. Christ says in John 6 that “he that eateth my fleshe, and drinketh my bloude, hath euerlastynge lyfe.” However, scripture testifies that Judas ate and drank, and Paul in 1 Corinthians warns that those who eat and drink unworthily bring judgement upon themselves. These persons are damned, even though they are promised eternal life through their reception of the Eucharist. To this Harpsfield responds that certain promises in scripture have limitations. For example, 1 John promises that any who confess that Jesus is the Son of God inherit eternal life. But there are other conditions which attend this, namely the faith and good living that Harpsfield discussed back in the fourth sermon of the *Homelies*. These conditions also apply to this promise regarding the Eucharist. Harpsfield cites two separate places where Augustine uses this line of argument, confirming what he himself argued from scripture.⁶¹ He who eats and drinks the body and blood of Christ *worthily* will inherit eternal life.

These three objections are good examples of the fourteen total objections Harpsfield raises and answers. In those objections which argue against the Eucharist from scripture, he refutes them using first scripture and then the church fathers. To those which

⁶⁰Bonner, *Homelies*, 67r-v.

⁶¹Ibid., 69v-70v.

argue simply from the fathers or church history, as in the objection regarding the creed, Harpsfield gives an answer using the fathers and church history. Each objection he raises and then defeats would have been taken from the lively debate about the Eucharist which had been raging in England since the dawn of the Reformation. In this sermon, Harpsfield meant to give the English laity, and perhaps the preachers reading his sermons to them, the intellectual ammunition they required to engage Protestant naysayers. Putting all of these three Eucharistic sermons in concert, Harpsfield gave his audience a thorough grounding in Catholic Eucharistic doctrine, inoculating them against Protestant thought and preparing them to argue with any opposition.

Having now examined each of the thirteen sermons of Edmund Bonner's *Homelies* in turn, what commonalities in style can we see in all of them? One of the first and most obvious is the ubiquitous use of scriptural and patristic sources. On almost every page of the *Homelies* Harpsfield, Pendleton, and Bonner cite a commonly accepted authority in support of their arguments. The authors do not discriminate in their use of sources, drawing from nearly every book of the Bible and many recognizable patristic sources. Another commonality of style is their doctrinal focus. These sermons are all meant to teach dogma, not promote virtue among their audience. This is intentional, as these sermons accompanied a catechism; still, it is notable that the premier sermon collection of Marian England was entirely doctrinally focused. Finally, these sermons all have an educated tone and style of argument which is meant to be persuasive, but they do not use overly technical language which would have confused the average lay person. Throughout the *Homelies*, rhetorical flourishes are used to drive home points or to make a certain turn of phrase memorable to the audience. The argumentation is meant to

persuade, not to inform. In many cases, the sermons bring up objections to their positions and then answer those objections, airing their opponents' arguments and preempting them. These rhetorical tricks were meant to be persuasive to someone who was skeptical of the new Catholic teaching being preached from the pulpit, perhaps remembering the recent Protestant dogmas coming from the same place. These three commonalities, use of scriptural and patristic sources, doctrinal focus, and persuasive rhetorical tone, are all the hallmarks of the style of the *Homelies*. As we will see in the next chapter, the *Homelies* was not an outlier, and these stylistic choices were common in other Marian sermons throughout the country as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

Additional Marian Sermon Collections

In the previous chapter, I examined at length Edmund Bonner's *Homelies*, which was the most popular printed sermon collection in England during the Marian restoration. However, there were countless sermons preached throughout England that received less promotion but were still fully part of the Marian program of reform and restoration. In this chapter, I will examine four printed sermon collections, prepared and delivered in four different cities throughout England, to show some of the continuities in content, style, and sources that can be found in Marian sermons. These sermons were delivered in London, Worcester, Wells, and Lincoln, by men of varying ages and ecclesiastical positions. Despite their differences in geography, age, and clerical rank, these four men, John Feckenham, Leonard Pollard, Roger Edgeworth, and Thomas Watson, all include some similarities in their sermons. They share a doctrinal focus, condemning Protestantism and fiercely defending traditional Catholic teachings. They all frequently cite Scripture, shoring up their points with Biblical quotations to provide universally accepted authority to their sermons. They all have a deep knowledge of church fathers, quoting and paraphrasing them often throughout. Finally, they all share an educated tone, avoiding colloquial language and the popular *exempla* that were characteristic of many medieval sermons. Just like the Bonner *Homelies*, these sermons exhibit traits which blend together the humanist and Protestant sermon trends popularized in England in only the prior fifty years. All of these traits indicate that there was a level of attention and care

given to the crafting of sermons in the Marian church, and that this care was widespread throughout England, not limited to one famous collection. Marian sermons throughout the country were forward-looking and modern in their structure, themes, and citation of authority. The Marian church did not merely attempt to establish a sophisticated program of preaching as part of its restoration of Catholicism; educated and eloquent preaching existed throughout England during Mary's reign, and it was an integral part of the attempted Marian restoration.

Before examining each sermon in turn, we should examine what is known about the initial reception of these sermons when they were initially given. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of the reception of these sermons when they were orally delivered beyond the texts themselves. Feckenham's sermon, for example, gives us a clue that it was well-received by its audience on its title page, since a powerful member of that audience insisted that it be put into print.¹ Roger Edgeworth's doctrinally Catholic sermons were considered dangerously influential enough by Edward VI's Protestant regime that he was prohibited from preaching in the middle of a sermon cycle.² Besides these textual clues, however, we have no way of gauging the influence of any individual sermon from these collections on its audience. However, the circumstances of their printing indicate their perceived influence by the Marian Church. All four collections were printed in London, three by Robert Caly, a publisher who worked closely with Edmund Bonner and the official Marian Church in London.³ The fact that these sermons,

¹John Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon made...at the celebration of the exequies of...Lady Jone, Quene of Spayne* (London: Robert Caly, 1555), 1r.

²Roger Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull, Godly, and Learned* (London: Robert Caly, 1557), 4r; cclxxix.v.

³Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 76; 96.

all except Feckenham's preached far from the capital, attracted the attention of important Marian clerics in London and were considered eloquent, orthodox, and influential enough to be put into print by Robert Caly suggests a good response to their oral versions. In addition, textual clues indicate that Feckenham was reluctant to put his sermon to print but was requested or ordered to by an authoritative figure who had heard it. Leonard Pollard's sermons were published posthumously, suggesting that someone else believed them to have been worthy of wider distribution.⁴ Although we do not have explicit evidence of a good audience reception of these sermons, these clues from the texts themselves and from the circumstances of their printing indicate that when presented orally they were indeed well-received.

