From Piety to Reflection:
The Purpose of Primers in Late Tudor England

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The story of the 16th century was one of major changes for the English nation. On a national level, English government changed and yielded a more centralized and controlling state. On a cultural level, English society began to change as more and more people began to read and have the economic ability to buy reading material produced by printing presses. On a religious level, the English church, through many twists and turns, transformed from a Medieval Catholic institution with loyalty to Rome to a Protestant entity responsible to its monarch. But what did these changes mean for the English men and women who populated the towns and villages in this still predominantly agricultural society? It is hard to answer this question because this segment of the population left few written records.

This thesis will consider a rare window into the lives of the insignificant laity by examining the change in primers, or Books of Hours. While it is true that not all of the English population could read these books, they were still produced on a mass scale to appeal to a broad audience. The first segment of this paper shall look at a group of primers produced in the reign of Mary Tudor. This section will show that while Mary’s regime sought to re-establish Roman Catholicism in England, the religion actually practiced through the use of these primers was not Medieval in nature nor was it like the Catholicism practiced on the continent in the 1550’s. The second segment of this paper will proceed to chart the disappearance of the primer tradition in Elizabeth’s reign. By the 1570’s English religion had changed to the point that the purpose and method of prayer had completely transformed. By examining Richard Daye’s *A Booke of Christian Prayers* and comparing it with the primer produced during Elizabeth’s first year as queen, it will be evident that the English church had completely changed and the English people had more or less accepted this.
I. “After the Use of Sarum”: English Catholicism in the Marian Primers

Prayer is at the center of the Christian experience. According to one writer during the reign of Mary Tudor, prayer is the “greatest consolation and conforte, that the soule of man can haue.” If this is true, then the types of prayers that Christians use reveal much about how they view God. The nature of Christian thought and practice can be gleaned from the various prayers that have been used by the Church through different generations. English Christians in Mary Tudor’s reign (July 1553 - November 1558), like their Medieval and ancient predecessors, used certain prayers to not only access God, but also to solidify their definition of Orthodox Christianity. The primers, or books of prayer, that were published during her reign yield an even more specific view of the nature of Mary’s church. They demonstrate that this church was not simply Roman Catholic, as was understood in the Medieval period in England or the early modern period on the Continent. The primers show that Mary’s church does not fit into a neat category: its leaders and lay persons were fashioning a church which had never existed before and would never exist again.

Historiographic Views on the Marian Church

Mary Tudor’s reign and church have received generations of scrutiny from Protestant historians. From John Foxe through modern historians such as A. G. Dickens and David Loades, her reign has been characterized as violent at worst and ineffective at best. A.G. Dickens, the last

1 William Wizeman, The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor’s Church (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 203.
“traditionalist” historian of the English Reformation, characterizes her council as one with
“notorious disunity;”\textsuperscript{2} her reign as “saturated with reports of sedition and discontent;”\textsuperscript{3} and her
people as “dissatisfied with the restoration of Catholicism.”\textsuperscript{4} Dickens also maintains the
traditional characterization of Mary herself as a queen with an “urge to severity.”\textsuperscript{5} In Dickens’
view of the reign, Mary was a malicious queen vainly striving to restore a belief system that
could not be restored. David Loades was a later historian who began the work of reevaluating
Mary’s reign by avoiding the assumption that Catholicism was unpopular and unrestorable. But
even he came to the negative conclusion that Mary “was utterly unable to understand anyone
who did not share her specific convictions.”\textsuperscript{6} In his writing, Mary appears not so much malicious
as irrational and weak.

Historians only began the work of seriously reevaluating the reign of Mary Tudor in the
1980’s. This process began because it became increasingly evident that her reign had come under
excessive biased scrutiny; when compared with the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI or even
Elizabeth, the measures that Mary took to insure stability in her church and kingdom were not
uncommon for rulers to employ in 16th century Europe. Some historians, like Diarmaid
MacCulloch, have continued to characterize Mary as “obstinate” and some of the measures
during her reign, especially the burning of nearly 300 Protestants, as “major miscalculations.”\textsuperscript{7}
But these historians have also admitted that not only did Catholicism still remain as part of the

\textsuperscript{3} Dickens, \textit{The English Reformation}, 261.
\textsuperscript{4} Dickens, \textit{The English Reformation}, 263.
\textsuperscript{5} Dickens, \textit{The English Reformation}, 265.
\textsuperscript{6} David Loades, \textit{The Church of Mary Tudor}, ed. Eamon Duffy and David Loades (Aldershot: Ashgate,
2006), 27.
religious ethos of the country, but also that “morale was returning to Catholicism.”

This trend of revaluation was taken to its furthest extent by the historians Eamon Duffy and Elizabeth Wooding. The revisionist historian Eamon Duffy asserted that Medieval Catholicism was far from dying out on the eve of the English Reformation in his groundbreaking work *The Stripping of the Altars*. This work completely changed the British Reformation studies field by tearing down traditional assumptions that Catholicism was an archaic religion straggling along in a modern England, unable to effectively reach the hearts and minds of the laity. He shows that Medieval Catholicism was not only in the process of evolution, but that English men and women intimately knew, appreciated and valued Catholic liturgies and customs. After specifically detailing the nature of the Medieval church, he puts forth evidence that lay people retained many elements of Catholicism through the Henrician and Edwardine reformation periods and that their reforming measures were more imposed than called for by an imaginary frustrated laity. Building off this thesis, Duffy then suggests that Mary’s church was not unpopular. He therefore characterizes her church as “not one of reaction but of creative reconstruction.”

Elizabeth Wooding continued this work of reevaluation. For Wooding, Mary herself was not a malicious or irrational queen, but one who “sought to personify the godly prince in whom true faith and true judgement were united.” But even though the revisionists have done much to discredit older views on the Marian church, a thread of traditionalist thought still holds sway in even more recent historians’ view of the reign such as Peter Marshall. Marshall includes the major arguments of reevaluation in his analysis but he repeatedly returns to the fact that the “plans for

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Catholic revival could not be carried out on the cheap.”\textsuperscript{11} He thus underlines that revisionists like Duffy may go too far in some places by claiming that the English laity were eager to restore Catholicism in all its expensive and lavish trappings. But ultimately, even the more impartial Peter Marshall claims the more revisionist view of the reign: he asserts that the idea “that Mary’s reign represented the last desperate gasp of Catholicism, allowing Protestantism to step triumphantly forward and erect the Elizabethan Settlement over the corpse, is no longer convincing.”\textsuperscript{12} The current consensus among historians thus seems to be that “revisionism has alerted us to the elements of imagination, flexibility and popularity in Marian religious policy, and encouraged us to shake off an inherited whiggish presumption that the future of England was preordained to be Protestant.”\textsuperscript{13}

As the revisionist reevaluation continued, another question arose which divided this group of historians: the degree to which Mary’s church was “insular” or whether it was connected with the development of Catholicism on the European continent. Lucy Wooding, like the traditionalists, while she maintains many revisionist assertions about the positive aspects of the Marian church, claims that the church was insular, particularly its lack of zeal for the papacy which was its “strength.”\textsuperscript{14} For Wooding, the Marian church drew its identity not from Rome but from the humanist religion of Henry VIII. Eamon Duffy, in a later work focusing specifically on Mary’s church, asserted that the church was in no way cut off from the continent, but rather the practices of her church, particularly the residence of bishops and the establishment of seminaries, took on “a new European significance.”\textsuperscript{15} Duffy carefully and cautiously asserts that the Marian

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] Wooding, \textit{Rethinking Catholicism} , 179.
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church actually helped lead the counter-reformation. In a monograph considering the religious writers of Mary’s reign, William Wizeman agrees with Duffy that in many ways Marian writers were prefiguring and “leading” the counter-reformers on the continent and vehemently attacks Wooding’s assertions about the insularity of the Marian church.

