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The Devil in English Culture
c.1549-c.1660

by

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**Thesis submitted to the University of Kent at Canterbury for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This study addresses a neglected area of early modern culture. It examines in context the characteristically Protestant understanding of the Devil which emerged out of the English Reformation. The reformers felt Satan powerfully as a proactive force both within the individual conscience, and as a subversive element within the commonwealth. As a result they emphasised his power of internal temptation as the central dynamic of his agency. This re-emphasis aimed to bring satanic power into the commonplace of people's lives, and removed the possibility of an outright victory over the Devil (promised by traditional intercessory religious practices). But the reformers also aimed to provide an effective method by which Satan might be resisted, based on introspection, and an understanding of the place of temptation within the Protestant soteriological scheme. This re-emphasis was highly influential within early modern English culture. It focused the attention of the zealous godly on the intimate experience of diabolic power within their lives, whilst, more widely, it also provided a means by which Satan's presence might be felt vicariously through an identification with the experience of temptation. Moreover a concept of the temptation of the body politic emerged as a powerful political analogy which undermined the common notion of consensual politics, and would eventually be used as part of the justification for taking up arms against Charles I in 1642.

Thus, whilst studies of witchcraft and theodicy have emphasised that the early modern concept of the Devil was essentially a left-over from the medieval world, unable to face the challenge of the Enlightenment, this contextualised study has identified a sophisticated demonism in early modern England, in which Satan was powerfully experienced as a proactive force rather than a functionalist symbol of evil.

The study is organised thematically within a broad chronology. The first part deals with the emergence of a characteristically Protestant conception of the Devil from the midst of the English reformation to the theological and devotional literature of the first half of the seventeenth-century. Chapter 1 examines the Devil's place within the historiography of early modern Europe. Chapter 2 examines the recourse to the concept of diabolic subversion adopted by Protestant polemicists, who sought to demonstrate the hidden contrariety of the Catholic church, and who necessarily highlighted the unseen agency of the Devil as his most threatening power. Chapter 3 deals with the Reformation's changes of devotional emphasis, in which Satan's hidden threat was more precisely conceived as internal temptation by a literal invasion of the mind. Part 2 traces the influence of this shift of emphasis on demonological experience in the period. Chapter 4 looks at the self-conscious godly who left the most detailed accounts of suffering at Satan's hands, and who can be shown to have internalised the emphasis on temptation, but also to have shaped it into a personally meaningful experience. Chapter 5 examines the wider influence of temptation in literate culture. Examining the genre of pulp press murder and witchcraft narratives it argues that they relied for their meaning on the transmission of a vicarious experience to the audience, who

were to comprehend the danger of temptation by an empathic identification with the mind of the criminal. Part 3 provides a chronological history of the role of demonism in political discourse after the accession of Elizabeth I and challenges the prevalent historical view that demonology was a rhetoric of consensus. Chapter 6 examines the perception of active diabolic subversion of the body politic to the crisis of the 1640s. It argues that an understanding of the dynamic of temptation allowed for an analogous political conception that identified elements as *de facto* diabolic potentials within society. But these were heavily contested, and Catholics, Puritans, conformists and bishops might equally be characterised as devilish. Chapter 7 examines how demonism's potential for political expression was fully exploited during the Civil War, in which each side employed demonic images of the other which did not simply demonize, but in themselves encouraged an engagement with the politics of the conflict.

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Part One

The Concept of the Devil

Introduction: The Devil in Early Modern History

The English Reformation and the Protestant Devil

Baudelaire's famous comment—that the Devil's best trick was convincing mankind that he did not exist—was written in the hindsight of a scientific revolution and intellectual Enlightenment that had rendered Satan a rather unworthy hang-over of a more primitive age.¹ Yet for all its contemporary novelty and wit, it gave expression to a far older concern over Satan's effective agency. Take away the connotations of his non-existence (made possible by the late seventeenth-century fashion for scepticism) and the same concern can be found underlining much of the religious and moral polemic produced during the English Reformation and its aftermath. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestants in particular were afraid, not that the Devil might convince man that he did not exist, but that he would persuade them that he was absent from their everyday lives.