Thomas Watson

The first collection of sermons I will discuss is Thomas Watson's *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine concerninge the seven Sacramentes*. Published in 1558, the year of Mary's death, this book was not able to become influential on other Marian preachers. However, its style is illustrative of what the official Marian church was looking for in sermons. This book was one of two books of sermons commissioned by the Legatine Synod in 1555, and Bonner's *Homelies* was only intended to be used throughout England temporarily while these sermons were completed.⁵ Watson did not finish the second book before Mary's death; however, *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine* gives us an idea of what the Marian church wanted in their sermons, as it was meant to replace Bonner's popular

⁴Mary Bateson, "Pollard, Leonard (d. 1556), clergyman" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004), accessed online, April 3, 2019.

⁵ Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 65, 68

Homelies, and would likely have been spread just as widely throughout England had Mary's death not killed the nascent restoration.

Thomas Watson was born in 1513 near Durham. He received his BA from Cambridge in 1533 and his MA in 1536. During his time at Cambridge he acquired a reputation as a scholar, especially of the classics, which would remain with him all of his life. He was noted for his opposition to Protestantism during Edward's reign, and would be imprisoned with Stephen Gardiner, the future Marian Archbishop of Westminster, for Edward's final years. During Mary's reign he aided in the prosecution of heresy and conducted a visitation of Cambridge University. In 1557 he would be consecrated as Bishop of Lincoln, a see he would hold for the remainder of Mary's reign.⁶

While in Lincoln, Watson composed this series of thirty short sermons about the seven sacraments, dealing with all sorts of different aspects of them. There is no evidence that Watson himself preached these sermons, as they were meant to answer the call of the Legatine Synod for books of model sermons to be used throughout England.⁷ However, their composition in Lincoln does indicate that the Marian church did not keep its intellectuals concentrated in London, and Watson would likely have preached these or similar sermons to his local flock. Watson gave less attention to the less controversial sacraments in this collection, spending only two sermons on Holy Orders and one on Extreme Unction. In contrast, those which had been recently under attack by Protestants were given more space. Watson gave seven sermons on the Mass and the Eucharist and

⁶Kenneth Carlton, "Watson, Thomas (1513-1584), bishop of Lincoln" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2011), accessed online, April 3, 2019.

⁷ Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 65, 68

eleven sermons on the sacrament of Penance. All these sermons were intended to defend and promote traditional Catholic sacramental belief and practice, about which there was much confusion in the wake of Edward's Protestant reign.

Watson's sources are slightly different than the sources in the other sermons examined in this paper. Although he does quote Scripture frequently, about half of his sources are extra-Biblical. Among these sources, he quotes from medieval scholars such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St. Victor, and Thomas Aquinas,⁸ in addition to more common patristic sources such as Augustine. He even at times quotes church councils, such as the Council of Florence on the second page of the collection.⁹ These sources were uncommon among other Marian authors, with most preachers relying solely on Scripture and patristics, authorities respected by both Catholics and Protestants. Watson is unafraid to use medieval scholastic sources in his debate with Protestants, weaving them together with Scripture and patristics to form a cohesive defense of the seven sacraments.

Watson not only defends the doctrine of the seven sacraments but gives practical advice on the performance of them as well. To be sure, he had heavily doctrinal sermons with titles such as "Of the change of bread and wine, that is to say, of Transubstantiation"¹⁰, which is a sermon on a weighty theological topic, but he also preached sermons on ways for common folk to maximize the benefits received from the sacraments, such as "How a man may come worthily to receive the Blessed Sacrament"¹¹

⁸Thomas Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine concerninge the seven Sacramentes* (London: Robert Caly, 1558), xiii.v-r, e.g.

⁹*Ibid.*, i.r.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, xlii.r-xlvii.r.

¹¹*Ibid.*, lx.r-lxvii.r.

or “Certain instructions whereby a man may consider his life and make his confession the better.”¹² These sermons had their share of doctrine, but in addition instructed his audience in ways to improve their sacramental life. These sermons were more advice than lecture and had overall fewer patristic citations and more practical information to bring the common man into a fuller communion with his church. Through these sermons, Watson shows that he was not only a brilliant intellectual who could expound upon theology with ease, but also a sensitive pastor, attuned to the needs of his flock and willing and able to shepherd them in practice as well as in doctrine.

Watson’s sermon on transubstantiation is a good example of the style he uses throughout this sermon collection. This sermon, entitled “Of the change of the bread and wine, that is to say, of Transubstantiation”, is the eighth sermon in the collection and the second sermon discussing the sacrament of Eucharist.¹³ Roughly the first half of the sermon is dedicated to explaining what the doctrine of transubstantiation was, and the second half discussed why Catholics believed that God had ordained the Eucharist to work in this way. Watson cites Church Fathers, ecumenical councils, and scripture in his explanation of transubstantiation, consistently using authoritative sources to support his points.

In order to explain the concept of transubstantiation, Watson begins this sermon with scripture, quoting directly from the Last Supper narrative in Matthew 26. He then states that Catholic ground their belief in transubstantiation in this passage, citing

¹²Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine*, cxxvi.r-cxxxi.r.

¹³Ibid., xlii.r-xlvi.r.

Ignatius of Antioch, John Chrysostom, and Eusebius of Emesa to prove it.¹⁴ He explains the coining of the term “transubstantiation” by the Fourth Lateran Council, explaining that this is an appropriate term given that Catholics believe the substance of the Eucharist is changed into Christ’s flesh and blood whereas the outward appearance of bread and wine is not. Here he makes an argument from the omnipotence of God, backed again by patristic and scriptural references. If Christ’s humanity could be seen during his time on earth, while his divinity remained hidden, why could he not be present but hidden in bread and wine?¹⁵ Only those looking with the eyes of faith could see the real substance of the Eucharist, namely Christ himself. Nonbelievers, meanwhile, would only see the superficial forms of bread and wine. Here Watson once more turned to the Church Fathers, citing Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Damascene on the importance of faith.¹⁶ He then compares the coining of the term “transubstantiation” by Fourth Lateran to the coining of “consubstantial” by the Council of Nicaea, arguing that the definition of both terms and both doctrines were equally central to the Catholic faith. Watson ended his explanation of the doctrine itself with this comparison, giving his audience a sense of the importance of transubstantiation.¹⁷

The second half of Watson’s sermon explained why it was necessary for Christians to receive Christ’s body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine. He paraphrases an argument from Augustine, stating that since humans abhor cannibalism, they could not eat Christ’s flesh and drink his blood if they looked, felt, and

¹⁴Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine*, xlii.r.

