Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War

Julie Spraggon

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This work offers a detailed analysis of Puritan iconoclasm in England during the 1640s, looking at the reasons for the resurgence of image-breaking a hundred years after the break with Rome, and the extent of the phenomenon. Initially a reaction to the emphasis on ceremony and the 'beauty of holiness' under Archbishop Laud, the attack on 'innovations', such as communion rails, images and stained glass windows, developed into a major campaign driven forward by the Long Parliament as part of its religious reformation. Increasingly radical legislation targeted not just 'new popery', but pre-Reformation survivals and a wide range of objects (including some which had been acceptable to the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church). The book makes a detailed survey of parliament's legislation against images, considering the question of how and how far this legislation was enforced generally, with specific case studies looking at the impact of the iconoclastic reformation in London, in the cathedrals and at the universities. Parallel to this official movement was an unofficial one undertaken by Parliamentary soldiers, whose violent destructiveness became notorious. The significance of this spontaneous action and the importance of the anti-Catholic and anti-episcopal feelings that it represented are also examined.

Dr JULIE SPRAGGON works at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London.

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For Paul and Lily

Abbreviations

Acts and Ordinances	*Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–60*, ed. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (3 vols, 1911)
BL	British Library
BRO	Berkshire Record Office, Reading
CCA	Canterbury Cathedral Archives
CCL	Canterbury Cathedral Library
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone
CJ	House of Commons Journals
CLRO	Corporation of London Records Office
CLSC	Camden Local Studies Centre
Coates	*The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes from the First Recess of the Long Parliament to the Withdrawal of King Charles from London*, ed. W. H. Coates (Yale, 1942)
CSPD	Calendar of State Papers Domestic
CSPV	Calendar of State Papers Venetian
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
DRO	Devonshire Record Office
GL	Guildhall Library
GRO	Gloucestershire Record Office
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HRO	Hampshire Record Office, Winchester
LJ	House of Lords Journals
Notestein	*The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes from the Beginning of the Long Parliament to the Opening of the Trial of the Earl of Strafford*, ed. W. Notestein (Yale, 1923)
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
ORO	Oxfordshire Record Office
Private Journals	*The Private Journals of the Long Parliament*, ed. W. H. Coates, V. F. Snow and A. Steele Young (3 vols, Yale 1982–90)
PRO	Public Record Office
VCH	Victoria County History
WCA	Westminster City Archives
YCA	York City Archives

A Note on Conventions

Dates are given according to the old style calendar except that the year has been taken to begin on 1 January. In quotations, the original spelling and punctuation have been kept but contractions have been expanded. Place of publication for works cited is London unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

The Puritan iconoclasm of the 1640s was as notorious in its own time as it remains today. The destruction of church ornaments and fabric by the parliamentarian army (both spontaneous and directed from above) has been the subject of myth and exaggeration, but it was also a real and meaningful phenomenon, part of a wider official drive against images. The peculiar circumstances of the time – the collapse of Charles's personal rule following defeat in the unpopular Bishops' Wars with Scotland, and the outbreak of civil war between the king and his parliament – meant that a minority of godly parliamentarians were in a position to effect political and religious change. This included a major campaign against idolatry in the form of church images and other objects associated with religious worship. It is the nature, extent and impact of this campaign that is explored here.

Iconoclasm was not, of course, an invention of the hotter sort of Protestants, nor of the 1640s. It had been an important feature of both the Continental and the English Reformations, with its roots in 'heretical' or reforming ideas of earlier periods. Arguments against images were based on the biblical injunctions against idols and graven images in the decalogue and on various other pronouncements against idolaters and stories of godly iconoclasts throughout the Old Testament. The theological case against images was a crucial part of Reformation ideology, if a controversial one (Luther, for instance, remained ambiguous on the subject of their removal). The resulting iconoclasm would prove a major instrument for effecting physical change in the setting and form of worship. This was especially true in England, where the Reformation was imposed from above, with official image-breaking used to establish religious change under Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth. The broad and dramatic iconoclasm of the mid seventeenth century was to be the final major resurgence of the phenomenon in this country.

Whilst historians have acknowledged the importance of Reformation iconoclasm, no systematic detailed analysis of iconoclasm in England during the 1640s has previously been undertaken. Indeed there has sometimes been a tendancy to underplay the attack on images that occurred in this period – perhaps an understandable backlash against the numerous unsubstantiated claims of destruction by civil war iconoclasts.[1] John Phillips,

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[1] It is often Cromwell who is to blame in these local legends. See Margaret Aston's comments on this in M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, i: *Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988), 62–3ff. On Cromwell's attitude see G. Nuttall, 'Was Cromwell an Iconoclast?', *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 12 (1933–6).

in his overview of English iconoclasm, has dismissed army iconoclasm as little more than the general destructiveness of war. Parliament's official attack on images has been used by John Morrill to illustrate the 'miserable failure' of their more general attempt to eradicate 'Anglican' worship. He argues that specific religious orders, including iconoclastic ones, were often ignored, even actively resisted.[2] This present study aims to show that the 1640s saw a good deal of official as well as unofficial iconoclasm, even though this may sometimes have fallen short of the radical and broad agenda that parliament intended and for which it legislated. It also seeks to highlight the link between official iconoclasm and the unofficial iconoclasm of soldiers, and to emphasize the significance of the latter.

Other recent works have begun to draw attention to the importance of the subject. The publication of Trevor Cooper's new edition of the journal of iconoclast William Dowsing achieves for the area covered by Dowsing (the seven counties of the Eastern Association) what this book is attempting on a more general basis: it carefully unpeels the layers of myth and hearsay to assess the actual extent of iconoclasm that took place. It not only provides the definitive version of a unique printed source, but contains a number of valuable essays which explore this most notorious instance of organized army iconoclasm, and the man who was the driving force behind it. The case of Dowsing is unique in that a detailed account of his endeavours has survived, and probably also in the scope of the reformation he carried out.[3] Dowsing the iconoclast, however, was not unique. He was one of a substantial minority of godly men (and in terms of action, at least, it appears to have been a largely male activity) who took the battle against idolatry into their own hands and drove on the iconoclastic campaign.[4]

Margaret Aston, who has written extensively on attitudes towards images in England, sees post-Reformation iconoclasm as a phenomenon which helped to define the nature of Puritanism, expressing the individual's spiritual zeal and a sense of responsibility to act where authorities had been neglectful. The Puritan preoccupation with idolatry gave rise to contemporary caricatures such as that of Ben Jonson's Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, the very stereotype of the fanatically precise, killjoy Puritan, who sees idols in the

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[2] Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* (Berkeley, Calif., 1973), 191; J. Morrill, 'The Church in England', in *Reactions to the English Civil War*, ed. *idem* (1982), 90.

[3] *The Journal of William Dowsing*, ed. T. Cooper (Woodbridge, 2001). Dowsing is discussed in chs 4 and 7 below.