In England the concept of the Devil underwent a very subtle process of cultural change in the hands of the Protestant reforming clergy. They were convinced that Satan offered an intimate threat to every Christian, especially when his agency was hidden from perception by the physical senses. This conviction was driven equally by a sense of personal danger in the face of demonic power, and by a belief that diabolism lay concealed behind the superficial piety of the Catholic church. The reformers did not wish to overturn traditional belief in the Devil as they did more high-profile aspects of Catholic religion such as Eucharistic piety or the doctrine of good works, and hence there was no explicit reform of demonological theology. Instead a characteristically Protestant demonism emerged from a subtle re-alignment of emphasis rather than an open attack upon tradition. The central focus of this change was to emphasise the Devil's power of temptation, especially his ability to enter directly into the mind and plant thoughts

¹ 'Mes cher frères, n'oubliez jamais, quand vous entendrez vanter le progrès des lumières, que la plus belle ruse du diable est de vous persuader qu'il n'existe pas'. ('My dear brothers never forget, when you hear the progress of the Enlightenment praised, that the Devil's cleverest ploy is to persuade you that he does not exist'), 'Le joueur généreux,' in *Le Spleen de Paris*, quoted in J. B. Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithaca & London, 1986), p. 206.

within it that led men to sin. As a result of the fall of Adam, all men were born spiritually corrupted. This stock of inbred evil was supremely malleable under the Devil's influence, and the effect of temptation was akin, in the words of the Cambridge theologian William Perkins', to putting a match to gunpowder.² Such power had long been part of the Devil's remit³, but Protestant theologians now elevated internal temptation into the most important and dangerous aspect of his agency. Subversion was the now the Devil's greatest threat—of the pious aspirations of the individual Christian, and of the godly nation as a whole.

This change of emphasis had profound consequences for reformed liturgical and devotional practice. Most striking was the reform of the baptism ceremony that took place between 1549 and 1552.⁴ By the publication of the Second Edwardian Prayer Book the rite had been stripped of the exorcism that had assumed that all children were born possessed by Satan. Christian initiation, which in the Sarum rite had been assumed to involve a tangible victory over the Devil, was now understood to draw the individual into a life of perpetual struggle with the demonic.⁵ Liturgical reform did not seek to deprive Satan of his power by implying that clerical mediation was unnecessary, rather it was informed by a belief that Catholic ceremonial diverted attention from the real site of conflict with the diabolic. The Sarum baptism, and ceremonies such as Candlemas and Rogationtide, concentrated on the external protection offered by the priest's mediation of divine power, and by holy artefacts and saintly intercession.⁶ Protestants instead advocated a personal engagement with the demonic within the conscience, and they stressed that every individual was ultimately responsible for resisting Satan's influence.

The Protestant ministry took on a central role as adepts able to aid men in warding off the Devil. The Reformation encompassed a fundamental challenge to the spiritual power of the clergy, who were stripped of their ability to mediate

² William Perkins, *The Combat betweene Christ and the Divell displayed*, in *The Works of...William Perkins* (London, 3 vols., 1616-18) vol. III, p. 376.

³ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-hunt* (London, 1975), p. 73; Fernando Cervantes, 'The devil's encounter with America', in J. Barry, M. Hester & G. Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in early modern Europe: Studies in culture and belief* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 128.

⁴ *The booke of the common prayer, and administration of the sacramentes* (London, 1549), fols. 135-152v; and *The Boke of common praier, and administration of the sacramentes* (London, 1552), sigs. P4-Q2; on the reform of baptism see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1971, reprinted, 1991), pp. 62-64; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven & London, 1992), pp. 280-281, 473.

⁵ The Sarum ritual is available in English in J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West: A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965), pp. 158-179.

⁶ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 280-283.

between God and humanity in the Mass.⁷ But in one sense the reformation of the clergy turned full circle as the Protestant ministry shaped a role for themselves as the mediators, not of preternatural power, but of support for the individual in his personal battle with Satan. Emphasis on struggle and resistance imbued demonic temptation with a soteriological significance. Increasingly it was understood to be an internal dialogue in which Satan sought to undermine pious instincts by appealing to man's natural corruption, and, most threateningly, by introducing doubts as to election.⁸ Protestant divines recognised how profoundly disturbing temptation might be, and they set parameters on the experience in their sermons and conduct books. God permitted temptation as a test of faith but would never allow a godly man to be tempted beyond his endurance. In effect temptation provided an opportunity for the practice, and the display, of trust in God above normal piety. Thus for the self-conscious godly, Satan's attention to drawing them away from their proper devotions might indicate that they were among his special targets, whilst their response could be measured for its godliness against that set out in devotional literature. Prayer, faith and a sound understanding of the meaning of temptation became the most important weapons an individual could deploy against the Devil. In ideal at least, an educated Protestant ministry was the natural repository of these assets. Their sermons and conduct books rehearsed the arguments that could be employed against the Devil when he tempted men to sin or to despair. Ministers became personally involved in mediating the correct understanding of temptation to their parishioners, encouraging them to see their doubts as a demonic intrusion within their consciousness and providing them with doctrinal tenets and scriptural authorities to counter the Devil's assaults. This ideal found wide expression in accounts of death-bed sufferings and possession, in which struggle with the demonic was increasingly presented as a literal debate over soteriological truth carried out between the Devil and an expert minister. By the later seventeenth-century, when Samuel Clarke was collecting his 'godly lives', the minister as disputant with Satan had become an important part of the imagery of the Puritan 'hero'.⁹