¹⁵Ibid., xliii.v.-xliiii.v.

¹⁶Ibid., xliiii.v-r.

¹⁷Ibid., xlv.v.

tasted like actual human flesh and blood. Since Christ decreed that no one could enter the kingdom of heaven without consuming his flesh and blood, “he by his godly wisdom invented this way to give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, and yet our nature should not abhor the eating and drinking of it, but comfortably and obediently receive it.”¹⁸ Watson then shares with his audience the reasons that the church allowed Catholics to receive only the body of Christ in the Eucharist and not the blood. This practice, Watson argues, is one of convenience, allowing the easy distribution of communion and avoiding the chance of spilling the chalice. After all, he clarifies, you can receive the fullness of Christ’s body and blood through the bread alone, as was seen when Christ celebrated the Eucharist with the disciples at Emmaus in the breaking of the bread only. To shore up this interpretation Watson cites Augustine, Eusebius, and the Council of Constance.¹⁹ Watson’s final argument in the second half of the sermon deals with the concern that communicants do not receive all of Christ’s body, since there are many hosts given out to all who wish to receive the Eucharist. Watson dismisses this trepidation, positing that Christ is present in the Eucharist just as the whole soul of man is present in each part of his body, or a man is reflected in each shard of a shattered mirror. Every communicant receives the whole body and blood of Christ, and there is no division or weakening of it through its multiplication.²⁰ By answering these three objections to Eucharistic practice, Watson showed why the Catholic Church believed transubstantiation was necessary and administered communion in the way that it did.

¹⁸Watson, *Holsome and Catholyke doctrine*, xlv.v-r.

¹⁹Ibid., xlv.v.

²⁰Ibid., xlv.r.-xlvii.v.

Watson ends this sermon with a plea for unity in the Church, stating that on the question of transubstantiation “the testimonies of ancient doctors . . . be all agreeable in this point” and that the Catholic Church’s understanding of Eucharist has been “one and uniform” from the time of Christ to his own day.²¹ His defense of transubstantiation was articulate and thorough, addressing many common objections to a highly contentious doctrine. He backed up his line of reasoning throughout with citations from scripture and Church Fathers, ensuring that his arguments were well supported. Through this sermon, Watson hoped to clarify Catholic teaching about the Eucharist, strengthen his coreligionists’ understanding of the doctrine, and convince skeptical listeners to return to the Catholic fold.

In his sermons, Thomas Watson boldly defended Catholic doctrine against Protestant attacks. He deliberately wrote on the controversial topics of the sacraments to combat Protestant theology directly. He used a wider variety of sources than some of his contemporaries, unafraid to look to the scholastics for help in elucidating his beliefs. His learned and well-sourced sermons bolster his reputation as a scholar, and his choice of controversial topics shows his zeal in promoting Catholicism. By weaving more practical sermons together with doctrinal ones, Watson shows that he was also a skilled pastor, willing to walk his audience through the day-to-day exercises of the Catholic faith. Through this sermon collection, Thomas Watson provided the Marian church with more material to use in promoting traditional Catholic religion in England.

²¹Watson, *Holesome and Catholyke doctrine*, xlvii.v-r.

Leonard Pollard

Little is known of Leonard Pollard's early life. A native of Nottinghamshire, Pollard received his BA from Cambridge in 1543 and his MA in 1547. He became a prebendary of Worcester Cathedral in September 1554, and there composed the five sermons which would be published in 1556 under the title *Fyve homilies of late made by a ryght good and vertuous clerke, called Master Leonard Pollard*. Unfortunately, by the time of publication Pollard had died on March 7, 1556.²²

Pollard's five sermons are all topical, and all focus on a key point of religious controversy in Tudor England.²³ The first is a discussion of the Eucharist, followed by a sermon on the Mass. The third expounds upon faith and the knowledge of God; the fourth, papal supremacy; and the fifth and final sermon examines confession and how man is cleansed from sin. Each of these sermons fiercely defends the Catholic position on each topic, and Pollard's wit and feisty intellectualism are evident on every page. Pollard was a master of rhetoric, and his sermons (unlike some others) show that he was concerned about the attentiveness of his audience. He not only kept his audience engaged through rhetorical tricks such as repetition, alliteration, and rhetorical questions, but he also kept his sermons brief and to the point. Because of this attention to his audience, Pollard not only conveyed Catholic doctrine but did it in a way which would be memorable and entertaining to anyone listening to his sermons.

Although his sermons are short, Pollard manages to pack a lot of material into them. Each of his sermons is full of references to Scripture and to the church fathers. The

²²Mary Bateson, "Pollard, Leonard".

²³Leonard Pollard, *Fyve homilies of late made by a ryght good and vertuous clerke, called Master Leonard Pollard* (London: Wyllyam Gryffyth, 1556).

printer put all of Pollard's references in the margin for the reader to look up himself, and on most pages there are three or more citations.²⁴ Most of these are Scriptural, spanning Old and New Testaments indiscriminately. Pollard will cite any book of the Bible which proves his point. The list of church fathers which he cites is similarly broad. His favorite patristic sources were Augustine and Chrysostom, but he quoted Bede, Jerome, Ambrose, Cyril, Dionysius,²⁵ and numerous other fathers throughout his sermons. Pollard had a deep well of sources from which he drew to defend controversial Catholic doctrines in these sermons.

As an example of Pollard's work, let us examine his sermon on papal supremacy, "Of the primatiue and chiefe auctoritie." Pollard opens his sermon with a quote from Job: "Mans lyfe . . . is a warfare upon the earth." He develops this theme over the next few pages, citing several other scripture passages to show that man fights with the devil through his whole life and must be a warrior for Christ. Continuing this martial analogy, Pollard argues "howe then can we keep our araye yf we haue no capytayne? Do ye not se that it is necessary in an army that he whiche is the chiefeteyne do appoynte some liefetenaunt by whose authoritie the souldiers maye be set in theyr aray, and that by hym such may be punished as wyll nedes breke theyr aray."²⁶ Christ's church needs a head, Pollard argues, in order to keep its members organized and motivated for the fight in which they are engaged.