[4] However, women no doubt took part in popular iconoclasm. At Halstead, Essex, in October 1640, three women were among those who attacked the clerk stripping him of his surplice and denouncing the prayer book as idolatrous. Sir Humphrey Mildmay recorded how, in 1641, the women of Sandon, Essex, took the communion rails from the church and burnt them on the village green, 'bravely like devils' (W. Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: the Coming of Revolution in an English County* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 287–9). There were also women who supported iconoclasm, such as Lucy Hutchinson and Mary Pennington (Springett).

hobby-horses and gingerbread men of Bartholomew Fair and takes it upon himself to destroy them. The commitment of the godly to the eradication of idolatry had its roots in a dissatisfaction with the state of Elizabethan churches. Yet, as Aston points out, the efforts of the Protestant church to remove images had been considerable. The Edwardine and Elizabethan onslaughts against images had achieved a great deal: by the end of the sixteenth century shrines, reredoses, statues of saints and carved rood figures had all been removed and destroyed, wall paintings were white-washed over and their place taken by scriptural texts, whilst imagery in windows was targeted in the 1559 royal injunctions.[5]

Nonetheless there were survivals and a certain toleration for objects which were unacceptable by Puritan standards – market crosses, for instance, were not outlawed by religious injunctions but came under constant attack from the godly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Spontaneous iconoclastic acts continued, representing the protests of those who could not rest easy with a prevailing pragmatism which Aston has defined as an 'uneasy balance between toleration and proscription of religious imagery'. When this balance began to tip, in the 1620s and 1630s, towards a greater acceptance of images an even more violent reaction was provoked. This climaxed in the 1640s, when the fight against Laudian innovations 'in the shape of fresh images and fresh defenders of church pictures' led to a widening of oppos-ition and 'both broadened and altered the iconoclastic agenda'. Parliament would see to it that 'legislation caught up with wider Puritan objectives'. The violent and radical iconoclasm of the 1640s was, as Aston puts it, the 'culmin-ation of a long ongoing puritan programme'.[6] It was, it will be argued here, the unique circumstances of this decade – the political split between king and parliament and the outbreak of war – which allowed this minority agenda to come to fruition (at least in legislative terms).

What differentiated this bout of officially sponsored iconoclasm from those which had gone before was that it was played out within the Protestant church itself, rather than as part of the struggle between the old Catholic faith and the new reformed one. The reformed English church had, since the Elizabethan settlement, been broadly hostile towards imagery. Indeed it has been argued by Patrick Collinson that from the 1580s hostility towards 'false' (that is idolatrous) art deepened into an iconophobic hatred of all art-forms which appealed to the senses. Collinson's concern is not specific-ally the issue of church images, but rather a wider cultural phenomenon, and his definitions of 'iconoclasm' and 'iconophobia' are too broad to apply to

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[5] Aston, 'Puritans and iconoclasm, 1560–1660', in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, ed. C. Durston and J. Eales (Basingstoke, 1996), 92–3, 121, 93–4. See also Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).

[6] Aston, 'Puritans and iconoclasm', 103–4, 109, 121, 117–18. For other works by Aston on related themes see bibliography.

a study of religious iconoclasm in its strictest sense. Yet, if he is right in identifying a widespread antipathy towards visual art in all walks of life then this would have considerable implications for the motivation and psychology of religious iconoclasts, and should be considered here.

Collinson proposes that between the mid sixteenth and the mid seventeenth century there was a shift within the English Protestant movement from iconoclasm (which he defines as 'a spirited attack' on unacceptable images) to 'iconophobia' (the total repudiation of all images). This was part of a withdrawal from popular culture by religious reformers as seen in three principal areas: printed ballads, stage plays and pictorial art. Collinson contrasts the early use of such forms in the promotion of reforming ideas to the 'refusal of . . . many late Elizabethan and Jacobean religious communicators to appeal to the senses and to popular taste'. This phenomenon was linked to other changes in attitudes, such as a growing distaste for inns and alehouses, and a general emphasis on moral purity, and is attributed by Collinson to 'the reception of Calvinism', with its inherent anti-sensualism.[7]

Collinson's thesis has been contested. Both Tessa Watt and Peter Lake have argued that Collinson has over-stated his case for a 'visual anorexia' in English culture, and exaggerated the extent to which people were cut off from traditional Christian imagery. In fact there continued to be a proliferation of popular art forms in cheap prints and emblem books, whilst the ruling classes commissioned portraits and funeral monuments – the latter often highly coloured and conspicuously erected in the middle of churches. Watt points out the danger of 'blurring the distinction between the rejection of religious pictures, and hostility to art in general', and is right to do so. The objection to religious images was backed by biblical injunction, and as such was an accepted part of the Protestant church. Not all Protestants, nor even all Puritans, were iconoclasts, and it was the minority who held extreme views on the subject, such as the objection to religious images outside churches. It is hard to find evidence to support the claim that many objected to art altogether. Even the godly parliamentarians of the 1640s were careful to protect secular monuments in their iconoclastic legislation, and many kept works of art in their own homes.[8]

Nevertheless the godly suspicion of sensuality is well known. The Puritan aesthetic valued plainness and simplicity over ornament and luxuriousness, the aural over the visual, and discipline and a literal adherence to biblical

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[7] P. Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* (Reading, 1988), 8, 22, 27. See also Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke, 1988), ch. 4.

[8] T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1991), 136, 138; and see P. Lake's review of *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 (1990), 688–90, esp. 689. There were, however, zealous Puritans who objected to religious art in secular settings (see the discussions of Robert Harley and William Springett in chs 3 and 4 below). Edmund Gurnay's view that funeral monuments should be prohibited was certainly exceptional (see ch. 2 below).

injunctions over the wanderings of the human imagination. Iconoclasm was a physical (as well as a symbolic) manifestation of these values. It also expressed other important aspects of the Puritan temperament: the importance of zeal and of the willingness to act upon one's godly duty, and the desire to cleanse and purge all that was ungodly from both the church and society at large. The reform of church buildings and church governance in the 1640s was part of a wider campaign for reform on a moral and social level. This would include the prohibition of stage plays and of traditional celebrations such as Christmas and May Day and, at the end of the decade, the introduction of the notorious Blasphemy and Adultery acts.

There was also a political aspect to the attack on images. Jacqueline Eales has argued that in England opposition to the Laudian altar policy, which triggered off the spontaneous iconoclasm of 1639–41, was linked to a wide spectrum of secular as well as religious tensions which had intensified under Charles I. The controversy was about not only the correct forms of liturgy, ritual and church decoration, but also about obedience to the crown, which for supporters of the king was equated with religious conformity. For the opposition, the fear of Catholicism was tied in with fear of political tyranny and absolute rule. As Carlos Eire has pointed out, 'in an age when the "religious" and the "secular" were not as easily divorced as in our own, it is misleading to speak of any motives as strictly "religious"'. Eire argues that the notion of idolatry had, by the second half of the sixteenth century, evolved into a 'dramatic political issue', giving rise to resistance theories such as those postulated by John Knox against the Catholic queens of Scotland and England.[9] In a similar way the dangers of idolatry were utilized to mobilise parliamentary support against Charles, and to justify the taking up of arms against the monarch.