While revisionist historians have used the primers that were published during Mary’s reign as pieces of evidence in their arguments, there is still a lack of in-depth analysis of these books. Duffy, Wooding, Wizeman and others have effectively deconstructed the idea that Catholicism and Protestantism were not mutually exclusive religious systems in early modern England. While these authors have used the primers as a peripheral type of evidence to fit their arguments, they have not analyzed Marian primers deeply enough. A more thorough analysis of the contents of the primers of Mary’s reign is necessary in order to assess the Marian church from the laity’s point of view. The primers should receive special attention, above all other Marian literature, because they were so widely bought and used by the laity; they thus provide a good view of lay religion, as opposed to the constricting view of the religion of church leaders alone. The Marian primers reveal a church that was both traditional and innovative. The types of prayers, images and treatises that were included in these books show that the Marian laity did not hold a Roman Catholic self-identity so much as they did an emerging English identity. This new identity included both Medieval and early modern, Protestant and Catholic ideas and influences. Marian primers deserve a closer analysis because they demonstrate the process of hybridization that was occurring during the 16th century which ultimately created a solidified English state with a national church that contained both Catholic and Protestant elements.

16 Duffy, *Fires*, 188-207
The Emphases of the Marian Church

In seeking the true nature of Mary’s church, Duffy and Dickens both employed methods that allowed them to ascertain what the laity broadly believed and practiced. But in order to seriously consider this larger picture, it is first important to focus on the historical actor in the center of the picture: Mary herself. In the early modern period, the Reformation across Europe brought the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* to come into effect.\(^{18}\) Under this principle, a ruler determined what his people should believe. While Duffy and the revisionists have effectively shown that this was by no means the only determining factor in the religion of the English people, a monarch’s own personal religion still had a large effect on what his people believed. An analysis of Mary’s personal religion, therefore, is important in order to understand her reign. To understand her as a merely Catholic monarch would be a mistake. While she submitted her realm back to the authority of the papacy, she continued to use her powers as “Supreme Head” to control religious matters; the concept of the supremacy was the very idea that Henry VIII used to rebel against the papacy which caused schism at first and eventually an entirely separate English church to form under the authority of the secular crown instead of the papal crown.\(^{19}\) Mary’s willingness to use this authority demonstrates that her church would look just as much to the English crown as it would the papal crown; papal obedience was not of the utmost importance for Mary. Neither was the cult of the saints. Even though Mary did display the signs of a basic devotion to the Virgin and other medieval saints, she never made any attempt to restore the great Medieval shrines of Thomas Becket or other important English saints, nor did she ever go on a


\(^{19}\) Loades, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, 19.
pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{20} While the saints served as prominent features of the Medieval Catholic religious ideology, they were not important to Mary; she was not a Medieval Catholic monarch.

What Mary did focus on in her own personal devotion was the mass itself. It is worth noting in Mary’s life how little she protested the religious changes of her father: her most important grievance with her father was his divorce of her mother and the political fallout that dismissed her from the line of succession.\textsuperscript{21} She maintained Catholic sympathies in line with her Spanish mother, but it was not until her brother, Edward VI, began to tamper with the Latin mass that she began her protest. At this point, “religion, rather than personal political following, increasingly became the main focus of her existence.”\textsuperscript{22} She began to hear as many as four masses a day in protest of the Protestant changes to her sacred Latin mass. The mass was an important battleground for Protestants and Catholics in both England and across Europe. The way in which it was celebrated had vast theological implications. For instance, one of the first Protestant reformers, Andreas Karlstadt, celebrated his first “Lord’s Supper” on Christmas day, 1521 in a way which broke completely with previous Roman practice: he used no vestments, said the consecration prayer in the vernacular German and distributed communion in both kinds. This evangelical service was the first “public break with a millennium of tradition.”\textsuperscript{23} Henry VIII, while he began to slowly change the beliefs and practices of his English church, ardently defended the Latin mass and rejected anything similar to Karlstadt’s Lord’s Supper. It was only during Edward VI’s reign with the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer in English that this service saw a major Protestant transformation. It was not the doctrinal changes that began

\textsuperscript{20} Loades, \textit{The Church of Mary Tudor}, 21.
\textsuperscript{21} Loades, \textit{The Church of Mary Tudor}, 12.
under Henry VIII’s reign that solidified Mary’s Catholic identity, but the liturgical changes in Edward’s reign.

Mary’s church was therefore first and foremost a sacramental church. Marian Christians, like their monarch, did not look so much to Rome for their Catholic identity but to the altars sitting in their parish churches. In this way, they saw their church as “defined by its practice rather than its form, and its unity was not organizational but sacramental.”24 The Protestant reformers, both in England and across Europe, had called into question all of the Church’s sacraments over the previous decades. While Luther, Karlstadt and the initial reformers sought mostly to strip the sacraments along with other types of worship of their superstitious elements, reformers like Zwingli started to alter the very nature of the sacraments.25 By tapping into the Humanist ad fontes inclination, Zwingli and other later reformers pointed to the Bible as the sole place to find any meaning behind the Mass or any other church practice. Zwingli started to celebrate the Lord’s Supper as a merely symbolic ritual with absolutely no deeper spiritual meaning than the memory of the story of the cross that it evoked. Instead of the sacraments changing the believer, sacramentarians such as Zwingli and Bullinger believed that Christians “bring Christ to the Supper in their hearts; they do not receive him in the Supper.”26 The 1552 Edwardine Book of Common Prayer brought this line of Protestant thought to England as well. This alteration in ritual was the part of the Reformation that impacted the normal laity the most. In many ways the Protestant Reformation was merely an academic revolution; theological debate did not often have any real practical effect on the laity. But alterations to the Mass had major

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24 Wooding, Rethinking, 126.
26 Ibid
repercussions for the average layperson. When Mary ascended to the throne, it was thus the immediate reintroduction of the Latin Mass that had the largest impact on her people.

The Mass, not loyalty to the papacy or any other Catholic doctrine, was the “touchstone of orthodoxy.”

**Primer Introduction**

In addition to the Mass and other liturgical practices found in their parish churches, people across England were turning to Primers during this period to aid in the practice of their Christian faith. Primers, or the Book of Hours, arose out of a Medieval desire from the laity to imitate the monks and nuns who prayed through all 150 psalms within a week. The primers that were produced during Mary’s reign demonstrate the emphasis that the Marian Church put on practice over polemic. Primers, not broadsheets or treatises, were the real way to reconversion. Primers were central to lay piety during the early modern period in England. In the Medieval period preceding the birth of the printing press, only the wealthy had access to these books of prayer and devotion. But after the printing press made book production much easier and more affordable, primers reached a larger audience. As many as 57,000 of these books were probably in print before the English Reformation. The universal availability of the primers served as a unifying force for the English church since both rich and poor, “simple and sophisticate could kneel side by side, using the same prayers and sharing the same hope.” They provided not only sources of devotion, but methods of learning: both about the doctrines of the Church and the basics of the English language. Moreover, primers in the Medieval period had a somewhat

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27 Wooding, *The Church of Mary Tudor*, 235.
28 Duffy, *Stripping*, 210
29 Duffy, *The Stripping*, 212.
supernatural and superstitious nature embedded within their texts. Many of the rubrics preceding the prayers had outlandish claims such as:

This prayer was showed unto St Augustine by revelation of the Holy Ghost, and who that devoutly say this prayer, or hear her read, or heareth about them shall not perish by fire or water, neither in battle nor in judgement. And he shall die no sudden death, and no venom shal poison him that day. And what he asketh of God he shall obtain if it be to the salvation of his soul, and when thy soul shall depart from thy body it shall not enter hell.

These types of promises attached with fabricated origin stories could be found in many Medieval primers. They represent a late Medieval piety that embraced miracles and divine intervention in the human world.

During the Henrician Reformation, primers did not disappear. Henry’s reign represented a tentative step towards Protestantism for the English Church, but primers continued to be published, including an official version in 1545 that stripped the Medieval primer of its unacceptable Catholic attributes; this 1545 version still retained the basic idea of a primer. However, during Edward’s more unabashedly Protestant reign, primers were radically changed. Then when Mary reintroduced Catholicism to the nation, primers also returned. Unlike Henry’s reign, there was no “official” version; publishers put forth many different versions which were all tolerated as long as they stayed within the bounds of Catholic “orthodoxy.”

On the surface these primers seem to fit into a broader trend that Brad Gregory has noticed: early-modern Western states began “to privatize religion and to distinguish it from public life.” Primers did

31 Duffy, Marking the Hours, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 142.
32 Duffy, Stripping, 536.
present a legitimate way for early modern Christians to practice religion outside the communal sphere in the privacy of their own homes. But, at least in Mary’s reign, primers functioned as more than a private prayer book. The purpose of the books was not so much to give the laity a way around communal worship as it was to give the laity a better understanding and way of functioning within the public, national church. Through these primers, Marian Christians learned about the liturgical calendar, read essential pieces of scripture for worship such as the Psalms and the four Gospel passages and even received theology in the form of treatises that helped them to understand what was happening at the altar on Sundays (and other mass days).