More widely, temptation provided a dynamic by which to define the character, motivations and mentality of identifiable groups of satanic agents who

⁷ For a discussion of the spiritual power of the medieval clergy and the effect of the Reformation see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, chapters 2 & 3, *passim*, and especially the conclusions on pp. 87-89.

⁸ On religious despair more generally see John Stackniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford, 1991); Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, 1985), pp. 14-44; Michael Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 220-222.

⁹ See for instance the biographies of Richard Rothwell and Robert Balsom in Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines, famous in their generations for Learning and Piety, and most of them suffered in the cause of Christ* (London, 1677), pp. 72-73, 181-182,

were believed to act out of a shared interest with the Devil and his aims. Satan's kingdom was more a demographic than a physical reality, and every individual who allowed temptation to conflate his own natural corruption was considered to be one of its components. The term 'The Synagogue of Satan'—derived from the denunciation of the Jewish church in the Book of Revelations—was applied to the Catholic church by generations of Protestant polemicists. It expressed the insidious subversion Protestants believed to lie behind Catholic false doctrine and empty piety—a church that appeared Christian was in fact its opposite. More loosely the term was applied to other demonic agencies that were assumed to act in the same way. For instance, corrupting popular pastimes, such as the theatre or dancing, were believed to proffer seemingly harmless entertainment as a cover for the demonic idolatry they in fact encouraged.¹⁰ The notion that a fragile subjectivity might be prey to demonic invasion pervaded the depiction of sin and violent crime in both the pulp press and on the stage. Criminals were believed to fall progressively under the sway of the Devil as he tempted them into ever greater evils. Narratives of murder and violent crime drove home the message that the difference between the temptation to mundane sins such as laziness or greed, and the temptation to criminality, was a difference in scale only. A universal vulnerability to demonic temptation imbued all men with the potential to descend into the most terrible sin, and so to themselves become components of the Devil's kingdom.¹¹

Thus the threat posed by temptation to the individual could be extended to the commonwealth as a whole. A concept of the temptation of the body politic developed in parallel to that of the human body. The Devil's human servants were commonly represented as a *de facto* demonic potential within the commonwealth, analogous with the inherent spiritual corruption which man inherited as a legacy of the fall of Adam, and which was so susceptible to the Devil's influence. This emerged most forcefully out of a dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan religious settlement which saw elements such as the episcopacy, or Catholic recusancy as diabolic intrusions into the commonwealth. Their very existence constituted a potential for diabolic activity which might be activated, again as a spark might be put to gunpowder. Indeed the Catholic plot to blow up

¹⁰ John Northbrooke, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vaine playes or enterludes are reprovved* (London, 1577); Stephen Gosson, *Plays confuted in five actions, proving that they are not to be suffred in a Christian Common Weale* (London, 1584); William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix, or the Players scourge* (London, 1633).

¹¹ For only a handful of examples see Anthony Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumaine Murthers, lately committed* (London, 1591); Gilbert Dugdale, *A True discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Caldwell* (London, 1604); John Reynolds, *The Triumphs of Gods Revenge against the crying and Execrable sinne of (willing and premeditated) Murther* (London, 1657, 1st ed., 1621); William Rowley, Thomas Dekker & John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton: A known true Story Composed into a Tragi-comedy* (1621), in Thomas Dekker, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. F. Bowers (Cambridge, 4 vols., 1953-61), vol. III.

parliament in 1605 was widely understood to be just such an activation of demonic potential. The split loyalties recusants were understood to experience between their duties to the monarch and the pope constituted a catalyst for potentially lethal Catholic militancy.

This provocative political analogy undermined the Elizabethan and Stuart rhetoric of consensus that emphasised unity under theocratic rule.¹² For many the ideal of consensus could not be allowed to overshadow the importance of establishing and maintaining the purity of the Christian commonwealth. The language of 2 Corinthians 6: 14-15—'What concord hath Christ with Belial?'—was widely used to denounce tolerance and compromise, be it of crypto-Catholicism, or religious radicalism. 2 Corinthians 11: 14—'for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'—emphasised the need for constant vigilance lest the Devil hide himself in the most seemingly benign political and religious activities. The possibility of the temptation of the body politic stressed the importance of identifying those diabolic triggers that Satan had introduced into the nation to activate its corrupt potential and seduce it into apostasy. Where those triggers might lie was a heavily contested issue. It was defined by an individual sense of tangibility rather than an allegiance to an abstract ideal. Thus conformists and nonconformists, Puritans and Arminians, and royalists and parliamentarians employed the language of diabolic subversion in turn against each other.