A study of the iconoclasm of the 1640s not only demonstrates the importance of the religious aspects of the civil war, but helps to illustrate the background of ideas against which the political and military struggles were being played out. The aim of this work is to fill a gap in current research by taking a detailed look at several aspects of this iconoclasm, concentrating as far as possible on primary sources, such as parish records and cathedral archives, in order to get a picture of its real extent and significance. A thorough analysis has been made of the agenda of official iconoclasts – how this changed and developed over time – and of the means through which the enforcement of that agenda was attempted. Parallel to this, the unofficial or

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[9] J. Eales, 'Iconoclasm, iconography and the altar in the English Civil War', in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. D. Wood (Studies in Church History, 28, Oxford, 1992), 158; C. Eire, *War Against the Idols: the Reformation of Worship From Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), 158, 310 and ch. 8 *passim*. David Freedberg also argues that iconoclasm, despite its primarily religious meaning, 'almost always has a significant political dimension' (D. Freedberg, 'The Structure of Byzantine and European Iconoclasm', in *Iconoclasm. Papers given at the 9th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. A. Byer and J. Herrin (Birmingham, 1977), 167).

semi-official iconoclasm of the parliamentary soldiers has been explored and its meaning assessed, and it is argued here that such iconoclasm was an important part of the wider movement. Whilst iconoclasm was a predominantly religious phenomenon, it cannot, of course, be divorced from its historical context – the peculiar political situation and the violent upheaval of civil war. This context, it is argued, helped to define the final form and character of this last major occurrence of image-breaking in England.

Before setting Puritan iconoclasm in its context, with a more detailed look at attitudes towards images in the hundred or so years between the Reformation and the meeting of the Long Parliament, it would be sensible to give a definition of what exactly is meant by 'iconoclasm' and the way in which the term is used throughout this work. Strictly speaking the word refers to the breaking of images, usually those of a religious nature. However, it is used here in a far broader sense, reflecting the way in which the issue of images was compounded with that of other 'offensive' objects at the time. Thus iconoclasm is taken as the destruction or removal of not only statues or representational images in paintings, stained glass or on canvas, but of a far wider range of items including liturgical equipment and other utensils associated with worship, as well as church ornamentation generally.

This extended usage is justified by the fact that all of these objects were coming under attack in the 1640s. They were the targets of iconoclasts not only in deed but in the relevant official legislation. Parliamentary ordinances were aimed at images or 'superstitious pictures' but were also concerned with the repositioning of the communion table, the removal of rails, the levelling of chancel steps, and the removal of altar furnishings such as candlesticks, richly covered books and basins. Superstitious inscriptions on tombstones and crosses were major targets along with vestments, fonts and organs. All of these things were seen by contemporaries as part of the same problem – they were all material manifestations of an erroneous and idolatrous form of worship. The catch-all terms used to describe such objects at the time were 'innovations' – applied to objects recently installed under the religious regime of Archbishop Laud – or 'monuments of superstition and idolatry' – which in practice could be interpreted with a degree of looseness which enabled it to encompass just about anything objectionable to the Puritan eye. Given this diversity of objects under attack, the phenomenon of Puritan 'iconoclasm' could not be fully explored except through such an inclusive approach.[10]

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[10] Such a usage is common to historians of the subject. Lee Palmer Wandel writing on Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel, comments that all objectionable items were viewed as 'idols' by the iconoclasts, whilst both Freedberg and Sergiusz Michalski note the inclusion of liturgical equipment amongst the iconoclasts' targets (L. P. Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel* (Cambridge, 1995), 190; Freedberg, 'The Structure of Byzantine and European Iconoclasm', 165–177, 171–2; S. Michalski, *The Reformation and The Visual Arts* (1993), 83).

Sergiusz Michalski has commented that iconoclasm is an 'ambiguous expression' which if used in its strictest sense only would mean that 'a large number of the events in Protestant lands cannot be regarded as iconoclasm'. He makes the point that some moves against images such as those effected in Zurich did not take the form of a violent tumult or involve the kind of physical destruction which is traditionally associated with the concept of iconoclasm, but were supervised, often gradual, removals of offensive items.[11] The official reformation of churches examined here is similarly classified as iconoclasm. It is contended that in aim, spirit and religious significance all of the acts of reformation discussed here can be so labelled without too far distorting the original meaning of the term.

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[11] *Ibid.*, 75–6.

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Attitudes to Images from the Reformation to the Meeting of the Long Parliament *c*.1536–1640

From the beginning of the Reformation hostility towards religious imagery and an emphasis on the sin of idolatry were important features of Protestant thought. These issues remained a constant topic of discussion throughout the period considered here – from the first official critique of images in the royal injunctions of August 1536 to the meeting of the Long Parliament in November 1640. The iconoclasm of the sixteenth century, which played such a central part in the English Reformation, has been thoroughly analysed, and it is not the aim here to provide a detailed account of early iconoclasm, but rather to look at the development of arguments against images in broad terms as a background to the resurgence of iconoclastic zeal in the mid seventeenth century.[1]

Eamon Duffy has called iconoclasm 'the central sacrament of reform', an almost ritualistic act concerned with the obliteration of past beliefs and practices, a 'sacrament of forgetfulness'. Similarly, Pieter Geyl, describing the activities of iconoclasts in the Netherlands, saw them as attempting 'to pull down at one blow a past of a thousand years'. The destruction of the external symbolism of a defeated ideology or regime is a common phenomenon. While this was certainly part of the equation, there was a deeper meaning to the Reformation hostility towards images. Reformist objections to the Roman Church centred on its materialism, its mix of the sacred and the profane, its emphasis on ritual (smacking of magic) and its claim to be endowed with the authority to continue Christ's work on earth (*opus operatum*). Luther set against this the simpler and more direct concepts of *sola fides* and *sola scriptura*, while later reformers, notably

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[1] Principally by Margaret Aston, Eamon Duffy and John Phillips. See M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, i: *Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988), *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion, 1350–1600* (1993), *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge, 1993), and 'Puritans and iconoclasm, 1560–1660', in *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560–1700*, ed. C. Durston and J. Eales (1996); E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–1580* (Yale, 1992); J. Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* (Berkeley, Calif., 1973).