**Primer Contents**

In the medieval period, the contents of individual manuscript versions of the primer was highly variable: each monastery produced vastly different sets of hours. But with the rise of the printing press and printed primers, a certain degree of standardization occurred, even though different printers still produced different primers with different emphases.\(^{34}\) The 1557 Wayland Primer, one of the primers considered in this thesis, has a typical selection and ordering: an Almanake, the four Gospel Passages, the Passion according to St. John, the Creed of St. Athanasius, a Prayer to the Trinitie, the Matins, the Prime (Hours of our Ladye), the Evensong, the Compline, General Prayers, the fifteen O’s, 7 Penitential Psalms, the Letany, the Dirige, the Commendations, the Psalms of the Passion, the Saynt Heriones Psalter, and more General Prayers. While this set of contents was typical for Marian primers, there was certainly variation. For instance, the Valentin primer, the other primer which this thesis focuses on, contains a treatise preface (The maner to lyve wel), the prayers of Solomon and other sections not used in

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\(^{34}\) Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 122.
the 1557 Wayland primer. Both the standardization and variation are important aspects of the Marian primers as a whole: the recurrence of a somewhat set order with most of the same prayers shows a church with a unified vision on how and what to pray; the small variations through the addition or subtraction of certain parts demonstrates a church that was by no means under one iron ecclesiastical fist. Contrary to the common traditionalist assumption that the Marian church was one that forced its doctrines and practices upon an unwilling population, the variations in the primers show that there was an active market with printers catering to different tastes in piety. This is in contrast to the church of Henry VIII which did try to force one primer, the King’s Primer, on a population that was at least somewhat unwilling.

The Language of the Primers

The Wayland Primer did approach the status of an “official primer” in that it had a royal endorsement that acted as its introduction. The 1557 version of this primer demonstrates the nature of Catholicism during Mary’s reign. The first notable feature about it is that it is in both “Englishe and Latine,” as the title page proclaims. Mary’s reintroduction of Roman Catholicism meant that the English services which had been instituted during the reign of Edward were replaced with the traditional Latin mass. Latin again became the language of religion during the reign of Mary. It is no surprise that the primers that were produced during her reign were therefore in Latin. This was typical during the Medieval period; before the Henrician Reformation, few English primers were in circulation due to fears about Lollardy. For Medieval laity this posed no problem: while they did not speak Latin, they understood liturgical Latin in a way that rendered the primer somewhat comprehensible for them. The use of Latin in

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35 Duffy, Stripping, 537.
36 The Prymer in Englishe and Latine after Salisbury use, (London: John Wayland, 1557), cover.
37 Duffy, Stripping, 213.
this primer thus signals a return to an age when Latin formed the entirety of the liturgical language of the English Church. English Primers were also not new at this point either. With the Henrician Reformation and the official 1545 primer, English became the language of Protestant primers. Thomas Cranmer provided artful translations of the prayers that had been so important to Medieval piety. From that point until Mary’s accession primers were exclusively printed in English. This primer’s use of both English and Latin represents then a synthesis of two religious traditions; both had resonance with the English people at this point.

In the Book of Common Prayer, Thomas Cranmer decided to make the monastic tradition of praying the daily office nine times a day accessible to lay people by combining the services into two simple services: Morning and Evening Prayer. The 1557 Wayland primer reverses this trend of Protestant simplicity by dividing the day back into the traditional monastic hours of prayer. These office services also reintroduce traditional Catholic piety: particularly its emphasis on Christ’s suffering and Mary’s primacy in the story of salvation. For instance in the Evensong service, one of the concluding prayers meditates on Mary at foot of the cross,

> With motherly pity in hart inclosed, her childes ded bodi she did behold: when at evesong tyme fro the crosse lifted, that heavenly pledge in armes she gan hold. She wept and kyst his mouth an hudrethfold the teares so abundaunt fro her eyes twayne, they wet al his bodye lyke rayne.  

In this prayer, the devoted faithful of the Marian church are invited to participate with Mary in the mourning of her son and to imagine his body in the same way and at the same time of day.

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38 *Prymer*, Wayland, Evensong page 12.
she did. This imaginative connection across space and time characterized late medieval
catholicism as well as the piety encouraged in the office services of this primer.

The 1557 primer begins the way most primers begin: with an almanake, a way for lay
people to keep liturgical time. Medieval Christians lived their daily lives by this calendar and its
inclusion in the Marian primer shows a continuing sense of liturgical time. During the English
Reformation, many of the days that had previously been held as feasts within this calendar were
downgraded: only the major holy days were retained in Protestant calendars. The Marian primer
brings back these holy days, including the holy day of “Thome Martiris” in December (Thomas
Becket), a saint that Henry VIII worked particularly hard to stamp out of English piety.

**Scripture in the Marian Primers**

Following this section are four important passages from the Christian gospels. The first
passage is the opening of St. John’s gospel (In the beginning was the Word...); the second is the
annunciation story from St. Luke’s gospel; the third is the story of the three visitors from the east
from St. Matthew’s gospel; and the fourth is the sending out of the disciples found in Mark’s
gospel. As Duffy points out, these four gospel passages were extremely important to Medieval
Christians.\(^{39}\) If Medieval Christians knew any biblical passages well, it was these four. Medieval
Christians did not take a rationalistic approach to these passages however; they instead saw in
these texts “an element of the numinous greater than might seem immediately warranted by their
function as texts.”\(^{40}\) There was something magical and supernatural about the texts which led to
the addition of all sorts of charms or rubrics in the margins of previous primers that tried to

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\(^{40}\) Duffy, *Stripping*, 217. Duffy notes that these texts were often associated with the actual Gospel books
used in the liturgy. These books were frequently “kissed, censed and venerated” and were thought to hold a
special power to bless and heal. Duffy asserts that this sort of power was transposed to the primers which
would use passages from these venerated books.
harness an extraordinary power that laid latent in the text itself. The Medieval focus was not so much on the theology presented in the text as its other worldly power. For this reason these four gospel passages, even though they were lifted straight out of the Biblical text, were omitted from the Protestant primers of Henry VIII’s reign after 1534. While the inclusion of these texts in the 1557 primer at first seems to suggest a return to a medieval understanding, it is worth noting that, like the rest of the primer, the passages appear in English as well as Latin. Anyone literate in the English language could understand these passages for their actual content. The passages have become a source of information as opposed to being merely a source of supernatural power and could be “employed by the laity as blessings, and as lessons in salvation history.” Absent from these passages are any sort of indication of a magical interpretation: no rubrics or notes in the margins enticing people to see these passages as anything other than purely Biblical passages. Instead, at the conclusion of the passage from St. John, a tiny anthem appears along with a collect. This collect, while ancient in origin, nonetheless carries a Protestant emphasis:

Protector in te sperantium Deus: sine quo nihil est validum; nihil sanctum: multiplica super nos misericordiam tuam ut te rectore, te duce sic traseamus per bona temporalia, ut non amittamus eterna. Per Christum dominum nostrum. Amen.

O God the protector of all that trust in thee: without who nothing is of value; nothing is holy: multiplye thy mercye uppon us: that throughe thy governaunce and guiding we may so passe in goods temporall, that we loose not the eternall. By Christe our Lord. Amen.

In addition to this collect’s Protestant reliance on God’s guidance as the only element that saves man, it is worth noting that Wayland has kept Cranmer’s translation of “sperantium” as trust

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41 Wizeman, *The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor’s Church*, 207
42 Wizeman, *The Theology*, 207
43 *Prymer*, Wayland, Gospel Section, page 3.
instead of the more literal meaning of hope.\textsuperscript{44} This small difference in words demonstrates a Protestant emphasis on faith; man is to trust in God alone for his salvation, not hope for him through the performance of various good works. Even if this minute translation detail does not exactly prove that Wayland was a raging Protestant, the use of this specific prayer in the middle of a group of four English Bible passages brings to light at least some of the influence of English Protestantism. This section of the primer appeals, at least in its language, to Protestant sensibilities.