²⁴See, as a random example, Pollard, *Fyve homilies*, 15r-16v.

²⁵Ibid., 8r, 8r, 12r, 14r, and 15r respectively.

²⁶Ibid., 31v-32v.

Who, then, is this head, and when and how were they appointed? Pollard promises to tell his audience, and he is confident that “sufficiently perswaded by gods worde . . . al true Chrysten men and women wyl be ruled and ordered” by this leader. He starts by warning his audience not to believe in “fortune” or “destiny”, as all things are ordained by God’s providence. Those placed in authority over the church were placed there by God, not by some luck or destiny. Therefore they ought to be obeyed, even if they are evil men, as Christ ordered the Pharisees to be obeyed. He discusses how there are different roles for different talents within the members of the Body of Christ, and praises those who receive Holy Orders as higher in rank than the laity. Within the orders there are also ranks, each with its own job and own dignity.²⁷ Pollard stresses this orderliness and structure within the church, arguing its importance for maintaining orthodoxy and correctly ministering the sacraments.

Within these ranks, there must be a head, and Pollard argues that this head is the Pope of Rome. He starts by arguing for the primacy of Peter among the apostles, noting that he is always named first when the apostles are listed in the gospels and the Christ often spoke directly to Peter when conveying information or power to all of the apostles. He walks through the other often-cited episodes of Peter’s life which Catholics argue shows his primacy, including the feed my sheep speech and Peter’s prominence as the voice of the apostles after Pentecost. He turns from scriptural evidence to patristic evidence, citing Augustine, Chrysostom, and Jerome as saying the Peter was the chief of the apostles.²⁸ Pollard spends a good deal of time establishing that Christ had chosen

²⁷Pollard, 32v-36r.

²⁸Ibid., 36r-37v.

Peter as the leader of the apostles, and that Peter fulfilled that role after Christ's ascension.

But even given that Peter was head of the apostles, does that make the pope the head of the modern church? Pollard argues yes, because "he that succedeth the kynge by ryght, ought of ryght to be kynge. So he that doth ryghtuously succede Saynt Peter beinge the chiefe of all the Apostles, ought of ryght to be the chiefe of byshoppes." The bishop of Rome is the successor of Peter, and therefore has inherited his primacy. Indeed, only Peter's successor could claim this primacy, Pollard argues, because otherwise the church would be uncertain as to who the head was, and thus the whole purpose of having a leader would be undermined. We may be sure that Rome is the seat of the head of the church because it, out of all the other apostolic sees such as Jerusalem or Ephesus, has never been destroyed or fallen into heresy. Pollard reminds his audience that the church is apostolic, and Rome is the last remaining apostolic see.²⁹ Therefore the bishop of Rome must have a special respect among all the other bishops, and he has power over the rest of the church.

Pollard ends this sermon with a short recap, reminding his audience of all the points he made throughout. The sermon is not very long but is packed with controversial arguments for papal supremacy. Pollard stresses the need for the church to have a head to effectively operate, the primacy of Peter among the apostles, and the succession from Peter of the bishop of Rome. He builds each of his arguments off the last, trying to make sure his audience followed his line of thinking so that they would be convinced by his sermon. He weaves scriptural and patristic quotes throughout with ease and familiarity,

²⁹Pollard, 37v-39r.

demonstrating the depth of his study in these fields. This sermon is an effective defense of papal supremacy.

Leonard Pollard's sermon collection is short, but full of interesting material. His sermons are rhetorically engaging and his knowledge of sources both Scriptural and patristic is broad, and he used these two facts to engage in the most hotly contested religious debates of Mary's regime. His work in Worcester would have been appreciated by the Marian hierarchy, especially considering that John Hooper and Hugh Latimer, two influential Protestant theologians, had been active in the area under Edward VI.³⁰ His early death in 1556 silenced a powerful young voice in the Marian church.

Roger Edgeworth

Roger Edgeworth was one of the older members of the Marian clergy. Born around 1488 at Holt Castle on the Welsh marches, Edgeworth held a variety of benefices following his graduation from Oxford until 1536, when he became a canon as Wells Cathedral in Somerset, a position he would hold for the rest of his life.³¹ He became an outspoken critic of Edward VI's doctrinal reforms, to the point where the Edwardine church attempted to silence him, as he recounts in the preface to *Sermons very Fruitfull, Godly, and Learned*: "I have inveighed earnestly and oft in my sermons . . . with the Protestants, until I have been put to silence, either by general prohibitions to preach, or by name, or by captivity and imprisonment, of all which (I thank God) I have had my

³⁰Bateson, "Pollard, Leonard".

³¹Janet M. Wilson, "Edgeworth, Roger (c. 1488-1559/60), Church of England clergyman and religious controversialist" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008), accessed online, April 2, 2019.

part.”³² Edgeworth was not only reinstated at the start of Mary’s reign but promoted to Chancellor of Wells Cathedral. It was here that he did the bulk of his preaching throughout Mary’s reign.³³

By 1557 Edgeworth had compiled a collection of sermons which he had delivered over his career and printed them, finding “much good matter in them, right worthy to be had in memory.”³⁴ He intended to publish more of his sermons, but the end of Mary’s reign in 1558 and his death in 1560 prevented him from doing so. The sermons he did publish are divided into four main themes: first, six sermons about the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; second, a sermon devoted to the Apostle’s Creed; third, “a homily of Ceremonies, and of man’s laws”; and finally, a series of twenty sermons giving a thorough exegesis of the biblical epistle First Peter.³⁵ Also included was twenty pages of what Edgeworth called “a repertory or table, directing to many notable matters expressed in this book,” essentially a topical index.³⁶ The topics covered in the index include morality (“priests must not be proud”³⁷), Scriptural stories (“Jezebel’s shameful end and death, notwithstanding her painting and trimming”³⁸), and controversial doctrines

³²Roger Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull, Godly, and Learned* (London: Robert Caly, 1557), 4r. Edgeworth does not number his folios in the front matter, and uses Roman numerals once he reaches the main body of his text; I shall use Arabic numerals to reference the front matter and follow his practice of using Roman numerals for the body.

³³Wilson, “Edgeworth, Roger”.

³⁴Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull*, 4v.

³⁵Ibid., 5r.

³⁶Ibid., 6r-16v.