Calvin, were concerned with spiritual worship and emphasized the transcendence of God. Images were inexorably bound up with the material and ritual features of the old religion whilst on a practical level they often depicted objectionable 'superstitions' such as purgatory or were tied in with the cult of saints.[2]

A suspicion of the use of religious images pre-dates Christianity, as well as being found in other religions such as Islam. Plato had argued that representing the divine was both futile (because it was inconceivable) and sacrilegious. Idolatry was an important and recurrent theme in the bible, particularly in the Old Testament: God's covenant with the Israelites demanded the end of idolatrous worship, whilst the altars and images associated with such worship were overturned time and again, and the wicked countenancers of images defeated. Yet there was an inherent contradiction in the bible which also contained examples of images being sanctioned (some of the most commonly cited being the decorations of Solomon's temple, the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant and the brazen serpent made by Moses at God's command). The seed of conflict between opponents and supporters of images was, therefore, always present.[3]

Controversy over the use of images in Christian churches first flared up in Byzantium during the eighth and ninth centuries. In 726 and again in 730 Emperor Leo III had promulgated a decree forbidding the veneration of images, and both he and his son Constantine pursued a vigorous policy of iconoclasm, actions which in part may have reflected the influence of anti-materialist eastern 'heresies'. The iconoclasts were condemned at the second ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 787 which established the lawfulness of paying honour to images, but further imperial iconoclasm took place in the first half of the ninth century until its final condemnation at the Council of Orthodoxy in 843.[4]

The medieval church's defence of images tended to concern itself with clarifying their legitimate uses, focussing particularly on their educational potential (as a means of instructing the illiterate masses). However, criticism of images did not go away. The actual destruction of images was associated with heresies such as the Cathar movement, and the Lollards. Within the

[2] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 480; Geyl quoted in D. Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History* (Cambridge, 1990), 54. See also Eire, *War Against the Idols*, introduction; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (1971), 59.

[3] A. Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: an Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. J. M. Todd (Chicago and London, 2000), 1; C. Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993), 255–7. See also J. Gutmann, 'Deuteronomy: religious reformation or iconoclastic revolution' in *The Image and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. *idem* (Missoula, Mont., 1977). On Solomon's temple, the Ark and the brazen serpent, see 1 Kings 6, Exodus 25, Numbers 21:8–9 and 2 Kings 18:4.

[4] Phillips, *The Reformation of Images*, 13–16; D. Freedberg, 'The Structure of Byzantine and European Iconoclasm', 165–77.

medieval church concern was expressed at the danger of the abuse of images with many treatises and sermons on the subject, although this was rarely expanded into an argument against images themselves. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries humanists, such as Colet and Erasmus, were critical of image veneration which they saw as superstitious. Whilst Erasmus was not an iconoclast he seriously questioned the use of images, particularly as part of his critique of traditions such as pilgrimage and the veneration of saints. Moreover, he felt such externals to be a distraction from inner spirituality.[5]

Iconoclasm was to play an important role in the Reformation: although Luther himself was wary of condoning image-breaking, which became associated with social anarchy particularly after the Peasants' War, other reformers, such as the notoriously iconoclastic Zwingli in Zurich, were more willing to take direct action against images. By the end of the 1530s action against images had been taken in numerous places including Wittenberg, Zurich, Berne, Basel and Strasbourg, whilst outbreaks of iconoclastic destruction had occurred in Paris, Geneva, Hamburg and elsewhere.[6] In England the Lollards had based their opposition to images (particularly those representing God, the Trinity, crucifixes and the Virgin Mary) on the decalogue, and Wycliffe was concerned that such 'externals' would hinder rather than help inner prayer. Imagery was a tool of the devil who seduced men through appeals to the senses. Lollard 'heretics' not only preached against images but occasionally engaged in acts of iconoclasm, and sporadic incidents occurred throughout the fifteenth century. By the early sixteenth century it seemed as if 'old iconomachy was getting a new lift from abroad', with image-breaking spurred on by events on the Continent. During the 1520s there had been a number of iconoclastic incidents, and these increased during the 1530s, mainly concentrated on eastern England. It was reported in October 1533, for instance, that images were being cast out of churches in London. Such cases were dealt with harshly as were the heresies with which they were connected.[7]

The break from Rome was far from being an endorsement of iconoclasm, or the ideas behind it. However, as defenders of traditional church doctrines tended to be less enthusiastic in supporting the royal supremacy, official policy found itself allied to those of more radical inclinations. This alliance, of the anti-papal cause with that of the iconoclasts, was seen in the carefully stage-managed exposures of various famous images, as well as in the dissolution of the monasteries. The Ten Articles of July 1536 had contained

[5] Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 16, 21, 31, 33–9. Phillips has argued that although the views of English humanists on images are too fragmentary to make any generalizations, their ideas were not radically different from those of Erasmus (*ibid.*, 35 and n. 20).

[6] On Zwingli, see C. Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts* (New Haven, Conn., 1966) and Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands*; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 20, 34–46, 205.

[7] *Ibid.*, 98–104, 211–12, 212 (quote); Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 381.

a qualified acceptance of images: article six forbade idolatrous worship but permitted the use of images for instructional purposes or as 'reminders of heavenly things'. Yet by August, the first set of royal injunctions was already taking a more critical attitude, arguing against the abuse of images, and those of 1538 went further ordering the removal of abused images, while instituting quarterly sermons to warn of the danger of kissing, or making offerings or pilgrimages to images and shrines. In the same year, Nicholas Partridge wrote to Henry Bullinger expressing his hope that God might now grant 'that we may really banish all idols from our hearts'.[8]

The Henrician reformation was a struggle between the restraining hand of the conservative king and those of his ministers and officials, men such as Cromwell, Cranmer and Latimer, who would have liked to move faster and further. Cranmer had first put the issue of imagery on the official agenda with his Paul's Cross sermon in 1536 in which he spoke out against images, purgatory and the worship of saints. In 1537 his additions to the text of the Bishops' Book were an attempt to undermine its justification of the use of images, although these were overruled by the king. In 1543, he was to be accused of heresy by conservative prebendaries at Canterbury, and although it has been suggested that the claims against him were exaggerated, his advanced beliefs on images would make themselves known in the more commodious atmosphere of Edward's reign. His 1548 visitation articles for Canterbury went beyond those of the 1547 royal visitation, requiring the destruction of images rather than just their removal.[9] Meanwhile Thomas Cromwell promoted anti-image propaganda recruiting men like Hugh Latimer and William Marshall. Marshall translated works by Erasmus, as well as the controversial iconoclastic work by Martin Bucer, *Das Einigerlei Bild*. Latimer by the mid 1530s was calling for the total abolition of images, and preached on this theme before the convocation of June 1536.[10]

The course of reform was halted by the fall of Cromwell in 1540 – although a royal proclamation of November 1538, whilst containing a strong attack on the Becket cult, had already shown a marked conservatism compared to the injunctions of two months earlier. With the accession of Edward VI, however, the reforming cause was renewed with increased vigour, particularly in the campaign against images. Acts of iconoclasm greeted the new reign, in London and elsewhere, whilst the official tone was set with Cranmer's coronation address, referring to the young king as another Josiah (the biblical king who had been zealous in his abolition of

[8] *Ibid.*, 404; Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 54; on Henrician legislation against images see Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 222–46. Partridge quoted from *ibid.*, 236.
[9] *Ibid.*, 172, 222; Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 57; M. L. Zell, 'The prebendaries' plot of 1543', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (1976), 241–53; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 461.
[10] Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 421–4, 205, 172; Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 53.