In addition to the use of whole scriptural passages in English, the Marian Primers also employ a certain type of prayer with its basis in the Bible. One good example of these scriptural prayers can be found at the end of the Valentine Primer: the three prayers attributed to Solomon.\textsuperscript{45} The first of these prayers comes directly from \textit{The Wisdom of Solomon}, chapter 9, and is an elegant address to “The god of our fathers” to send his “wysedom fro thy holy heues and fro the see of thy mythtiness that it may be with me.” The second prayer comes from \textit{1 Kings}, chapter 3, another prayer with humility as its guiding theme. It asks that the petitioner be given “a hart to be taught.” The use of these prayers is on one level curious: they are the petitions of a king which seem to have nothing to do with the everyday concerns of the ordinary Marian laity. The prayers do have spiritual meaning: both are pleas for humility and wisdom, universal virtues. But the first person singular nature of the prayers (as opposed to the ordinary liturgical first person plural), transports the pious Marian layperson into the Biblical story. By praying scripture, users of this prayer book entered into scripture in an intimate way. These scripture based prayers show

\textsuperscript{44} Marion Hatchett, \textit{Commentary on the American Prayer Book} (Seabury: 1980), 189.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Here after Followeth the prymer in Englyshe and latin sette out alonoge after the use of Sarum} (Robert Valentin, 1556), cxxxi.
the impact of the Protestant Reformation while also demonstrating how Marian Catholics were experimenting with a new type of piety. Instead of limiting themselves to the study and examination of scripture, Marian Catholics incorporated scripture into their private prayer lives.

The final prayer in this set comes from the 30th chapter of *Proverbs*. Once again humility is its theme, but it has an interesting request:

Two thynges Lord I demanded that thou woldest not denye me untyll I dye. Wanyte and wordes of resyng make farre from povertye or rhyches gyve me not. Onely gyve me that is necessary for my lyvyng: lefte perchance beynge in full abundance I myght be provocked [to] deny thee and saye who is lorde? Or compleeyd by necessytie I myght steale and forsweare the name of my god.

The central fear of this prayer is that the faithful be separated from a true knowledge of the name of God. This prayer is a request for God’s aid against heresy and the perseverance of right belief. Its placement at the very end of the primer as the last prayer in the entire collection is significant: it reveals the obsession of both early modern Protestant and Catholics for religious truth. For Marian Catholics, this prayer also served as a kind of reminder that the nation had forsworn the “name of god” by separating itself from the Catholic Church during the two previous reigns and subtly admonishes Catholics to continue to adhere to right belief.

William Wizeman plays down this use of scripture in his brief analysis of the Marian primers. He states that:

The editors of the Marian primers responded to Protestant demands for access to scripture with caution. Believing fears of unsupervised Bible-reading to be confirmed by the disintegration of Catholic religion in England, they did not provide extensive translations. Instead they published scriptural passages, paraphrased or in translation, that had been contained in traditional collections of prayers, or had been printed in the officially sanctioned King’s Primer. These texts consisted of psalms that were part of monastic worship, gospel passages that supported devotion to Christ and his passion, or moralizing selections from the Old Testament. It seems that the type of text-- i.e., that it pointed to traditional piety-- was the key to the editors’ selection.47

The idea that religious officials were “cautious” with the use of vernacular scripture completely ignores the plans that Cardinal Pole had made at his 1555 legatine synod in London to create a vernacular Bible for public use (albeit, it would use a more Catholic translation). While this book never came to fruition due to the brevity of Mary’s reign, the primers must have acted as the next best source of scripture for the common laity. While Wizeman is correct that the “type of text” determined its inclusion, this does not necessarily equate with “caution” on the part of the editors. Cranmer’s Protestant Book of Common Prayer uses the same method: he only included those passages of scripture necessary for liturgical worship. Wizeman seems to miss the point that the primers were prayer books which by necessity limited the amount of scripture included. But the very inclusion of whole passages of English scripture along with prayers that draw heavily on Biblical passages was a significant feature for these primers. It signaled a complete break with the Medieval past and its suspicions of vernacular scriptural passages. It also shows

47 Wizeman, The Theology, 208.
how the Protestant use of scripture had deeply influenced the English market. Catholics were literally using the Bible to pray.

**Images in the Marian Primers**

While Marian primers drew a lot of their content from an earlier Medieval period, there are many clear signs of a break with the Medieval past. Perhaps one of the most powerful
indications of this trend can be found in the images within the books. The 1557 Wayland Primer, towards the end of the prayer book, has a section entitled “Psalms of the Passion.” The use of these seven psalms that have associations with the death of Christ was very typical in both Medieval and later Protestant primers. In A Goodly Primer, published in 1535, the Psalms are presented towards the end of the book with simple explanations as the heading for each psalm linking the words of David with a deeper Christological symbolism. Just like Lutheran primers, which tended to have moralizing and educational elements, this 1535 primer shows a Protestant tendency to explain and educate but avoids presenting the psalms as a sort of gateway to an experience of the passion itself. The 1557 Wayland Primer, following Medieval Sarum precedent, does not attempt to explain the psalms but rather offers a litany at the end of the psalms. This litany connects the faithful with the two central characters at the foot of the cross: both the Virgin Mary and the Evangelist John. In a way, this litany invites the Christian to go to the cross with Mary and the John, to enter directly into the passion itself which will deliver “fro sorowful heavines, & bryng us to the ioyes of Paradise.” The Marian Primer thus preserves the Medieval tendency to reach past one’s current time and place and directly experience the divine drama as enacted upon the cross (the same tendency that could be found in the celebration of the Mass). In both a 1527 version and the 1557 Wayland Primer, a picture introduces this section. While the content (though not the languages) of these sections are the same, these pictures are vastly different. The more Medieval 1527 version depicts a Christ removed from his actual passion. He stands with his cross and his stigmata, but he is not actually in the act of dying. The picture is cluttered and does not make use of the Renaissance artistic method of one point

perspective to create a center with pictorial depth. Instead, various symbols surround Christ and rosary beads form a frame around him. In the four corners surrounding the beads are Medieval men and women in acts of devotion. This image has a whiff of the superstitious about it; the person praying through these psalms is not invited to think of the event as historical so much as mystical. In the 1557 Wayland version, however, Christ is present on the cross, in the middle of his agony, between the two thieves. There is a landscape behind him and other characters in front of him. There is also a single center to the image, Christ himself, which all the lines of the image point toward; this creates a Renaissance sense of balance. This image thus represents an actual historical event; the realism of the image invites the Faithful to consider the event itself in its historical reality. This image thus appeals not to a Medieval Christian in devotion but to an early modern one with a more humanistic concern about the events described in Scripture rather than mystical symbols produced by tradition.

**Treatises in the Marian Primers**

In some primers, though not all, publishers included short treatises in addition to prayers. The purpose of these treatises was not polemical so much as educational. This supports Duffy’s claim that the Marian church was more interested in worship than polemic.\(^{50}\) The Valentine primer includes one such treatise: “The Maner to lyve well.”\(^{51}\) This treatise, by Jean Quentin, was written before the English Reformation had taken full effect, but its contents exhort the laity to live a good Christian life. One of the central requirements of a good Christian is public worship. After rising in the early morning for private prayer, the reader of this treatise is to “abyde in the churche the space of a lowe masse.” At this point in history lay Catholics, except at

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\(^{50}\) Duffy, *Stripping*, 529-530.