But perhaps most significantly, the concept of the diabolic temptation of the body politic helped to strengthen and reinforce resistance theory in England. The notion that the government might, wittingly or unwittingly, be tolerating *de facto* demonic subversion equated resistance with exorcism. Throughout the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I the notion was (with one notable exception) kept well away from the person of the monarch.¹³ But increasingly in Charles I's reign disaffection with 'new counsels' and the influence at court of perceived crypto-papists encouraged the regime's critics to see diabolic subversion closer to the throne. The Puritan lawyer William Prynne, for instance, accused Charles of encouraging diabolic apostasy in his promotion of the theatre, a charge that was quite accurately highlighted by his prosecutors in Star Chamber in 1634.¹⁴ In 1639 John Lilburne, imprisoned for his involvement in clandestine Puritan publishing,

¹² On consensual politics see J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution* (2nd ed, Cambridge, 1986), p. 9; Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-1642* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1992), chapters 5-7; for a challenge see Johann Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (London, 1986), p. 3-4; Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London, 1990), pp. 185-221.

¹³ The exception was Peter Wentworth who, in 1576, made a speech in parliament in which he accused Elizabeth of turning a blind eye to the use of diabolic tactics to enforce her prerogative over the discussion of religion and the succession. See *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. T. E. Hartley (Leicester, 3 vols., 1981-95), I, pp. 426-427.

¹⁴ *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne, in 1634 and 1637*, ed. S.R. Gardiner (Camden Society, New Series, XVIII, (1877), pp. 5, 11-13, 19, 20, 23.

had visions of proving in the presence of the king that Archbishop Laud was a servant of Satan. Lilburne's belief in the diabolism of his adversaries was the organising principle of his resistance to his prosecutors.¹⁵ In many respects the printed propaganda of the Civil War and its aftermath represented the zenith of the political use of the concept of diabolic subversion. As the war progressed accusations of diabolism became increasingly sharply focused on Charles, firstly as a victim enveloped in a web of diabolic temptation woven by Laud, the Earl of Strafford and Henrietta Maria, and finally, to justify his execution, as a witting agent of Satan, whose inflated claims to divine right focused idolatry upon himself. Historians have argued that resistance theory was only adopted in retrospect after 1642 to explain actions already taken.¹⁶ But the perception of Arminianism as crypto-Catholicism in the minds of its enemies associated criticism of the regime's religious policies with an identified source of *de facto* satanic subversion with a very long pedigree. The polemical manoeuvring of 1640-1642 may not immediately have called for parliament to take up arms against the King, but it certainly argued that the government was rife with diabolic subversion and this implied that the body politic was in need of exorcism.¹⁷

Whilst this theologically driven picture of the Devil's invisible subversive agency was increasingly dominant in shaping cultural expressions of demonism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, popular ideas of the Devil persisted alongside it. Satan was still widely believed to appear in physical shape to trick or tempt men out of their souls, or to exercise God's providential judgements. The physical Satan retained an absolute hold in narratives of witchcraft, in which he appeared in a variety of human and animal guises to enter into a formal pact with the witch.¹⁸ In many ballads, pamphlets and stage-plays the Devil appeared as a physical entity.¹⁹ In some cases the invisible tempting Devil of the Protestant

¹⁵ John Lilburne, *Come out of her my people: or An Answer to the questions of a Gentleman (a professor in the Antichristian Church of England) about Hearing the Publicke Ministers* (London, 1639), pp. 13, 25.

¹⁶ John Morrill, 'Introduction', in Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649* (Houndsmills, 1982), pp. 5-7; Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1987-1988* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 23-24, 132-136; for a challenge to the argument see Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, pp. 71-77.

¹⁷ Anon., *News from Hell, Rome, and the Inns of Court, wherein is set forth a letter from the Devil to the Pope* (1641); W.F.X.B., *Camilton's Discovery of the Devilish Designs, and Killing Projects, Of the Society of Jesuits...intended, but graciously prevented, in England. Translated out of the Latin Copy. Dedicated to the High-court of Parliament* (London, 1641), in *The Harleian Miscellany*, (London, 12 vols., 1810), V, pp. 103-117.