idolatry and punishment of idolaters). Such references were to become commonplace.[11]

The official policy on images went further than ever before. The 1547 royal injunctions required the destruction of all *abused* images, defining even the simple act of censing as abuse, and the removal of all relics, images, pictures and paintings which constituted 'monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition'. This went so far as to include glass windows, which even the hard-liner Zwingli had exempted from destruction in Zurich. During the actual visitation the commissioners pushed through a radical reading of the injunctions.[12] The question of images remained controversial, and in February 1548 the Privy Council issued an order commanding *all* images to be removed, largely to circumvent dispute on the subject. In 1550, when John Dudley, the earl of Warwick, replaced Protector Somerset the pace of reformation was stepped up. A bill for the establishment of the new Book of Common Prayer also required the destruction or defacing of all 'images of stone, timber, alabaster or earth, graven carved or painted, which heretofore have been taken out of any church or chapel, or yet stand in any church or chapel'.[13]

Radicals like bishops Nicholas Ridley and John Hooper took even more extreme action. In May 1550, Ridley ordered the abolition of altars in his London diocese (an order which would be imposed on the whole country under the authority of the Privy Council the following November). His zeal was such that he had to be restrained from pulling down the tomb of John of Gaunt at St Paul's Cathedral. Hooper, in his 1551 visitation injunctions for Gloucester and Worcester, saw to it that steps and partitions where the altars had been were also ripped out, and forbade the decking of tables.[14]

Even though images were to be returned under Mary, the expense of refurbishment limited the extent to which the clock could be turned back. Duffy points out that the narrowing of the devotional range of Marian Catholicism was partially to do with this difficulty of reconstruction (whilst also reflecting a general tendency of the counter-Reformation). There was

[11] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 410–11, 449; W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: the Young King* (1968), 146–7, 149, 150; S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), 423–4, 430–1; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 247, and see 249, n. 83. On the comparisons made between Tudor monarchs and biblical iconoclasts see also Aston, *The King's Bedpost* and D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (1999), esp. ch. 2.
[12] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 450–1; *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, i: *the Early Tudors (1485–1553)*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (New Haven and London, 1964), no. 287.
[13] *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England*, ed. E. Cardwell (2 vols, Oxford, 1844), i, 47–9; and see Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 94, 96–7, and ch. 4 generally on Edwardine iconoclasm; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 469, citing J. Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (4 vols, 1908–13), iii, 183.
[14] *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, ed. W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy (3 vols, 1910), ii, 276–7 (item 43), 284–5 (item 16); Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 270. On Ridley and Hooper in London, see Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 362–9.

a concentration on the high altar, with the rood and the individual church's patron saint being the only image made obligatory, and no official attempt made to enforce the restoration of side altars or other images. This was paralleled by a greater emphasis on the cross and redemption.[15] Despite their somewhat muted return, by the time of Queen Elizabeth's accession, in 1558, church images had gained a heightened symbolic meaning, representing the religious reaction of the Marian period. Their removal and destruction was both religiously and politically expedient to demonstrate the establishment of a new regime. A procession the day before Elizabeth's coronation illustrated the point – figures depicting superstition and idolatry were shown being defeated by another representing true religion in the form of the new royal Deborah. At the level of popular protest adherents of Protestantism did not wait for legislation (which would not come until a cautious seven months later) but in riotous scenes took it into their own hands to smash images. It was reported that 'in many of the churches of London the crucifixes have been broken, the figures of the Saints defaced, and the altars denuded'.[16]

The thorough purging of images from churches started with the royal visitation of July 1559. Such a step was not only a reflection of the need to dismantle the symbols of the Marian regime but also an attempt to finally eradicate the conservative leanings of the general population. This time the removal of the paraphernalia and imagery of Catholicism was meant to be final, with clauses in the visitation articles and the royal injunctions allowing for the searching of private houses to discourage the hiding of images. There was also an emphasis on destruction rather than simple removal, and a strict attitude taken against those who attempted to avoid it. It was important that the change of religion should be seen to be permanent and not yet another temporary shift.[17]

Another factor which had an impact on attitudes towards images in the immediate post-Marian period was the theological influence of the Reformed churches at Geneva, Frankfurt and Zurich, where Protestant refugees had spent their exile. Despite the fairly early divide between those prepared to take office in the 'but halfly reformed' church of the Elizabethan settlement and those who chose to stay outside of it (or who were deliberately excluded), most of these men returned with a greater commitment to Reformed religion. Their feelings on the subject of images is clear from their visitation articles, and from their extreme discomfort over the question of

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[15] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 563–4. See Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 106–7ff., for furtive acts of iconoclasm during Mary's reign, and the difficulties of reinstating images.

[16] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 568; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 295; *CSPV*, 1558–80, 84 (10 May 1559).

[17] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 567; Elizabethan injunctions and articles of inquiry in H. Gee, *The Elizabethan Clergy and the Settlement of Religion, 1558–64* (Oxford, 1898), 54, 58, 69 (royal injunctions, clauses 23 and 35; articles of inquiry, item 45).

the 'relics of superstition' in the queen's private chapel. Some were notorious iconoclasts in their own right. William Whittingham, who had been in Geneva with John Knox and who was responsible for the English translation of the Geneva Bible, acted zealously against images at Durham Cathedral, where he was dean. Robert Horne who had been at Frankfurt with Jewel, Cox and Grindal, and who became bishop of Winchester in 1561, ordered the destruction of every painted window, image, vestment, and superstitious ornament or structure in the cathedral there.[18]

Elizabeth herself, however, was far more conservative in her religious leanings. This conservatism together with the priority given to unity and peace in religion – which led to a fairly broad, inclusive, settlement – lent a certain constraint to pronouncements on images in key texts of the Elizabethan church. It was this ambiguity which would allow for varying interpretations of the Elizabethan position at a later date. The Act of Uniformity, at the beginning of 1559, cautiously retained the use of 'such ornaments of the church and ministers' as in the second year of Edward's reign (that is, objects such as crosses and lights, and vestments).[19] By comparison the royal injunctions and the articles of inquiry for the royal visitation, drawn up around July 1559, both came out strongly against images. However, there was a subtle difference in the position taken by these two official statements. The visitation articles took a radical line requiring the removal and destruction of 'all images, all tables, candlesticks, trindals, rolls of wax, pictures, paintings and all other monuments of feigned and false miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition'. Ministers who 'extolled superstition', including the use of images, were sought out, as were any parishioners who harboured images, pictures and paintings or other superstitious monuments in their houses 'especially such as have been set up in churches, chapels or oratories'.[20]