\(^{51}\) Prymer, Valentin, iii.
the Easter mass and the final mass of one’s life, did not actually receive Communion.\textsuperscript{52} But as this treatise exemplifies, the laity were expected to go to mass nonetheless and be physically present even though they could not physically receive. This mode of Catholic worship thus emphasized community: while private prayer was important, it was also important to be present at communal prayer. But while at this mass, the treatise gives a list of thoughts that the lay person should pray through. The treatise instructs the person at prayer to “thynke a whyle on the goodnesse of god/ on his divyne myghte and vertue. Thynke what gyf[t] he hath gyven to you to create you so nobly as to his ymage and lykenesse.” The God of this treatise is thus a fundamentally good God. The treatise does direct the layperson’s attention to the “sharpe judgement at the houre of dethe.” But the treatise counters this more Medieval image of a judgemental God with the constant assurance that of how “derely he redemed you gyvyng his precious body/ his blode/ and his soule.” This emphasis on the passion and crucifixion of Christ fits in with the broader Marian tendency to focus on the cross.\textsuperscript{53} The God of this treatise is thus ultimately a loving God. Diarmaid MacCalluch has pointed out that the use of the term “Protestant” is itself problematic and charged; he instead advocates the use of the description “evangelical” because the “word has the advantage that it was wide used and recognized at the time, and it also encapsulates what was most important to this collection of activsts: the good news of the Gospel, in Latinized Greek, the \textit{evangelium}.”\textsuperscript{54} But MacCulloch’s new description is itself problematic because Catholics of this period were also embracing the ideas of \textit{evangelium}: as this treatise shows the idea of a loving God reaching forth to save his creation through the

\textsuperscript{52} Duffy, \textit{Stripping}, 95.
\textsuperscript{53} Duffy, \textit{Stripping}, 536.
\textsuperscript{54} MacCulloch, \textit{The Reformation}, XX.
actions of Jesus on the cross deeply impacted Catholic piety and thought as well. Even though this treatise came prior to the Reformation, its inclusion in this primer shows that Marian Catholics, like their Protestant compatriots, were also embracing a more modern idea of a loving, forgiving God rather than an older, Medieval view of a judgemental God.

**Prayers in the Marian Primers**

To a large degree, the Marian primers were standardized and shared many similar sections with previous primers. But in the sections devoted to individual prayers, prayers not necessarily used in a service but simply for isolated devotion, a greater degree of variation occurred. The general prayer sections of the primers gave publishers a chance to cater directly to what their clients wished to see in their prayer books. Because there was no “official” primer, market forces had a larger role in determining the shape and contents of the primers than religious authorities. The prayers which were included in these sections thus reveal a great deal about the piety and beliefs of individual Christians.

Prayers focusing on the eucharist were a common type of prayer that was included in these general prayer sections. For instance towards the end of the Valentine Primer and also at the end of the general prayer section following the compline in the Wayland Primer, the publisher includes two prayers to be prayed before and after receiving communion. To receive communion the faithful layperson should pray:

O mercyful Lord I am not worthy that thou shuldest entre into my synfull house: yet not withstadynge thou hast sayd who that eateth my fleshe and drinketh my blood thee

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55 Another example of the ideas of *evangelium* penetrating Catholic thought can be seen in Cardinal Pole himself. As Thomas Mayer points out in his biography (*Reginald Pole*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29.) Pole himself espoused the “Protestant” idea that faith was the most important component in the salvation formula.
dwelleth in me and I in him wherfore have thou lord mercy upon my synne: by the receyvyng of this thy body fleshe and blood. And that I receyve it not to damynacyon but through thy mercy: to the helth of my soule: and in the remissyon of my synnes by thy paynfull passyon.56

The introduction to this prayer comes from Matthew 8:8, when the centurion tries to stop Jesus from coming into his house out of humility. Again, the primer makes use of a scriptural prayer (see above discussion on the prayers of Solomon). The prayer also demonstrates the importance of the Eucharist for the Marian Church. It was the sole way in which God could “dwell” in the laity and that the laity could “dwell” in God. The prayer after the reception of the communion expands on the importance of the sacrament. It is the way in which the laity can avoid damnation and judgement. Through the reception of communion, the faithful can “lede and lyve in charitable lyfe” while “here living so that I may herafter come to eternal life” (cxxviii).

Communion, as the publisher of this primer and the Marian church as a whole asserted, was salvation itself. These prayers typify and represent Marian Eucharistic theology with their emphasis on the idea that communion acts to save the sinner and restore him to a “charitable” life.

The “Conspicuous” Absence

The emphasis on the eucharist that these prayers demonstrate fits in with Wooding’s claim that Marian Catholicism was defined by a “vision of a church united by communion with Christ [through the eucharist], rather than by earthly authority.”57 Wooding asserts in her work that English Catholicism downplayed the role of the papacy and viewed it as merely an

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56 Prymer, Valentin, cxxviii.
57 Wooding, Rethinking, 126
administrative necessity to bind the universal church under one authority. There is some political legitimacy to this claim since the accession of Pope Paul IV after Julius III put Mary and Pole in an awkward position. Paul IV had a personal hatred for Pole along with the Spanish (i.e. Phillip, Mary’s husband). After declaring war on her husband Mary found herself “ironically cast in the role of political enemy of the pope.”

Aside from this political reason, Woodings’ point can also rest on the “conspicuous” absence of ideas of papal authority in the literary output of Marian writers. As Peter Marshall points out, this claim has been “vigorously disputed by revisionist scholars.” Duffy points to Pole himself and states that through his leadership, “loyalty to ‘the holy father, Pope of Rome’ became the mark of dynastic allegiance as well as religious orthodoxy.” Wizeman has sifted through the theological works of the Marian reign and concluded that “Marian Catholic theologians presented papal authority firmly and unequivocally.” But apart from the work of theologians and the leadership of the Marian church, the primers seem to support Wooding’s claim that, broadly speaking, the papacy was not a large element of Marian Catholicism. The Marian primers do not try to emphasize the role of the papacy and its spiritual authority. One section that particularly shows this is the “Letanye” of the Wayland Primer. This litany, unlike Cranmer’s English Litany a decade earlier, contains the usual Catholic list of saints who are asked to pray for the faithful. The litany moves on to pray for all sorts of requests including the governance of the church that “all the degrees of holy religion be kept and saved.” Bishops and

59 Wooding, Rethinking, 127-128.
60 Marshall, Reformation, 99.
61 Duffy, Fires, 48.
63 Primer, Wayland, Letanye page 7.
abbots are prayed for (which is ironic because Mary did very little to help reestablish monastic life) as is the English monarchy, but there is no specific mention of the pope. The papacy was thus not an institution which English Catholics prayed particularly fervently about.

**Conclusion**

The Wayland and Valentine primers shows that Marian Catholicism was deeply influenced by Medieval Catholicism. It uses much of the same format and many of the same prayers and readings that upper class Medieval Christians could find in their primers. But the Wayland Primer also shows that Marian Catholicism was influenced by the Protestant Reformation as well; Marian Catholicism was thus also a more “modern religion.” The very acceptance of English as a valid language to understand prayers and Biblical passages exposes the modern nature of this religion. While no zealous Protestant would have used this primer with all its references to the Holy Mother and the various saints that the Reformers were so suspicious of, an average literate lay person who was Catholic in practice but influenced by the revolutions of the Protestant Reformation under Henry VIII and Edward VI would have been comfortable using this spiritual resource.

The sale and use of the two primers analyzed in this thesis verifies the broader claim of the revisionists from Duffy forward: Mary’s religion was not antiquated and unwanted, but dynamic and fluid. While these two primers build off Medieval liturgy, they include elements that were not characteristic of the Medieval period. These two primers embrace scripture in a new way and also reflect a more centralized focus on Jesus and his cross. Moreover, the primers seem to fit more with Wooding’s view that Mary’s church was more insular rather than Duffy and Wizeman’s assertion that her church was wholly connected to the continental church and
was somehow a leader in the counter-reform movement. Even though primers represent a small fraction of the literary output in Marian England, they are in many ways more important than the rest. These were not academic, theological works that appealed only to an educated elite. They functioned as books of prayer, a very intimate and personal type of book that a broad portion of the population had access to. The lack of emphasis on papal supremacy coupled with the extensive use of English scripture was the result of a country that had been separated from the papacy and had grown accustomed to an English Bible in parish churches for over a decade. Instead of “rolling back” these elements of Protestantism, the publishers of these primers targeted their specifically English clients. It is also fitting that both of these primers are according to the “use of Sarum.” The Sarum (Salisbury) Rite was a distinctively English liturgy. It was the liturgy that Cranmer had turned to in order to craft his Book of Common Prayer. It was also this English liturgy that the compilers of these primers employed. These two primers, which are good representations of the rest of the market of primers, are thus essentially English Catholic books rather than strictly Roman Catholic books.