³⁷Ibid., 14v.

³⁸Ibid., 11r.

(“denial of purgatory, bringeth men to carnal liberty”³⁹). This topical index suggests that Edgeworth meant this sermon collection not only to be read as complete sermons, but also to be used as a reference by people looking for Roman Catholic material on many different oft-debated topics.

The first section of Edgeworth’s treatise is comprised of six sermons about the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. He started with a brief discussion of Catholic belief about the Holy Ghost and scriptural references to Him. Edgeworth equated the presence of the Holy Ghost with the concept of grace, attributing his presence to Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and Paul.⁴⁰ He then posited that no one could receive any of the gifts of the Holy Ghost unless he first possessed the three virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity: “Faith, Hope and Charity be presupposed to all these seven gifts, as the root in a tree . . . is presupposed if the tree shall bring forth leaves, blossoms or fruits.”⁴¹ Having established the prerequisite concepts, Edgeworth moved to a discussion of the seven gifts themselves, taking each in turn over the sermon cycle. His treatment is heavily scriptural; most of his sources are in the New Testament, although occasionally he would quote the Psalms or Isaiah. Although the bulk of his quotes are from the Gospels, Edgeworth draws many quotes out of non-Pauline epistles, turning to James often and referencing Jude as well. Paul is, of course, also present, with Hebrews and Romans being heavily relied on throughout the cycle. Edgeworth also uses the Old Testament for stories to exemplify his point, paraphrasing large sections from Genesis, the life of Moses, and the stories of David and Solomon,

³⁹Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull*, 14v.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, i.v-iv.r.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, v.v.

among others. However, he rarely directly quotes the Old Testament. He similarly avoids referring to sources that are not in Scripture. Edgeworth occasionally quotes Augustine,⁴² but other church fathers and medieval scholars are conspicuously absent. Overall, these six sermons give a highly Scriptural explanation of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, exhorting the audience to cultivate them as best they can in imitation of Christ.⁴³

Edgeworth's next sermon, entitled "An homily or sermon of the articles of our Christian faith", is a straightforward exposition of the Apostle's Creed. He went through each of the twelve articles of the Creed in turn, attributing each to one of the twelve apostles.⁴⁴ Edgeworth welcomed the necessity to defend his doctrine against the Protestants, since he believed that most men's faith had become complacent and untested without the challenge of heterodox beliefs. He quotes Ambrose as saying "the peace and rest of faith is the matter and cause of corruption of faith," arguing that since Catholic men's "wits were unexercised" by combatting heresy, it took root in their hearts quickly.⁴⁵ Edgeworth proposed to fight this corruption in the faith by looking in turn at each of its basic articles.

This sermon is less Scriptural than his cycle on the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, although references to Scripture do occur often throughout. However, Edgeworth relied much more heavily on quotations from church fathers and other extra-Scriptural sources to defend the faith. He references, among others, Ambrose, Basil, Aristotle, and

⁴²Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull*, lxvi.r for example.

⁴³Ibid., lxx.v.

⁴⁴Ibid., lxxiii.v.

⁴⁵Ibid.

especially Augustine with great familiarity, showing that his heavy Scriptural emphasis in the earlier cycle was a deliberate choice, and not one made out of lack of patristic scholarship.⁴⁶ In addition, Edgeworth's apostolic attribution of each of the twelve articles is extra-Biblical, showing that Edgeworth was comfortable using sources other than Scripture to prove his points. This is not to say that Scripture is absent in this sermon; to the contrary, Biblical references and quotations occur throughout, with Edgeworth returning often to the same books he used in his cycle on the seven gifts. Overall, Edgeworth's sources in this sermon are balanced fairly evenly between the Scriptural and the extra-Scriptural, giving this sermon a more scholarly bent than the earlier ones.

Edgeworth's next sermon, "an homily . . . treating of Ceremonies and man's laws," is a defense of the Catholic Church's ceremonies and sacraments, many of which had come under attack by Thomas Cranmer at the accession of Edward VI. In this sermon, Edgeworth returns to an almost exclusively Scriptural source base as he argued that ceremony as a concept is thoroughly Biblical, even if certain specific ceremonies of the church were not found in the Bible. He argues from the laws of the Old Testament and the ceremonies prescribed by it that ceremony and law were necessary to please God, even if Jesus left no specific instructions about how to carry these ceremonies out in the New Testament. Overall this sermon seems to be in protest against the iconoclasm of Edward VI's reign and the drastic simplification of liturgy that was overseen by Cranmer.⁴⁷

⁴⁶See for example Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull*, lxxv.v-r, in which he cites Aristotle and Basil in quick succession, along with other Scriptural sources.

⁴⁷Edgeworth, *Sermons very Fruitfull*, lxxxiii.v-lxxxxviii.r.

Finally, Edgeworth included in this volume of sermons a cycle of twenty which gave a thorough exegesis of the First Epistle of Peter. He moved verse by verse, leaving nothing without explanation; he even used the cities to which Peter addressed his epistle to give his audience a lengthy geography lesson.⁴⁸ These sermons are, once more, filled with scriptural references and occasional citations from church fathers. In certain sermons, Edgeworth inserted Catholic doctrine which would have inflamed the reigning Edwardine hierarchy, including at the end of the seventeenth sermon on First Peter this defense of the necessity of works for salvation: “S. Peter biddeth us commend ourselves to God in good deeds; then only faith is not enough, you must work charitably withal, to declare yourselves to have a lively faith . . . adorned with charity and good works, which shall be acquitted surely and faithfully with glory in heaven.”⁴⁹ Perhaps it is no coincidence that this would be his last sermon delivered under Edward VI, having been ordered to cease preaching; however, when he was permitted to return to the pulpit five or six years later under Mary, he resumed this sermon cycle as if he had never been interrupted.⁵⁰ Edgeworth was dedicated to completing these sermons on First Peter, and complete them he did; he also found them important enough to memorialize in print.

Edgeworth’s dedication to preaching began long before the reign of Queen Mary. However, in his doctrine and his liturgical practice he was much closer to the Marian church than to that of her brother Edward. All of the sermons he published in his collection of *Sermons very Fruitfull, Godly, and Learned* bear the hallmarks of Marian

⁴⁸Ibid., cvii.v-cxi.r.

⁴⁹Ibid., cclxxviii.r.