¹⁸ See for example Anon., *The Examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensford in the Countie of Essex* (London, 1566); Anon., *The Aprrehension and confession of three notorious Witches arraigned and by Justice condemned in the County of Essex* (London, 1589); Thomas Potts, *the Wonderful discoverie of Witches in the county of Lancaster* (London, 1613); Henry Goodcole, *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer* (London, 1621).

¹⁹ See for example the ballads, *A Pleasant new Ballad you may here behold, how the Deuill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (no date), in *Ancient Songs and ballads...Chiefly collected by Robert Earl of Oxford* (London, 4 vols., arranged and bound 1774, hereafter Roxburghe Collection), I, 286-287, 340-

reformers and the physical popular Devil were antagonistic concepts. One Puritan minister was moved to complain that the populace were so conditioned by the grotesque of the traditional mystery plays that they feared no harm from Satan until he appeared before them with the requisite horns and cloven feet.²⁰ But Protestant demonism never denied that Satan had the power to appear in physical form, it only asserted that his practice of internal temptation was more common and more dangerous. 'God's hangman'—the physical manifestation of the Devil in which he punished sinners on the behalf of God—was as comfortable in Protestant culture as he had been in Catholic. He took pride of place as the dispenser of poetic justice in the Puritan Thomas Beard's hugely successful *The Theatre of God's Iudgements*, published in 1597.²¹ In September 1621 the Puritan lawyer and future member of the Long Parliament, Sir Simonds D'Ewes recorded in his diary that all the ships docked at Plymouth had been destroyed by a storm that followed the appearance of the Devil in the form of a black dog.²² Indeed the Protestant emphasis on internal temptation was quite capable of interacting with more popular notions of the physical Devil. In ballads and on the stage, physical appearances by the Devil could be used to provide a tangible demonstration of his ability to conflate man's natural corruption. In *A new Ballad, shewing the great misery sustained by a poore man in essex*, conversation with the Devil in human guise is sufficient to drive the pauper into a violent rage without the subject of murder being openly mentioned. In the play *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) a single touch from the Devil in the shape of a dog drives a bigamous husband to murder.²³

Thus the concepts of an internal (invasive) and external Devil were in no way mutually exclusive, within or outside Protestant culture. But the emphasis on internal temptation was increasingly dominant. Devotional, literary and even visual culture either presented the Devil as an entirely spiritual presence, or blurred the dynamic of temptation when he was presented physically. Only witchcraft narratives continued to maintain a purely physical conception of

341; *The Wretched Miser: or, A brief Account of a covetous Farmer, who bringing a Load of Corn to market, swore the Devil should have it before he should take the honest market price; which accordingly came to pass* (no date); *Dirty Dolls Farewel. Being an account of a certain Woman...who was in her Life-time so notorious for several misdemeanours, that it is said, the Devil about the 17th, or 18th of August 1684, appeared to her, between whom there hapened a terrible Combat* (1684?), in *The Pepys Ballads: Facsimile*, ed. W. G. Day (Cambridge, 5 vols., 1987), IV, p. 331, V, p. 47.

²⁰ The opinion was that of Thomas Pierson, the rector of Brampton Bryan, and editor of some of William Perkins' works, see his preface to Perkins', *The Combat between Christ and the Divell Displayed*, sigs. Kkk6-Kkk6v.

²¹ Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of God's Iudgements reuised and augmented* (London, 1631; 1st ed., 1597).

²² Simonds D'Ewes, *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes 1622-1624*, ed. Elizabeth Bourcier (Paris, 1977), pp. 95-96.

²³ Anon., *A new Ballad, shewing the great misery sustained by a poore man in essex, his wife and children, with other strange things done by the Devill*, in *Roxburghe Ballads*, II, pp. 222-228; Rowely, Dekker & Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, III, iii, 7-40.

diabolic temptation, and it must be recognised that this made them increasingly unusual in early modern English demonism.

The Historiography of the Devil

This is a significantly different picture of the Devil to that which has emerged in early modern social and cultural history, in which Satan tends to be presented stereotypically as a functionalist symbol of evil and a tool of persecution. There are remarkably few historical studies of the Devil (given his importance to western culture), and they have tended to be informed by the perception of continuities in belief which span vast periods of western history. The basic concept of the Devil has remained fundamentally unchanged since its establishment in Christian orthodoxy, around the fifth century AD, and historians have generally passed over what appears to be a generalised demonism in a culture dominated by religious language.