English identity, during the 16th century, was largely influenced by religious identity. The nation’s church became a defining feature of the emerging early-modern English state. As the revisionists have demonstrated, it was not necessarily the birth of Protestantism that created this modern state. Instead it was a broader process of hybridization which helped change a Medieval church into a modern church. Mary’s church was a key part of this process. The primers produced during her reign show that her church was part of this dynamic process that eventually produced the unique Anglican church, a church which drew elements from both Catholicism and Protestantism. These primers reveal the fluidity which was at work throughout
the 16th century that eventually gave the early English state its early national church. This national church, like Mary’s church, sought to minister to the English, not any other group of people. The primers are an example of a national church appealing to the hearts and minds of Englishmen, not necessarily Roman Catholics.
II. “Wonderful is the Strength and Force of Prayer”: The Disappearance of Primers

After Mary’s death in 1558, Elizabeth ascended to the throne and swept away her attempt to re-establish Catholicism. The Protestant Reformation under Elizabeth I’s reign created a church with recognizably Protestant ministers, an English liturgy and Calvinist tenets of faith. The piety of thousands of Christians changed as well: no longer would they go to hear a Latin mass at their parish church in a community. Instead individual prayer became an even more essential element of the Christian experience, albeit in a much altered form. The Catholic primers published during Mary I’s reign gradually disappeared, but there was still a market for primers at the beginning of the reign as Catholic sensibilities held on. Yet by the 1570’s official primers had disappeared and in their place stood a book, Richard Daye’s *A Booke of Christian Prayers* which contained only faint traces of Catholic form to project the new theology of the Church of England, Calvinism and monarchical values to English Christians. The mutation process that primers underwent during Elizabeth’s reign demonstrate the slow and gradual religious change of the English reformation

**Historiography of Elizabethan Protestantism**

During the reign of Elizabeth I, England once again became a Protestant nation. But exactly what this Protestantism actually entailed is a question which continues to divide historians. Rather than produce its own version of Protestantism-- “Anglicanism” would develop fully in the next century-- Elizabeth’s church imported many ideas from the continent. As Diarmaid MacCulloch notes, the English “added little that was original” to the theological ideas found on the continent.64 At the center of the Elizabethan church was the Queen herself and her

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own views were and remain ambiguous. For while the judgement of J.E. Neale holds that Elizabeth had to accept more Protestant elements than she wanted held sway, Christopher Haigh refutes that claim and thinks that Elizabeth had to accept more Catholicism than she wanted.  

Whichever the case, it is clear to historians today that Elizabeth detested certain elements of her new Protestant church: clerical marriage, the simplification of liturgical music and even preaching itself.  

From 1559 forward the church of Elizabeth had to struggle on with a settlement that was totally pleasing for no one. While previous historians have tended to think that the Protestant reformation united the English nation and created a sense of English nationality, many historians such as Patrick Collinson have pointed out that the Reformation had divisive tendencies as well.

During the reign of Elizabeth, two groups emerged within the Church of England. From the Admonition Crisis of 1572 forward, a group, later known pejoratively as the “Puritans,” came to call for more reform within the church. Another group came to be more or less satisfied with the Elizabethan settlement and were generally content with the state of the church, the “conformists.” The Puritans tended to make more noise so they have left a larger historical

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68 Marshall, *Reformation England*, 132. A note on religious terms in this paper: What Puritanism actually was continues to elude historians. Its development is hard to track because in many instances, as Marshall points out on 124, Puritanism cannot exactly be “juxtaposed with Protestantism.” Puritans worked largely within the Church of England and did not during Elizabeth’s reign call for a break from it. Puritanism, as this paper uses the term, strictly refers to those who simply saw the Elizabethan Settlement as inadequate; reform had to go on. Puritans as a group also tended to use Calvinist theology, although again this is confusing since Calvinism had spread throughout the Church by the end of Elizabeth’s reign. According to Marshall Elizabethan clergy, broadly speaking, considered “their Church as part of the ‘Reformed’ (Calvinist) family.” John Daye and his son Richard were not Puritans: they supported the Elizabethan regime and the state of its church. However, they were certainly Calvinists as their *Booke of Christian Prayers* demonstrates.  
footprint. However, Judith Maltby states that the emerging Puritans were never a majority; the silent majority of Prayer Book conformists dominated the church.\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{Introduction to \textit{A Booke of Christian Prayers}}

These Prayer Book conformists were the “spiritual leftovers” who were never fully converted to the brand of Protestantism propagated by the Evangelical leaders of the Elizabethan church.\textsuperscript{71} While these Prayer Book conformists may have been staunchly traditionalists in terms of their Catholic piety at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign, they gradually accepted the Prayer Book and began to use it as their “redoubt”; as Eamon Duffy argues, the use and “adherence to the prayer-book became the one way of preserving [Catholicism].”\textsuperscript{72} This type of Christian sought to preserve their piety in other ways as well. One significant method they employed was the continuing use of the primer. Elizabeth issued three official primers in 1560, 1565 and 1575. After the 1575 primer, this type of book fell out of general use. But another book was published in 1578, Daye’s \textit{A Booke of Christian Prayers} which bore remarkable similarity to the outward look of a primer.\textsuperscript{74} This thesis will consider the 1560 primer alongside Daye’s book to chart the development of the Reformation in terms of theology and piety under Elizabeth. In some ways publishers such as the John and Richard Daye were catering to a continuing sense of tradition amongst their conformist customers.

\textsuperscript{70} Marshall, \textit{Reformation England}, 171.
\textsuperscript{74} The book was published by John Daye and edited by his son Richard Daye
John Daye, whose printshop published *A Booke of Christian Prayers* was a successful printer of whose “commitment to the evangelical cause there can be no doubt.” He printed many Protestant works during the reign of Edward and continued to do so during Mary’s reign which led to his imprisonment. He worked tirelessly through his career to spread the ideas of the Reformation and through the use of a patent his “career demonstrated the power of the printing press both to shape public opinion and to enrich the holders of copyrights.” Richard Daye, the editor of this book, was both an ordained clergymen and his father’s printing partner. This arrangement did not last however because Richard (several years after the publication of *A Booke of Christian Prayers*) pirated some of his father’s previous works which led to a permanent rift between the two. Both, however, used the printing press to effectively spread their Protestant ideas.

Eamon Duffy has referred to *A Booke of Christian Prayers* as a “trojan horse” which furtively used Catholic aspects under a Protestant guise. While this thesis shall consider these Catholic elements as a part of the fluid dynamic of the English Reformation, Duffy mischaracterizes this book as well. On one level Duffy correctly points out the book’s semblance, especially visually, to printed primers. But the book, while it contains many Catholic aspects, instructs readers on how to transform an older approach to prayer into an appropriately Protestant one. While it may contain hints of an older Catholic format, as Duffy states, the book

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does not in any way conceal its attempt to offer a radically different approach to prayer than Catholic primers. It may have been produced to cater to a “conformist” clientele intent on clutching onto the aspects of Catholic piety, but the book itself is thoroughly Calvinist showing that Reformed Protestantism had become the dominant ideology by 1578.

Micheline White has analyzed this process of Protestant transformation for prayer method. She posits that reformers advocated a complete shift in the way the faithful were to offer and understand the act of prayer, an argument that can be applied to Daye’s book as well. While A Booke of Christian Prayers targets conformists eager to hold onto ceremony and Catholic prayers, the book also tries to persuade its readers that prayer is not a work of merit but one of humility in response to God’s overwhelming grace.

Richard Daye’s Introduction

The key to this book lies in the introduction written by Richard Daye. In this introduction, he outlines how the reader is to interpret and use the following prayers; it is a purpose statement which illuminates the motivations of the editor in producing this collection of prayers. Daye’s central problem is addressing the very purpose of prayer. At the outset of the book, he moves the work outside the bounds of a primer; this introduction lays bare his argument about the correct, Reformed sense of prayer. To support his argument he uses a plethora of Biblical sources. This Protestant method of argumentation sets up his thesis that prayer is not a work but a response. The benefits of prayer do not so much increase “by use,” but are requited “by thanks.” Prayer does not have efficacy or power “of itself.”

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“humble thyself before the feet of his majesty” and to remind a Christian of his “hourly want of grace.”  