The royal injunctions struck a slightly more cautious note. Based on the Edwardine text of 1547 they did contain a radical clause ordering the destruction of monuments of idolatry and superstition, including pictures and paintings, on walls and in glass windows. However, a clause requiring the destruction of images at the parochial level was omitted and there was a greater emphasis on the dangers of the *abuse* of images, rather than images per se. The additional orders regarding the removal of altars defined the issue as largely a matter of indifference: 'saving for uniformity, there seems no matter of great moment'. Margaret Aston has suggested that the reason for the difference in approach was that the injunctions were the formal, official basis of future royal policy, and therefore reflected more obviously

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[18] See *DNB* on Whittingham and Horne. On the activities of individual reformist bishops see S. A. Wenig, *Straightening the Altars: the Ecclesiastical Vision and Pastoral Achievements of the Progressive Bishops under Elizabeth I* (New York, 2000), ch. 4.
[19] *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. H. Gee and W. J. Hardy (1896), 466; see Wenig, *Straightening the Altars*, 78.
[20] Gee, *The Elizabethan Clergy*, 65, 66, 69 (items 2, 9, 45).

the queen's conservatism. The visitation articles, on the other hand, were drawn up for practical application – the more radical stance being necessary for eradicating the remnants of Marian worship.[21] These articles were supplemented by others drawn up by Archbishop Matthew Parker and other bishops, in *A Declaration of Certain Principal Articles of Religion* (1559). These made no mention of a permissible use for images, but disallowed, amongst other things, 'all kind of expressing God invisible in the form of an old man, or the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove'.[22]

The result was widespread and violent iconoclasm. It was reported that

> in many places, walls wer rased, windowes wer dashed downe, because some images (little regarding what) were paynted on them. And not only images, but rood-loftes, relickes, sepulchres, books, banners, coopes, vestments, altar-cloathes wer in diverse places, committed to the fire.[23]

Early in 1560 Edwin Sandys wrote to Peter Martyr that 'all images of every kind were at our last visitation not only taken down, but also burnt'. This excess horrified the queen who issued a proclamation on 19 September 1560 prohibiting the destruction of church monuments. This offered protection not only to secular monuments but forbade the removal or defacing of 'any image in glass windows in any church without consent of the ordinary'. Cases where spoliation had already occurred were to be investigated and those responsible liable to make good the damage.[24]

Another possible example of the queen's conservatism on this subject are certain textual changes in the *Homily on Idolatry* of 1563, for which it has been suggested that Elizabeth herself may have been responsible. This was the longest of the homilies – four times longer than any of the others, showing the importance of the issue. Its attitude on the subject of images was clear: 'images which cannot be without lies, ought not to be made, or put to any use of religion, or to be placed in churches and temples'. Yet revisions made to the original text toned down this position. The claim that true Christians ought to have nothing to do with 'filthy and dead images' was changed to an acknowledgement that images have no place in temples 'for fear and occasion of worshipping them, though they be of themselves *things indifferent*' [my emphasis]. The queen also seems to have restricted the reading of the third part of the homily – the most vehement against images which reminds readers that God expects Christian princes to act against images and idols. This part

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[21] *Ibid.*, 54–5 (clause 23); 48 n. 5, 47, 58 (clauses 2, 35), 63; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 298–304. See also Wenig, *Straightening the Altars*, 79.
[22] Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, i, 266.
[23] John Hayward, 'Annals of the first four years of the reign of Elizabeth', quoted from Wenig, *Straightening the Altars*, 80.
[24] *The Zurich Letters*, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge, 1842), i, 31, 74 (1 April 1560); *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ii: *the Later Tudors (1553–87)*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (New Haven and London, 1969), no. 469, 147.

was not to be read publicly or intended for uncontrolled general reading. Nonetheless, the *Homily on Idolatry* remained a key text for those who argued against images right up into the 1640s when it was often cited.[25]

Most of the Elizabethan episcopate were far more hostile towards images than the queen and the tension between the two positions came to a head over the issue of religious ornaments in the royal chapel. The retention of a crucifix and candles on the altar caused a great stir, prompting Matthew Parker and other leading members of the clergy to write to Elizabeth in 1559 enclosing an anonymous tract entitled *Reasons Against Images in Churches* (in which Patrick Collinson detects the hand of Grindal). There were also several acts of iconoclasm, with the crucifix being broken in 1562, 1567 and 1570. Both Thomas Sampson and John Jewel were prepared to resign over the issue, the latter writing: 'matters are come to that pass, that either the crosses of silver and tin, which we have everywhere broken in pieces, must be restored, or our bishoprics relinquished'. One of the main fears expressed by the clergy was that of the establishing of a precedent. The bishops' address to the queen complained of the risk of 'setting a trap of error for the ignorant, and . . . digging a pit for the blind to fall into'. Parkhurst lamented the 'lukewarmness of some persons [which] very much retards the progress of the gospels'.[26]

The queen's attitude towards rood images also provoked anger. According to Sandys she

> considered it not contrary to the word of God . . . that the image of Christ crucified, together with Mary and John, should be placed . . . in some conspicuous part of the church, where they might more readily be seen by all the people. Some of us [bishops] thought far otherwise.[27]

A disputation over the issue of crucifixes was held in February 1560, where among the defendants of Elizabeth's position were Archbishop Parker and Richard Cox, with Grindal and Jewel arguing against. It has been suggested that the positions taken by Parker and Cox, surprising considering their earlier expressions of dislike for images, actually represent 'a formal ecclesiastical procedure for the queen's benefit, not a split in the episcopal ranks'. Elizabeth conceded the point on the matter of rood lofts, with a royal order for their removal on 10 October 1561. However, she was never persuaded to part with the ornaments in her chapel.[28]

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[25] On this see Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 320–4.
[26] *Ibid.*, 309–14; *The Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, ed. J. Bruce and T. Thomason Perowne (Cambridge, 1853), 79; *Zurich Letters*, i, 129.
[27] *Ibid.*, i, 73–4.
[28] *Ibid.*, i, 67; Wenig, *Straightening the Altars*, 104; *The Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, 96–7. A detailed discussion of this controversy is given in Wenig, *Straightening the Altars*, ch. 3. See also Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 306–14.

Despite Elizabeth's personal caution, the period of her reign was important in the development of arguments against images. One of the key reasons for the continued (and increased) emphasis on idolatry as the central sin was its usefulness as a weapon against the Catholic Church, which was perceived as representing a very real threat. It was in the polemical writings against Catholicism of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean years that the common arguments against images were formulated and became widely accepted, although many harked back to the early Reformation and beyond. The differences with Rome on the subject were based upon varying interpretations of the decalogue's prohibitions against images and idols. Did the law against the making of images mean all images or only idols, that is, images of false gods? If the prohibition was against idols only and not images representing figures of the true church, might such images be offered worship or honour, indeed might God be worshipped through them?

The argument for the outlawing of all images was greatly enhanced by a re-ordering of the clauses of the decalogue by reformers. This created a separate second commandment solely concerned with forbidding the worship of images:

> Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water beneath the earth:
>
> Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them.[29]

The subsequent change of emphasis made clear that it was the worshipping of images, and not just of idols, which was forbidden. Thus the issue was not simply a matter of false religion (turning to false gods) but of false worship of the true God, a point brought out in the various texts discussed below.