Other continuities have been more explicitly constructed. Evil, argued to be one of the most fundamental of human experiences, was particularly problematised in Christian theodicy.²⁴ According to J. B. Russell, the author of the only dedicated treatment of the Devil's entire history, Satan has consistently been used by theologians from antiquity to the present to divert responsibility for evil away from God. Correspondingly he judges the Devil's significance largely on the basis of how much theoretical coherence individual theologians such as Origen or St. Augustine were able to enforce upon the concept in this role. The result is a largely uncontextualised history of abstract theology which sees theodicy in essentialist terms, influenced by, but largely separate from social and cultural change.²⁵ Henry Angsar Kelly is more polemical, tracing a series of interpretative mistakes he claims have allowed the Devil to occupy a place within Christian orthodoxy that he never deserved.²⁶

A history of the Devil's role in persecution has developed in the light of the twentieth-century phenomenon of genocide, as historians have sought to trace the

²⁴ Richard Cavendish, *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief* (London, 1975); Hans Schwarz, *Evil: An Historical and Theological Perspective* (Minneapolis, 1995), p. 1; Paul Ricoeur, 'Evil, a challenge to philosophy and theology', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LIII/3, (1985), passim; Marilyn McCord Adams & Robert Merrihew Adams (eds.), *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford, 1990), p. 1; Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil* (London, 1963), p. 13.

²⁵ The term theodicy was coined in 1697 by Gottfried Leibniz, but has been applied retrospectively to the whole history of Christian theology's problem with evil. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca & London, 1977); *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca & London, 1981); *Lucifer: the Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London, 1984); *Mephistopheles* (1986); Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton, 1987).

²⁶ Henry Angsar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft* (Garden City, N.Y., 1974).

origins of society's willingness to scapegoat minorities. Possibly after the First Crusade or even as late as the fourteenth-century, there is believed to have emerged in Europe a persecutory mentality which actively classified minorities and produced convoluted myths of anti-human activity to justify their persecution.²⁷ In its earliest stages it was aimed at Jews, heretics and lepers, and imagined them to be diabolic servants working to destroy Christendom.²⁸ A stereotype of the Devil's servant developed into a complex and lethal mythology of a clandestine society marked out by pacts with Satan and diabolic rituals carried out at witches' Sabbats.²⁹ Once established the persecutory mentality pervaded the history of western Europe, and eventually became secularised. Yet popular stereotypes, most notably of demonic Jews, retained the essential characteristics that the medieval world had given them. The persecution of Jews as servants of Satan in medieval Europe and genocidal anti-Semitism of the twentieth-century, are taken to be variants of the same process.³⁰ Thus, as an interpretative model, willingness to act on a belief in the Devil has to a large extent been equated with persecuting zeal and fanaticism, unchanged in nature for over a thousand years.

These two continuities are bisected by one enormous cultural change. Between the sixteenth- and eighteenth-centuries Europe underwent what Max Weber termed 'disenchantment'.³¹ A traditional world view which saw man at the centre of an ordered cosmos in which macrocosm and microcosm constantly

²⁷ R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 35, 64-65, 89-91, 123.

²⁸ Joshua Trachtenburg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia & Jerusalem, 1943; reprinted 1993); Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. R. Rosenthal (London, 1991); Elaine Pagels has also found similar processes prevalent in the development of early Christian identity, see *The Origin of Satan* (London, 1995).

²⁹ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*; Carlo Ginzberg, *Ecstasies*, passim; Robert Muchembled, 'Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality'; Robert Rowland, "'Fantastical and Devilish Persons': European Witch-beliefs in Comparative Perspective'; Gustav Henningsen "'The Ladies from Outside": An Archaic pattern of the Witches' Sabbath', all in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, eds. B. Ankarloo & G. Henningsen (Oxford, 1990), pp. 139-215; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London, 1996), pp. 25-59; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 80-93, 161-178, 321-334.

³⁰ This continuity has been relied on in works dealing with the holocaust. Recent examples include Richard L. Rubenstein & John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and its Legacy* (Atlanta, 1987), chapter 2; Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London, 1996), pp. 39-43, 52-53; Joel Carmichael, *The Satanizing of the Jews: Origin and Development of Mystical Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1992), passim. But this view has been convincingly challenged by David Nirenburg, who argues that in all periods persecution, and anti-Semitism in particular, must be understood in its immediate context, and that assumptions about the long-term continuity of anti-Semitism are ahistorical, see *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), pp 3-17.