⁵⁰Ibid., cclxxix.v.

preaching: an emphasis on Catholic doctrine and a condemnation of Protestantism, frequent Scriptural citation, knowledge of church fathers, and a scholarly tone. Edgeworth's sermons show that the Marian reform was alive and well in the southwest of England.

John Feckenham

John Homan was born in c.1515 in the small village of Feckenham, Worcestershire, and would later take the name of that village as his surname. Although Feckenham accepted the hierarchical changes imposed on the English Church by Henry VIII, he was fiercely Catholic in his doctrine, as evidenced by his sermon delivered on January 16, 1547, in which he denounced Protestantism as heresy, especially those new ideas coming out of Germany. Mere days later, Henry VIII would die, and his son Edward VI ascended the throne. Edward's Protestant government sent Feckenham to the Tower of London for his vociferous opposition to Protestantism in 1549, where he would stay until he was released by Mary in 1553.⁵¹

Feckenham became a leading preacher in London, called upon for several important events. He was sent to dispute with Lady Jane Grey before her execution in 1554 in order to try to convert her to Catholicism before her execution for treason. Although he was unsuccessful, he did earn her respect for his intelligence, and when he attended her execution they had a cordial encounter.⁵² Given his prominence as a scholar and as a preacher, it is unsurprising that he was called upon to give a sermon at the

⁵¹David Knowles, *Saints and Scholars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 192-193.

⁵²Knowles, 194.

Exequies of King Phillip's grandmother Queen Joanna of Castille. He delivered this sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral in London on June 18, 1555, in the presence of members of the Queen's Privy Council. In some ways, this sermon is an exception to the other Marian sermons we have examined thus far, but in other ways it exemplifies many of the trends seen throughout Marian homiletics. This sermon had a highly formal style, exhibiting some characteristics of the largely defunct thematic sermon, especially in its organization. Although the sermon was somewhat old-fashioned, it may have been deemed appropriate for the occasion and the noble audience in attendance. It seems to have been well-received by that audience, as the title page notes that Feckenham printed it "at the request of some in authority whose request could not be denied." With many important nobles and members of Mary's Privy Council in attendance, this sermon likely pleased a high-ranking official who either convinced or ordered Feckenham to prepare a version for print, something the prolific preacher rarely allowed.⁵³ Feckenham's sermon appealed to the leadership of the Marian Church, and they made sure it became available to the wider public.

Feckenham began his sermon with a passage from Deuteronomy 22: "people void of good counsel, void of wisdom, and of all foresight of things to come . . . would God they would be wise and understand, and provide for the last things."⁵⁴ The whole sermon is a *memento mori*, reminding Feckenham's audience of their mortality and exhorting

⁵³John Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 1r. I have only been able to find two printed works by Feckenham: this sermon and a volume containing two homilies on the first three articles of the Creed. In addition, in the bibliography to *Fires of Faith* Eamon Duffy references a volume printed in Rome in the Italian language and attributed to Feckenham celebrating the return of England to the Roman Church (pg. 233). Besides these three volumes, Feckenham does not seem to have put any other works into print.

⁵⁴Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 2r. I have throughout the paper modernized the spelling used in each sermon.

them to prepare for death and their subsequent judgement by God. Feckenham divided his sermon into three parts, in each part wishing to instill a different lesson in his audience: “by the first lesson a learning of wisdom, we may have sure knowledge of things past. By our second lesson of perfect understanding, we may have the right consideration of things present: thereby the more earnestly to attend the third lesson of good provision making for the things to come.”⁵⁵ This tripartite structure encouraged the audience to repent of the misdeeds in their past, reflect on the present state of their souls, and resolve to act more virtuously in the future. Throughout the sermon, Feckenham repeated over and over again the themes of wisdom, understanding, and provision for the future, trying to ensure that his audience would leave St. Paul’s remembering these three points.

In the first section of the sermon, Feckenham discussed the cultivation of wisdom, which he links with knowledge of the certainty of death. He points to many examples from the past, and especially from Scripture, in support of his argument. He quoted Job frequently, as might be expected in a sermon dwelling on death, but he chose passages from Genesis, the Psalms, and Hebrews almost as often. He also quoted several books which are more unexpected, such as Ezekiel and Tobit. Starting with Scriptural passages which state that life is fleeting, Feckenham spent a considerable amount of time telling his audience that life is miserable and short, and so one should not become too attached to it.⁵⁶ He then describes death as an inescapable decree, one which “not Minos the law maker at Crete, nor Lycurgus at Lacedemon, nor yet the wise Solon in his laws devised at

⁵⁵Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 4v-r.

⁵⁶Ibid., 6r-9v.

Athens, could make any repeal.”⁵⁷ After this brief classical reference, Feckenham returned to scripture, listing many Old Testament figures whose virtues could not save them from death. He compared death to an archer, one who has been practicing since the beginning of the world. At first, he was not a good shot, taking 930 years to kill Adam. However, in the present day death hits its target in seventy to eighty years at most, irrespective of rank, wealth, or gender.⁵⁸ Throughout this section, Feckenham reminded his audience that the wise man knows the certainty of death and thus prepares himself for it, not becoming too attached to this world and always ready to pass into the next.

Feckenham’s second section is much different from the first and third sections. In this part of the sermon, he turned to the virtue of understanding, linking it with knowledge of the present state of one’s soul. To expound upon this theme, he used the analogy of “the mirror and glass of our own corruption”, encouraging each group in his audience to examine themselves in it. He held up the mirror to old men, young men, gentlemen and women, rich men, kings and princes, and finally bishops, priests, and anyone else who might be present.⁵⁹ Throughout this extended discussion of what each state in life will see in the “mirror of corruption”, Feckenham avoided outside references, only citing Job once. When he finished his examination of the mirror, he returned to his usual habit of citation, using Bernard of Clairvaux and Genesis to complete his point: understanding of the fleetingness of one’s state in life and the corruption that comes with it is crucial for preparing one’s soul for death and the afterlife.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 9r.

⁵⁸Ibid., 10r-12r.

⁵⁹Ibid., 15v-19r.

⁶⁰Ibid., 20v.