Micheline White has analysed a translation of sermons of John Calvin by Anne Lock (an important female writer in Tudor England). White shows in this essay that Lock “attacks Catholic devotional experiences and seeks to replace them with Reformed ones.” Lock in particular focuses on Hezekiah’s song and Psalm 50. Lock is horrified by the Medieval practice of using these texts as “a way of experiencing the anguish and hopes of the dead; as a way of undertaking heartfelt contrition; and as a way of offering satisfaction.” In fact, most of Medieval primers functioned as methods of satisfaction: to pray a prayer was to make up a spiritual debt (though as explained above the Marian primers had a move away from this idea.) Calvinism, as Lock expresses through translation, scoffs at this idea: humans cannot truly be devoted to God through prayer because of their sinfulness. Rather it is only through God’s mercy that humans can learn by prayer how wretched they are and have a change of heart. For a Calvinist, prayer’s only value is in reminding the devoted Christian of his own sinfulness and causing him to rely solely on God’s grace. As White concludes, Lock’s text shows that there was a general effort to “reform all aspects of private prayer, including the assumptions readers brought into their devotional closets.”

The process that White sees in Anne Lock’s book is also present in Christian Prayers. Richard Daye’s introduction parallels Lock’s Calvinist book in that it completely throws away

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81 Ibid, 436.
82 Ibid, 431.
83 White, “Dismantling Catholic,” 95.
84 Ibid, 98.
85 Ibid, 103.
86 Ibid, 113.
Medieval ideas of prayer and introduces a Protestant method of prayer. As Daye explains, prayer cannot be a dead series of words that a person mindlessly repeats in order to satisfy a misplaced sense of penance. A believer must be fully and personally engaged with his prayers. He must prepare his “soul to pray with tears.” Daye urges his reader to avoid praying “at adventure” because it is “unprofitable, proceeding of custom from the lips, not of zeal from the heart.” The whole point of Daye’s collection of prayers is that they are “zealous and godly.” For instance “A Prayer to God for his Spirit, and grace to pray effectually” reads,

Stir up my heart and mind, O Lord: come into me, O Spirit of God, that I may come unto thee with heart and soul, not with mouth and lips only. Give us thy grace, that we may call upon thee, as true worshippers in spirit and truth, with the inward intention, without hypocrisy and ambition.

This is actually only a small portion of the prayer. Most of the prayers in this collection are in fact more like essays than short, structured collects as found in Medieval primers. Daye has chosen these prayers specifically because they are supposed to move the believer: he is supposed to see God’s holiness, his own sinfulness and his utter need for grace. This Calvinist agenda transforms the whole idea of prayer collections: gone are primers which offer small pieces of spiritual food for the faithful layman to chew on and repeat incessantly. Instead this book offers full, hearty meals in each prayer which should actively change a person’s faith and thereby, produce a better Protestant.

Sin in A Booke of Christian Prayers

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87 A Booke of Christian Prayers, 432.
88 Ibid, 434.
89 Ibid, 457.
Beyond the introduction’s strong emphasis on sin and repentance, the book as a whole contains many prayers which specifically deal with sin and many prayers that implicitly employ a more Protestant understanding of sin. This emphasis on sin stands in contrast with the primer tradition’s fixation on the ideas of death. Instead of dwelling death, *A Booke of Christian Prayers* contains well over a dozen prayers about sin including “A confession of our sins,” “A prayer for remission of our sins,” “A comfort after craving of mercy,” “A prayer of God’s mercy received,” “A prayer in commendation of God’s mercy received,” “A complaint of a sinner, that he sinneth again after repentance.” The general confession which begins this cycle is actually taken from John Calvin’s French liturgy.\(^90\) It contains the quintessential Calvinist formula about sin: humans are “bred and born in sin and corruption, and that since...birth have not ceased.”\(^91\) Calvin was noted for his doctrine of total depravity which held that human beings were utterly sinful and in total need of God’s grace.\(^92\) The prayer for remission of sins continues this idea that humans are utterly helpless since their deeds “displease” God and that it is God who is the “party that doth first offer peace and atonement.”\(^93\) This confession of sin stands in stark contrast with the prayer offered in the 1559 primer. This prayer lacks the formula of total depravity and instead emphasizes human agency: it is man who sins against “the throne of glory.”\(^94\) It is not man’s birth that has doomed him so much as his conscious actions, and with his conscious thought he now returns to the Lord who acts as “a tower of strength, a place of refuge, and a defensible God, namely against the face of the fiend, who, like a roaring lion, shall be then most ready to

\(^90\) *Ibid*, 488.
\(^91\) *Ibid*.
\(^93\) *A Booke of Christian Prayers*, 489.
devour.” Like the Calvinist prayer, God’s majesty and power are upheld in lofty terms in the 1559 prayer. The two prayers hold the same view of God: he is, in both, mighty and merciful. But the confession from 1559 primer shows that total depravity had not yet slipped into the Church of England’s theology.

By the 1570’s, however, the Church’s view on the condition of man had changed; the Calvinist idea that man was utterly ruined from birth had begun to significantly impact the prayer life of Elizabethan Christians. Because of this new view of man, the book also offers a prayer about despair. This prayer reads,

Many say to my soul, There is no help for him in his God. But thou, Lord, art my maintainer, my glory, and the holder up of my head. Depart not from me in the time of my need, but defend thou me, till this storm be overpast.96

As the Church adapted this new theology, the weight of sin began to seem overwhelming. Some later Puritans would unhealthily obsess about sin. For example, the London Puritan Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658) left a journal that records his constant struggle with the psychological weight of sin.97 These types of prayers which ask God to remove this sense of despair, a type of prayer totally absent in the 1559 and all previous primers, became a necessary part of Protestant piety.

Prayers Concerning Worship

The 1559 Primer contains two prayers concerning communion, one to be said before communion and one to be said after.98 Like the Marian primers only a few years before which

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95 *The Primer of 1559*, 112.
96 *A Booke of Christian Prayers*, 504.
98 *The Primer of 1559*, 15.
also contained prayers concerning communion (see discussion above), these prayers were included to emphasize the Eucharist and also to instill “correct” eucharistic theology. The prayer before “holy Communion” states:

We do not presume to come to this thy Table (O merciful Lord) trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold, and great mercies: we be not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table, but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us therefore gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood.

This prayer eventually became a part of the Communion service in the Book of Common Prayer. This prayer echoes many of the ideas in the Marian prayer before communion: it stresses the unworthiness of the receiver, the power of God to overcome this unworthiness, and the idea that Communion makes the receiver clean. Catholic ideas about Communion had not entirely disappeared by 1559. This prayer which is commonly called the “Prayer of Humble Access” in the modern Anglican church, comes from a Medieval tradition. After the Church stopped administering communion to lay people in the Middle Ages, only a priest would receive the communion he had just consecrated. A tradition arose in which the priest would utter a prayer about unworthiness and asking for “worthy reception,” even though these prayers were never a part of the official Latin liturgy.  

This prayer shows a Protestant shift in Eucharistic theology: now the congregation of lay people were also receiving and so they are also praying for worthy reception. The prayer cobbles together “phrases or concepts from the Liturgy of Saint Basil,

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Mark 7:28, a Gregorian collect (nos. 851 and 1327) which had been printed at the end of the 1544 litany, John 6:56, and the writings of Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologica, Part 3, Question 74, Article 1).  Together these phrases drawn from diverse sources convey an idea of Communion which is characteristic of the via media of Anglicanism, as it later developed. This idea of Communion was not purely Protestant since it treats Communion with such reverence.

Daye’s Book of Christian Prayers also contains a prayer before the reception of communion, which contains a more Calvinist view of communion. But perhaps more significantly the book contains an entirely new type of prayer not found in the 1559 primer: “A Prayer at our going to a Sermon.” This prayer shows a shift of emphases about Christian worship. The problem, according to this prayer, is that all are “ignorant, and overcast with the cloud of darkness. And as for true preachers, that teach as they ought to do, the number of them is very small.” If ignorance is the problem, then “teachers” are the solution. These teachers are to be granted “the treasure of thy wisdom, that he may pour it out upon us to our salvation.”

These teachers are to be responsible for pushing away thorns and producing good fruit among God’s people. While this book is not a Puritan work (see below discussion), it does contain hints of what would become important to later Puritanism. In Puritan thinking, the Church’s true power lies in its teaching and preaching, not its sacraments. As Alec Ryrie writes, the “real Puritan ambition was to establish a universal godly preaching ministry, proclaiming the true Word.”

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100 Hatchett, Commentary, 382.
101 A Booke of Christian Prayer, 515.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid, 516.
such as as the vestment controversy or the prophesying controversy. But these battles were only fought out of a “fear that the preaching of the Gospel was being stifled.”