³¹ Alan Macfarlane, 'The root of all evil', in D. Parkin (ed.), *The Anthropology of Evil* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 57-76; R.W. Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the "Disenchantment of the World"', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXIII:3 (Winter, 1993), pp. 475-494.

interacted was increasingly challenged. The Protestant rejection of magic favoured belief in human agency under subjection to God. Whilst the existence of preternature was not denied, it was increasingly considered a sphere of activity reserved only for God.³² In the later seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries the scientific revolution undermined the basic rationale of magic as mechanical philosophy emphasised the orderly and regular functioning of the universe, upon which spirits and demons were incapable of acting.³³ As Robin Briggs has noted, the reason for this 'conceptual revolution' has defied adequate historical explanation.³⁴ But it had profound consequences for the educated perception of the Devil. The question of evil was central to the thinking of philosophes such as Leibniz, Hume and Voltaire. But they found the Devil to be little more than a telling example of the absurdity of traditional Christian belief. Natural disasters and other evils were to be attributed instead to the inevitable action of the laws of nature. Similarly, liberal Christians who sought to reconcile their faith with rationalism found the Devil to be cumbersome baggage. In response alternative theodicies gained prevalence, for example the belief that evil had no existence and was merely a relative declension from good. In eighteenth-century England, so J. B. Russell argues, only the theology of John Wesley continued to be influenced by a profound sense of the demonic.³⁵

The hindsight of the effect of the Enlightenment on the preternatural has greatly coloured the cultural history of the Devil in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. For J. B. Russell the period saw 'the Devil between two worlds' as Europe witnessed 'a profound shift in the centre of gravity of perceptions of evil, from the world of spirits to the world of humanity'.³⁶ For Professor Russell the Protestant Reformation marked the last chapter in the Devil's unassailed dominance in theodicy. Protestantism was infused by contradictory impulses over the Devil. Its leaders, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin were deeply concerned with the profound personal experience of evil, and the principle of *sola scriptura* instilled in them a regard for the Synoptic conception of the Devil. According to Professor Russell, they 'uncritically accepted virtually the entire tradition of medieval diabolology'.³⁷ At the same time Protestant concern over clerical abuses encouraged a rejection of the preternatural agencies which had provided a barrier between man and the demonic.³⁸ Satan's victims, Russell notes,

³² Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 378-381.

³³ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1987), pp. 217-224.

³⁴ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, p. 377.

³⁵ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, pp. 130-132.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36; H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1967), p. 72; John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London, 1968), pp. 121-123.

³⁸ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, pp. 31-33; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 60-65.

found themselves alone with no solace other than their faith and their bibles.³⁹ Yet, he continues, even as this more pessimistic demonism was taking hold, an undercurrent was emerging to challenge the Devil's dominance in the question of evil. In the period's tragic literary characters—such as Hamlet, Faustus or Iago—could be seen the earliest expressions of evil embodied entirely in man. But whilst human, the evil of these characters bore the hallmarks of Satan's wanton and self-fulfilling malice. Thus, for Professor Russell, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries constitute a half-way house between the cosmic evil of the medieval Devil and the purely human evil of the post-Enlightenment. As a precursor to the Enlightenment, early modern culture began to find cosmic evil in a human form.⁴⁰

The remainder of this chapter will examine this pre-conceived historical picture of demonism in detail, some of the recent developments which have provided a more sophisticated picture of demonology within witchcraft, and finally will look at the sources by which a more contextualised model of demonism might be drawn up.

Jews and Witches: The Devil and 'the Persecuting Society'

The Devil has emerged most forcefully in the history of persecution, as a symptom of society gone awry⁴¹, and implicit in this history is an index of significance for belief in the Devil. The more extreme the conceptualisation, and the more discernible its consequences, the more significance it is allowed. Hence the seemingly pathological fantasies of the Sabbat are seen as inherently more significant than more mundane (and more widespread) demonological beliefs. As a result a picture has emerged which stereotypes the Devil as a tool for creating victims.

No phenomenon illustrates this persecuting mentality more clearly than the prosecution of witchcraft. Between 1400 and 1750 Europe saw some 40-60 000 executions for the crime, many as part of large-scale organised witch-hunts.⁴² The practice of witchcraft was endemic in pre-industrial Europe and of itself was incapable of arousing mass persecution. However when popular notions of witchcraft were intertwined with ideas about the Devil, the prosecution of the crime gained its particularly lethal aspect. Heretics and magicians increasingly

³⁹ For a discussion of the traditional protectives offered by pre-Reformation Catholicism see Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 266-282; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 31-52; R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 142-147, 158-161, 162-165.

⁴⁰ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, pp. 66-76.

⁴¹ Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-craze*, pp. 11-23.