In the final section, Feckenham discussed how to provide for death and what comes after. By this point in the sermon, Feckenham has turned to the New Testament for most of his scriptural texts, citing especially Ephesians, Romans, and the Gospels. He exhorted his flock not to follow false shepherds, touching briefly upon heresiarchs who arose throughout the history of the Church from Arius and Pelagius to the modern-day reformers Luther, Bucer, and Zwingli.⁶¹ Speaking directly to the citizens of London, Feckenham encouraged them to set aside Protestantism and stop listening to the “strange voices of these deceitful Mermaids” pulling them away from the faith of their fathers.⁶² Heresy would not get one to life everlasting. Nor would the despoiling of monasteries and churches, which Feckenham bemoaned at length.⁶³ By leaving the Catholic faith or being complicit in the theft of Church property, Feckenham warned his audience that they were not making provision for the things to come.

After telling his audience what to avoid if they wanted to be prepared for death, Feckenham advised them how they should be acting in this life. Similar to how he structured the section about the “mirror of corruption”, Feckenham divided his audience again by their station in life, speaking to each in turn. This time, however, he included a Scripture verse for each group, mostly taken from Ephesians 5 and 6.⁶⁴ He used these verses to tell each group how to live their life in accordance with the Scripture, thus growing closer to God and becoming ready for death when it inevitably arrives. The

⁶¹Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 23v-24v.

⁶²Ibid., 25v.

⁶³Ibid., 26r-28v.

⁶⁴Ibid., 28v-30v.

sermon concluded with encouragement for all those who followed Feckenham's advice, quoting Romans 8: "and if God be on our side, who can be against us? And then we shall be sure to have at the finishing and knitting up of this life a very quiet and a joyful death: to receive at the hands of God a very merciful and most comfortable judgement."⁶⁵ After his vigorous denunciation of heresy and his reminder to his audience that they were all sinners through the "mirror of corruption", Feckenham ended his sermon on a note of hope and encouragement, reminding his audience that God rewards those who walk in his ways.

Feckenham's sermon is an eloquent *memento mori*, an exequies sermon which uses the occasion of Queen Joanna's death to remind those in attendance of their own mortality. Feckenham exhorted his readers to develop three virtues: wisdom, understanding, and provision for things to come. In order to ensure that his audience remembered these three points, he repeated them again and again, rarely going two folios without referring back to them. In this he displays some similarities to the thematic style, which returned again and again to the *thema* of the sermon in order to ensure memorization. In this stylistic choice, Feckenham is unusual among other printed Marian preachers, although this could be attributed to the solemnity of the occasion and the nobility and education of his audience. Feckenham's moral focus is also unusual for a printed Marian sermon. Although he briefly denounced Protestantism, Feckenham did not spend much time on questions of doctrine, preferring to use his words to inspire more virtuous living rather than orthodox belief in his audience. Although his structure and focus were outliers among Marian preachers, his sources and rhetoric were not. Through

⁶⁵Feckenham, *A Notable Sermon*, 31v.

most of the sermon, he uses frequent scriptural quotations and less-frequent references to classical figures and noted church fathers to bolster his argument. Perhaps the unique style of this sermon can be attributed to the fact that Feckenham likely did not intend for this sermon to be printed. As noted before, Feckenham rarely allowed his works to reach print, and this one only did so because some powerful member of Queen Mary's government insisted that Feckenham put the work into print. This official may have been a secular official instead of an ecclesiastical one, perhaps even King Phillip himself, whose continental sensibilities may have been more accustomed to the thematic style than England, which had been shifting away from it. This could account for the fact that it is ill-fitting among the rest of the printed Marian sermons. Even so, Feckenham's sermon is an interesting and unique example of Marian preaching.

These four sermon collections all exhibit similar patterns in structure, theming, and citation of authority which were at the time exceptionally modern. They do not follow a medieval or scholastic sermon model, with a theme, protheme, development, and proliferation of anecdotal *exempla*.⁶⁶ The only one of these sermons which resembles a scholastic style is Feckenham's formal and highly-stylized exequies sermon, which certainly takes a scriptural theme and develops it throughout, but does not use the *exempla* common in medieval sermons. These Marian sermons rather resemble more modern trends in preaching. In fact, they have more in common with the humanist and even the Protestant sermons of the past fifty years in England than they do with traditional medieval sermons. Humanism brought with it an increased attention to biblicism and patristics which would slowly begin edging out medieval *exempla* as the

⁶⁶Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi'*, 47-86.

most popular way to bolster a point; Protestantism would accelerate this trend, and its focus on controversial doctrinal arguments would shatter the traditional structure of the scholastic sermon, preferring a more direct presentation of their themes to couching them within a formal thematic sermon.⁶⁷ These same trends can be seen in these four Marian sermon collections, with their straightforward expositions of doctrine and use of biblical and patristic sources to shore up their points rather than anecdotal *exempla*. This surprising similarity to current Protestant sermons trends shows that Marian preaching was innovative and forward-looking, not unimaginative or reactionary.

The Marian church was highly attuned to the importance of sermons in returning England to Catholicism. These four sermon collections suggest a high level of sophistication in the crafting of sermons by Marian clerics and they all display modern preaching trends which were characteristic of Protestant sermons. They are all highly Scriptural, showing not only that these four preachers were intimately familiar with the Bible but that they considered it important that their audience understand the Scriptural underpinnings of their teachings. The preachers show their high level of education by using patristic sources liberally throughout, adding the voices of centuries of Christian theologians to their own in their push for doctrine. They take an educated tone with their audience, suggesting that there was a demand in England at this time for more learned sermons backed by frequent citation of authority, rather than for striking stories to ensure that the audience would remember what had been said. All of these traits are shared with the Protestant preachers who worked under Henry, Edward, or Elizabeth. What sets the Marian sermons apart is their fierce adherence to Catholic doctrinal orthodoxy. Many of

⁶⁷Lucy Wooding, "From Tudor Humanism to Reformation Preaching", in Peter McCullough et al., ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 329-345.

them directly engage with the most controversial theological subjects of the time, such as Eucharist, Penance, Grace, and Purgatory. Even those that do not are steeped in a Catholic way of thinking. Each of these preachers directly attacks Protestant thought, fighting back against the heterodox doctrines and practices which had until recently held sway in England. All of these traits show a commitment to Catholic doctrine and a dedication to the craft of preaching which belies the traditional narrative about the Marian church. The Marian Church did not look backwards to medieval thought and preaching practices in their attempt at a restoration of Catholicism. Rather, Marian preachers were attuned to modern sermon trends and used them as tools to reach an audience familiar with this style from hearing Protestant preachers for the past twenty years. These preachers tried to end the confusion and bring England back into the Roman Catholic fold. Mary's death in 1558 ended this attempt early, and the long reign of Elizabeth ensured that England would remain a Protestant nation. However, the failure of the Marian restoration was not the fault of Marian preachers like John Feckenham, Leonard Pollard, Roger Edgeworth, and Thomas Watson. They poured much eloquence and zeal into their attempts to restore the Catholic religion in the hearts and minds of their audiences through their preaching.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Queen Mary I and Reginald Cardinal Pole both died on the same day, November 17, 1558. With them died the attempted Catholic Restoration. Under Elizabeth I, England would take a distinctly Protestant path, either driving Marian clerics into exile or imprisoning them. Ultimately, the Marian restoration failed.