The idea was put forward by Leo Jud in his German catechism of 1534 (with a preface by Henry Bullinger), and taken up by Martin Bucer and by Calvin in 1537. William Marshall, in the 1535 edition of his *Goodly Primer*, used both the traditional and new sequences, whilst official acceptance of the latter in England came with the publication of Richard Grafton's authorized primer of May 1545.[30]

Roman Catholics had, by comparison, officially allowed the veneration of images since the second Nicaean Council in 787. Here it was decreed that images might be used legitimately because they served as reminders of their archetypes (the holy figure which was being portrayed) and inspired contemplation of the divine. Honour paid to images would be passed on to that archetype, images acting as channels between the material world and the

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[29] *Ibid.*, 371–92.
[30] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 479; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 380–5, 421, 427–8.

spiritual one. This theory was expounded by Thomas Aquinas, who made a distinction between the worship due to God alone – *latria* – and the respect or service owed to holy individuals such as saints and angels, and for images – *dulia*. A third form of service – *hyperdulia* – was reserved for those who 'have special relationship to God such as the Blessed Virgin'. These 'tricks of relative worship', as Jewel called them, were almost universally rejected by Protestants. Even William Laud, giving his opinion at the trial of Salisbury iconoclast Henry Sherfield in 1633, would dismiss the *dulia/latria* distinction as 'absurd'.[31]

Another, potentially more controversial point, was the question of whether the use of images in religion was prohibited outright, even when there was no such abuse as the worshipping or venerating of them. Most Protestant writers tended to argue either that all religious images were unlawful, or that the line between idol and image was too fine and too easily crossed over for the latter to be safely allowed. Better to err on the side of caution, especially given the natural proneness of mankind towards idolatry. The idea of the fundamentally corrupt nature of man was reflected in Calvin's belief that the human mind was 'a perpetual forge of idols'. Although men had the seed of religion in them, if left to itself, this would always seek expression through false, idolatrous means. Similar ideas were to be found in the early period of the English Reformation, as, for instance, in the work of John Hooper who described how man, from 'vanity of fond imagination', attempted to express God in the form of an imagined figure or image, 'so that the mind conceiveth the idol, and afterward the hand worketh and representeth the same unto the senses'.[32]

This attitude came to be commonplace among Elizabethan and early Jacobean reformers. The Calvinist bishop Gervase Babington believed that it 'cleaveth to our bones and the very marrow to be superstitious and delighted with evil'. In the popular *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, by non-conformist divines John Dod and Richard Cleaver, there was a warning not only against man's natural propensity for idolatry but against the 'highly infectious nature of the disease'. Merely looking at an idol, even with 'good intent', would quickly 'set the heart on fire with idolatry'. This inclination towards idolatry, according to *Reasons Against Images in Churches*, addressed to Queen Elizabeth in 1559, was why God had seen fit to outlaw images in the first place.[33]

[31] Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 14–16; Thomas Aquinas quoted from Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 48; *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials*, ed. T. Howell (33 vols, 1809), iii, 550.
[32] Quoted from Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, 235; quoted from Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 436–7.
[33] Gervase Babington, *Collected Works* (1660), 144; John Dod and Richard Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1606), 58, 61; *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, 79.

Opponents of the use of images stressed the importance of the spiritual over the material in worship. Calvin emphasized the mystery of God, and promoted the principle of 'finitum non est capax infiniti' (the finite cannot contain the infinite). The influence of this idea can be seen in the works of English writers. Babington, for instance, stressed the incorporeal nature of God – a 'spirit incomprehensible' – and argued not only that he could not be seen but that he did not have a body in the human sense. Where the scripture spoke of him having parts such as feet, hands and face, these were merely temporary forms in which he appeared to men and in which 'he lay hid even when he was seen'. It was not possible to perceive God by the senses – and this is why the 'hereticks' were wrong to picture him in human form. Ultimately, worship of God must be either spiritual (rightful) or material (false), it could not be both. According to William Perkins the 'right practice of the Gospels [is] to put from us all manner of Idols, and to sanctifie God in our hearts', that is, to 'serve him in mind and spirit'.[34]

That Christians had a duty to perform 'rightful' worship was an important aspect of the argument against images and idolatry. For Babington 'every worship not commanded of God is idolatrie, and the worship also that is commanded, if it be done in other manner than is commanded'. Dod and Cleaver went further claiming that men were as guilty as out and out idolaters if 'they pul up idols and superstition but do not plant the holy worship of God'. Similarly the drive for a preaching ministry reflected both a reformer's duty to evangelise and an acknowledgement of the superiority of God's Word as a teaching medium compared to images which were mere inventions of mankind. The Catholic defence of images as laymen's books and teachers of the illiterate was totally rejected. Such an argument was seen as both absurd – for how could dumb statues instruct – and dangerous, being in George Abbot's words 'a very ready way unto superstition'.[35]

The concept of the 'dumb' image was one frequently used in writings against imagery. John Knox defined idols thus:

> that which hath the form and appearance but lacketh the virtue and strength which the name and proportion do resemble and promise. As images have face, nose, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet painted but the use of the same cannot the craft and art of man give them.[35a]

The reference here is to Psalm 115 which condemns heathen idols: 'they have mouths but they speak not, eyes have they, but they see not'. It was

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[34] On Calvin see Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 3; Babington, *Collected Works*, 410–11; William Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times and an Instruction touching Religion or Divine worship* (Cambridge, 1601), dedication.

[35] Babington, *Collected Works*, 497; Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 74; *Cheapside Crosse censured and condemned by A Letter Sent from the Vice Chancellor and other Learned Men of the famous University of Oxford* (1641), 5.

[35a] John Knox, 'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women', in *John Knox On Rebellion*, ed. R. A. Mason (Cambridge, 1994), 23.

a common theme expounded, for instance, in a Paul's Cross sermon by John Bridges in 1571, and by Jewel in his controversy with the Catholic writer Thomas Harding. This dumbness of images was set in opposition to the 'living' word and the active medium of preaching. Thomas Sampson condemned those who would 'look for religion in these dumb remnants of idolatry, and not in the preaching of the lively word of God'.[36]

If images could be called teachers at all then they were teachers of lies. Jewel likened painters to poets for whose ability to lie Plato had wanted banished. Dod and Cleaver warned that scholars who made use of such 'laymen's books' would 'grow at length to be even as blockish and foolish as the blocks and stones that they worship'. Time and again the point was made that if Catholics were serious in their desire to instruct they would permit the publication of the scriptures which were both more 'wise and profitable' and far less dangerous than images. Images, as the address to Queen Elizabeth pointed out, were ultimately unnecessary for the learned and dangerous and misleading for the weak. It was rather the duty of the learned to set a good example. Jewel cited Deuteronomy 27:18, 'accursed be he that leadeth the blind out of the way'.[37]