Ryrie is correct in asserting that the real battles for the English church were not “won and lost in set-piece political and theological confrontations, but parish by parish soul by soul, in a myriad quiet battles and crises which are almost entirely hidden from us.” The inclusion of this prayer for wisdom through sermons reflects the “gradual but decisive tectonic shift” in the English church away from Catholic ideas about worship towards Protestant ideas.

This book has retained the idea of preparation present in earlier primers. But instead of preparing the faithful to receive Eucharist, this book directs the elect to prepare for the reception of wisdom in a sermon. While the book holds on to prayers which create a sense of preparation for Eucharist, the inclusion of prayers concerning sermons shows the emergence of new spiritual emphases in the Elizabethan church. The Daye publishing house was eager for conformists who might be tempted to use Eucharistic preparation prayers to begin also to look towards the sermon as a source of spiritual food.

**Monarchy in A Booke of Christian Prayers**

Richard Daye’s *A Booke of Christian Prayers* begins and ends in a similar manner. After the cover page, Daye presents a portrait of Elizabeth Regina. The portrait shows an exalted queen in the middle of prayer; a Bible lies open before her as she kneels with a gaze directed towards the Almighty. English Christians using this book would have been greeted with a powerful example of Protestant piety. A selection from 2 Chronicles follows this portrait, “Domine Deus Israel, non est similis tui deus in cælo et in terra: qui custodis pactum et

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misericordiam cum servis tuis qui ambulant coram te in toto corde suo” (O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant in steadfast love with your servants who walk before you with all their heart, 2 Chronicles 6:14). This selection from the Old Testament demonstrates the way Elizabethan Protestants related to the divine: they came to have “an increasingly intimate involvement with God, cemented in the bonds of a covenant made between him and his people.” As Collinson suggests, Elizabethan Protestants began to not only read the Bible more closely and intentionally than their Medieval ancestors, but began to equate England with Israel. Just as Solomon led the Israelites in building a temple for God’s glory in 2 Chronicles, Elizabeth, in the minds of these Protestants, was leading the nation in a divine way to build a reformed church, a new house for the living God.

However, as Elizabeth’s reign progressed, more and more Protestants did not see Elizabeth in these terms. The Elizabethan settlement of 1559 had officially converted the nation into a Protestant nation, but for an increasing number of more zealous Protestants, this settlement was not enough. These “godly” Protestants viewed the agreement of 1559 as less of a settlement and more as a step in a reforming process that had to continue. The settlement left the nation with a Book of Common Prayer that was too ritualistic, priests who still wore vestments, and bishops with too much power. As Puritanism began to arise in Elizabeth’s reign, it did not seek to split from the Church of England. However, it increasingly saw Elizabeth as more of a problem not a solution. This tendency came to a head in 1577 (a year before Daye’s book) when the godly Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Grindal, wrote to the Queen, “Bear with me, I beseech you,

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108 NRSV
109 Collinson, Birthpangs, 11.
Madam, if I choose rather to offend your earthly majesty than to offend the heavenly majesty of God.”

The Daye workshop was not a part of this trend. John Daye had powerful patrons such as William Cecil and Archbishop Matthew Parker, who encouraged him to produce works that upheld the legitimacy of the English Church. By far John Daye’s most famous and important publication, John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, was officially encouraged by the Council. William Cecil actively tried to use the printing presses as a way to strengthen the Queen’s influence, and specifically used Daye’s press as a way “to further the justification of the English Church and of Elizabeth’s position as monarch also.” John Daye and his son, at least by the standards of the 1570’s, were thus not Puritans.

The *Booke of Christian Prayers* proves this. In addition to the impressive opening portrait of Elizabeth, the book is riddled with prayers for Elizabeth. The book actually ends with a blessing for Elizabeth, asking for wisdom and tranquility for the monarch. In addition to this shorter prayer are a set of three extended prayers “for the Queen’s majesty.” These prayers both pray for Elizabeth, but also try to foster the idea that the Queen was God’s instrument since through her, God “hast restored again the liberty of our country, and the sincerity of thy doctrine, with peace and tranquility.” In the second prayer of the set, Elizabeth is prayed for as “thy chosen creature, the nurse of this thy church, our Queen and governor.” The prayers thank God

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112 Evenden, *Patents*, 121.
116 Ibid, 477.
that she escaped imprisonment and sickness and all other dangers; the drama of Elizabeth’s life
is transformed into a story of God’s salvific purposes for England.

In addition to its Calvinist attack on Medieval Catholic piety and its construction of a new Protestant method of prayer, this book also seems to be defending Elizabeth’s church from the other front: Puritanism. These prayers and images show Elizabeth to be a godly monarch fit to rule over God’s church as its royal governor. As the 1559 Primer (which is a basic reprint of the King’s Book of 1545) supports the Act of Royal Supremacy, the foundation stone of Henry and the young Elizabeth’s claim to rule over a Protestant English Church, this book continues this conviction against a rising tide of Puritan doubt.

Conclusion

A Booke of Christian Prayers marks a death and the birth of a new tradition. The book is arguably one of the last vestiges of a tradition of primers. It, like the older primers, tries to fit a person’s day into a sort of liturgical mold: it contains prayers for morning and evening and various events in between (such as “A prayer at the putting on of our clothes” or “A prayer to be said at our first going abroad”). And yet this book should not be read (as Eamon Duffy has) as a “Trojan horse.” While the decorations harken back to other early modern primers and the prayers in some ways contain echoes of older Medieval prayers, the book’s introduction completely discredits the older method of prayer. This book may adapt elements of the primer format, but its content stands in direct contention with the whole purpose of a primer. While a primer originally provided a method for lay people to adapt a monastic method of cyclical prayer, this book actually attacks the idea that human prayer contains any salvific value; it cannot accomplish anything since man is totally depraved. It is only useful in a practical sense: it awakens men to
their sinfulness and their need for God. The prayers in this book thus emphasize above all else man’s complete need for God and his inability to do anything of benefit for his own salvation. In this sense, the book is a result of the birth of the Calvinist thought in the Elizabethan English church.

But the book should also be read in defensive terms: it seeks to defend the Elizabethan regime against her Puritan detractors. The book contains emphases that Puritans would later champion, such as its prayer for sermons. Yet the book very boldly disputes any Puritan of the 1570’s who would see Elizabeth as anything but a blessing for the Church; the book specifically lists the ways that Elizabeth has blessed her church with the leadership required to found and cement Protestantism in England.

* A Booke of Christian Prayers * demonstrates the continuous process of fluctuation in the English Reformation. By presenting a body of prayers, John and Richard Daye produced a book that would have useful to the thousands of consumers who had previously bought primers. But these consumers were not buying a primer; they were buying the product of two decades of transformation in the English church. The book transformed notions of piety and made prayer an intensely personal process of introspection and conversion.
Epilogue

Daye’s *Booke of Christian Prayers* served an entirely different population than the one that used Valentine or Wayland’s primers. By the 1570’s, laypeople were not praying as a means of entering the Biblical narrative. They were not at the foot of the cross with Mary who “wept and kyst his mouth an hudrethfold the teares so abundaunt fro her eyes.” They were not looking to communion for the “helth” of their souls. Through the efforts of Daye and other printers who were changing the landscape of religious literature, people began to look to sermons for God’s “treasure of … wisdom, that he may pour it out upon us to our salvation.” They began to look deeply at their own sins and compare them with the overwhelming holiness of God. They were trying through “true faith” to rely upon God’s grace alone.

But in both the Marian primers and Daye’s book, a developing sense of English nationalism is on full display. The language in both sets of books is the one that was slowly becoming modern English. Both look towards the English monarchy, an institution that was increasing its power throughout the 16th century, for spiritual leadership. In each there is also a peculiarly English sense of spirituality, one that was not entirely like either the Catholic Counter-Reformation or the continental Protestant Reformation. An emerging English identity speaks, sometimes in a whisper, sometimes in a loud shout, throughout the English primer tradition and the newer tradition of Protestant religious literature that was developing in Elizabethan England.
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Here after Followeth the prymer in Englyshe and latin sette out alonage after the use of Sarum.


This prymer of Salysbury vse is set out a lo[n]g wout ony serchyng, with many prayers, and goodly pytctures in the Kale[n]der, in the matyns of our lady, in the houres of the crosse, in the .vii. psalmes, and in the dyryge. And be newly enprynted at Paris. 1527. Accessed October 28. Early English Books Online.