However, it did not fail because of poor evangelization efforts, and especially not because of poor or outdated preaching. Marian preaching was on the cutting edge of sermon trends in the mid-sixteenth century, neither stale nor reactionary but rather forward looking and tailored to England's unique situation. These sermons do not look back to the medieval era, constricted by the formalism of the thematic sermons or full of the colloquialisms and legends which make up Mirk's corpus. Nor are they a callback to John Fisher's style, although his influence can be seen in some of their and use of patristic sources. Finally, they are not the thoroughly Biblicist sermons of Cranmer and the Edwardian Reformation, eschewing patristic sources and relying solely on scripture. Marian sermons have their own distinct style, characterized by frequent and wide-ranging scriptural and patristic citation, a learned but approachable rhetorical tone, a loose method of organization, and a heavily doctrinal focus. Marian sermons are unlike any preached in England before them, combining trends seen in Renaissance preaching and Protestant sermons and producing a fusion which was tailored to the unique situation of Marian England.

Far from being reactionary, these traits of Marian sermons correspond exactly to the trends of Catholic preaching starting to take shape on the continent. In particular, Marian sermons have many traits in common with the suggestions made by Erasmus in his *Ecclesiastes*. They have a focus on persuasion and rhetoric, something that Erasmus was passionate about. They are highly scriptural and patristic, pursuing an *ad fontes* approach to authorities that would have appealed to the prominent humanist. They were all carefully crafted to be accessible to their intended audience, the dubiously orthodox English laity, which was an oft-repeated proscription of Erasmus'. The Marian church also took the education of priests seriously, with the 1555 Legatine Synod calling for the establishment of seminaries to properly train priests in their duties, especially preaching.¹ The one point where Erasmus and the Marian church deviated in their approach to preaching was in the subjects of their sermons. Erasmus called for more morally focused sermons, with the doctrinal subjects he suggests being fairly broad, such as the nature of God. Erasmus advocated preaching on virtues and vices, teaching the common man a good way to live rather than burdening him with complex doctrines. The Marian church took a much more doctrinally focused approach, attacking Protestant doctrine on specific subjects such as the Eucharist, supremacy, and justification. They realized that in their specific situation in England, it was more important to clarify what the church now taught and what it did not, and persuade people that the dogmas now being advanced under Mary were superior to those recently imposed by Edward. Morals could come later; for now, orthodox belief was most important to instill in their flock. Regardless of this difference in subject matter, Marian sermons do resemble the approach to preaching

¹Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 25; 196-197.

advocated by Erasmus. Whether or not the Marian church was influenced by Erasmus specifically, they saw a need for the same sort of preaching reforms that he did.

The Marian church was not alone in this agreement with Erasmus. The Council of Trent also advocated similar preaching reforms. Frederick McGinness points out in his essay “An Erasmian Legacy: *Ecclesiastes* and the Reform of Preaching at Trent” that the measures proposed by the Council of Trent in regards to preaching look remarkably like the measures proposed by Erasmus in *Ecclesiastes*. McGinness argues for direct inspiration; whether or not he is correct is difficult to say for certain, given the widespread suppression of Erasmus’ work following his death and the reluctance of prominent Catholics to publicly acknowledge Erasmus’ influence.² However, Trent, Erasmus, and the Marian sermons all share similar approaches to preaching and advocate similar reforms to the existing system. This places the Marian church right on the cutting edge of Catholic Reformation thought and practice when it came to preaching.

It comes as no surprise that Marian sermons closely follow the guidelines set down by Trent. Trent’s decree on preaching was part of the council’s first session, and it was promulgated on June 17, 1546. One of the presiding clerics at this session was none other than Reginald Cardinal Pole, future papal legate to Mary’s England and leader of the Marian church throughout her reign. Pole gave the opening address to the council earlier that year and would be a powerful influence at the first session of the council.³ He likely would have had some influence over the final decree on preaching, and it is unsurprising that he would use his time in England to put into practice many of the ideals

²McGinness, 93-109.

³Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 22-23.

promulgated by himself and the other council fathers at Trent. He used England as a testing ground for the ideas proposed at Trent, attempting to show the church that these ideas could work when put into practice, even in a nation which had previously been subjected to a Protestant king and clergy. Although the restoration failed, interest in the project was still present among the Catholic clergy, and a collection of Pole's works and the documents of the Legatine Synod were published and passed around at Trent.⁴ The Marian Restoration was very much a part of the greater Catholic Reformation, and was neither reactionary nor backwards looking in its approach to reform. Rather, it espoused the most avant-garde Catholic thinking, and its leaders saw themselves as a proving ground for Trent's reforms. This is especially true in terms of preaching. Although the Marian reform failed, it left behind a legacy of preaching which was innovative and effective.

⁴Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 205-206.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Table of Contents of Edmund Bonner's 1555 *Homilies*

- i. Of the creation and fall of Man (Harpsfield)
- ii. Of the miserye of al mankind and of hys condempnation to death (Harpsfield)
- iii. Of the redemption of Man (Harpsfield)
- iv. How the redemption in Christ is apliable to man (Harpsfield)
- v. Of Chrysten Loue and Charitie (Bonner)
- vi. Howe daungerous a thing the breake of Charitie is (Harpsfield)
- vii. Of the Church What it is, and of the commoditie thereof (Pendleton)
- viii. Of the auctoritie of the Church (Pendleton)
- ix. Of the Supremacy (Harpsfield)
- x. Of the Supremacye (sic) (Harpsfield)
- xi. Of the true presence of Chrystes bodye & bloud in the sacrament of the Aultar (Harpsfield)
- xii. Of transubstantiation (Harpsfield)
- xiii. Of certen Aunsweres against som common obiections made agaynst the sacrament of the Aultare (Unsigned, but likely Harpsfield)

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