Another common theme of writers against images was the concept of spiritual fornication, a metaphor which linked the sin of idolatry with that of adultery. The God of the decalogue had declared himself to be a jealous God, one who required a chastity in belief and worship, as Dod and Cleaver reminded their readers. They saw the church as the spouse of God, so it followed that the sin of idolatry was betrayal, a kind of adultery. Calvin had called the worship of images 'that vilest species of adultery' and the address to Queen Elizabeth declared the invention of images to be 'the beginning of spiritual fornication'. The giving of honour which properly belonged to God alone to others (such as the saints or the Virgin Mary) was also adultery. Even if honour was paid to God alone but paid in the wrong way – that is, through the use of images – this was 'false love' and therefore 'true hatred'. The ultimate fornication was that committed by the Roman Church. William Perkins expressed a widely held view that Rome itself was the Whore of Babylon who 'hath endeavoured to intangle al the nations of the earth in her spirituall idolatrie'.[38]

The idea of mankind's spiritual 'whoring' after their own inventions tied in with that of image-worshippers as yielding to the pleasures of the corrupt

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[36] Aston, *The King's Bedpost*, 170; *The Works of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury*, ed. J. Ayre (4 vols, Cambridge, 1845), ii, 660; *Zurich Letters*, i, 63.

[37] *The Works of John Jewel*, ii, 660; Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 62; *The Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, 79; *The Works of John Jewel*, ii, 668.

[38] Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 75, and see 79–80; Calvin quoted from Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 468; *The Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, 82, 85; Babington, *Collected Works*, 24–5; William Perkins, *Reformed Catholicke* (Cambridge, 1598), 2–3, 6.

senses. They were tempted by material richness and outward beauty and drawn away from the plain and simple worship proper to true faith. 'Wicked Adulterers will bestow much upon their harlots', complained Babington, 'and pinch for anything to their lawful wives.' Linked to this fusion of spiritual and sexual temptation was the condemnation of marriage to idolaters. The Elizabethan articles of visitation of 1559 required that local church officials should declare against recusants, and numerous writers warned against close relationships with Catholics (or even keeping their company). As images themselves were full of the danger of allurement and corruption, so too were the worshippers of images. According to Dod and Cleaver it was impossible to have so much as a conversation with idolaters 'and not receive some taint of their superstition'.[39]

It was the duty of all godly persons to reform idolatry, for God, according to Babington, would be revenged upon the sufferers of idolaters as well as the idolaters themselves. In particular, marriage with idolaters was strictly forbidden and the curse of God was upon such matches. This argument could have important political implications. When in around 1569, there was rumour of a marriage between the duke of Norfolk and Mary Queen of Scots, an anonymous pamphlet (possibly by Thomas Sampson) was published *Touching the Pretended match between the Duke of Norfolk and the Queen of Scottes*. The example was invoked of King Solomon who, despite his famed wisdom, was tempted to join his wives in idolatry. Objections were made again in 1579, when a marriage was proposed between Elizabeth and the duke of Anjou. Sermons were preached against the marriage and popular lampoons and ballads appeared alongside more learned tracts. John Stubbs was punished with the loss of his right hand for penning *The Discovery of a gaping gulf wherein England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage*. Drawing on Old Testament precedents he argued that a match with a 'popish prince' was like that of a Hebrew and a Canaanite, and that it would seriously endanger the Reformed faith.[40]

The same issue was to cause problems in the seventeenth century with regard to the marriage and general conduct of Charles I. In the 1620s, the proposed Spanish match of the prince to the Catholic Infanta was extremely unpopular, prompting Charles's own chaplain, the Puritan George Hakewill, to write him a paper arguing against the marriage. Nor was Henrietta Maria to be much more acceptable, with her 'very conspicuous' troop of Capuchin friars, and Roman Catholic masses sung openly in her chapel. Lucy Hutchinson saw her as being in league with Archbishop Laud

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[39] Babington, *Collected Works*, 402; Gee, *The Elizabethan Clergy*, 70 (item 51); Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 58–9.
[40] Babington, *Collected Works*, 497, 413; Aston, *The King's Bedpost*, 199; W. T. MacCaffrey, 'The Anjou match and the making of Elizabethan foreign policy', in *The English Commonwealth 1547–1640: Essays in Politics and Society*, ed. P. Clark, A. G. R. Smith and N. Tyacke (Leicester, 1979), 59–75, 64–6.

and his 'prelaticall crew' in a 'cruel designe of rooting out the godly out of the land'. Furthermore the king was perceived to be 'keeping company' with idolaters at court, where there were a number of Catholics, such as the convert Walter Montague. Charles's flouting of the common Protestant wisdom against associating with idolaters only served to heighten the religious tension, as well as appearing to prove the point.[41]

In general the Protestant hostility to images was, as we have seen, an opposition to the use of images as well as to their abuse, the very objects themselves being regarded as the causers of idolatry. For some this was part of a wider attack on other aspects of popular cultural forms, those which appealed to the visual senses. The hostility towards the theatre, for example, was directed at its appeal to the sensuous eye, as well as its peddling of lies (fictional stories or real stories falsely represented). Idolatry was all about things 'false', and images were always 'teachers of lies'. The Puritan John Carter typified this attitude when he wrote that 'love songs and books . . . filthy objects in pictures, plays or whatever else stirreth up corrupt nature'.[42]

For the more godly Protestants as well as for Puritans, there was an ever-increasing stress on inner as well as outer reformation, and also an urge to moral evangelism on all aspects of life and not just on religious issues. The issue of idolatry also became bound up with intense conscience-searching and self-examination. God's laws were to be kept spiritually, taught Dod and Cleaver, and they 'reacheth . . . to the inward parts of every man, and lyeth close upon his conscience'. Perkins warned against idols of the mind arguing that 'a thing feigned in the mind by imagination, is an idol'. Edward Elton, in his *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, interpreted the second commandment as condemning not only 'outward idolatry of the hand, which is when men make an image . . . and set it up for religious use' but also 'inward idolatry of the heart, which is when men misconceiving God, do worship him according to their own misconceit'. The wayward human imagination was prone to such corruptions and was not to be trusted but to be brought under control. The same was true of the equally untrustworthy human senses, which served to feed the imagination. Field and Wilcox in a message *To the Christian Reader*, expressed the hope that God would help them to 'overthrowe the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bring into bondage every thought to the obedience of Christ'.[43]

[41] P. Gregg, *King Charles* (1981), 73–4; for the conspicuous behaviour of the Capuchins see *CSPV*, 1630, 304 (22 March); Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. J. Sutherland (Oxford, 1973), 49.

[42] P. Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia*, 25.

[43] *Ibid*., 27; Dod and Cleaver, *A Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 8; Perkins and Elton quoted in Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 453, 458; John Field and Thomas Wilcox, 'An Admonition to the parliament' (1572), in *Puritan Manifestoes: a Study of the Origins of the Puritan Revolt*, ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas (1954), 39.