⁴² Levack, *The Witch-hunt*, pp. 19-22.

became associated in the minds of theologians and inquisitors with a belief that a reciprocal pact with the Devil was inherent in the performance of magic.⁴³ The connection tainted the widespread practice of folk magic with the same stain, and innocent women and men were prosecuted for the increasingly tightly defined crime of demonic witchcraft.⁴⁴ In order that witch prosecution become witch persecution a peculiar paranoia as to the activities of the Devil's servants had to manifest itself in the minds of the authorities, if not always in those of the populace.⁴⁵ It was only when individual acts of *maleficium* could be assimilated into a wider subversive plot that just cause could be found for seeking out a collectivity of Devil-worshipping witches.

The diabolic pact was central to what Robin Briggs has described as 'the myth of the perfect witch', allowing the practice of magic to be seen as apostasy.⁴⁶ Possibly of Persian origin the notion that humans could enter into a reciprocal pact with the Devil found its way into Christianity in the writings of the Church fathers such as St. Jerome and St. Augustine. It became increasingly prevalent in Europe after the ninth-century when legends, such as that of St. Theophilis were translated into Latin.⁴⁷ Theophilis, a bishop's seneschal in sixth-century Asia Minor, found himself deprived of his position. In order to regain it he enlisted the aid of the Devil in return for a written pact and a formal renunciation of Christ. Years later he repented of his crime and was saved through the intercession of the Virgin.⁴⁸ Except for its happy ending the story provided the blue-print for the most famous narrative of the pact, that of Dr. Faustus, first printed in Frankfurt in 1587.⁴⁹ By the period of the great witch-hunt the concept of the pact had become stereotyped in the image of the old hag, driven to promise her soul to the Devil in return for *malefic* power with which she could take revenge on her neighbours.⁵⁰

An elaborate narrative of the witches' progression into diabolism was recounted with striking consistency in confessions offered throughout Europe.

⁴³ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 226-228, 232-239, 252-253; Kieckhefer, *European Witch-trials*, pp. 73-92; Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, pp. 101-108, 146-157; Easlea, *Witch-hunting, Magic & the New Philosophy*, p. 6-7.

⁴⁴ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 239.

⁴⁵ For statements of this argument see Easlea, *Witch-hunting*, p. 1; Levack, *The Witch-hunt*, pp. 27-35; Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London, 1981), p. 134; Robert Muchembled, 'Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality', p. 140.

⁴⁶ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-59.

⁴⁷ Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature*, pp. 167-180; Levack, *The With-hunt*, p. 32; Russell, *Lucifer*, pp. 80-84.

⁴⁸ Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature*, pp. 181-185; Russell, *Lucifer*, pp. 80-84.

⁴⁹ Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (c.1589), in *The Complete Plays*, ed. J. B. Stearne (London, 1969), Act I, scene v; Anon., *The Historie of the damnable Life, and deserved Death of Doctor Iohn Faustus* (London, 1592), pp. 2-9, 78-82; Lucy de Bruyn, *Woman and the Devil in sixteenth-century literature* (Tisbury, 1979), pp. 3-19.

⁵⁰ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-31; Rowland, "'Fantasticall and Devilishe persons'", pp. 161-168; for an account of the development of the pact, and a cautious assessment of its influence in England see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 521-534.

Having encountered the Devil the witch agreed to give herself to him, and was transported to a distant location by supernatural means. This was the setting for the Sabbat, a meeting of hundreds of witches where obscene rituals of initiation and consolidation were performed. An inverted baptism, carried out by the Devil or some lesser demon, involved stamping and spitting on the cross and other sacred objects, whilst the orgiastic revelry that followed included fornication with demons, infanticide and cannibalism. After the Sabbat the witch was returned to her community as a demonic subversive and employing the Devil's aid to commit acts of *maleficium* against property and individuals.⁵¹ As Robert Rowland has noted the Sabbat represented both an anti-world where the moral and social norms of society were inverted in a shocking parody, and also an implicit re-assertion of those norms. By removing the activities of the Sabbat to a distant and deserted location (usually a mountain-top) the boundaries of the moral community were established and reinforced. The witch was removed from the moral community by her apostasy, but then reinserted into the real community, transformed by the Sabbat into a diabolic agent.⁵²

Norman Cohn's investigation into the development of the Sabbat myth, contained in *Europe's Inner Demons*, is perhaps the best and most influential example of how historians of witchcraft have approached the Devil as a result of their familiarity with this material.⁵³ As Cohn himself points out the title of the book is revealing. His subject is the persecution of groups 'that for many Europeans...came to embody part of their innermost selves—their obsessive fears, and also their unacknowledged, terrifying desires'.⁵⁴ Cohn's book was written as a result of his involvement with the Columbus Centre, a research centre established to study 'collective psychopathology', and is a self-conscious investigation into the 'dynamics of persecution and extermination'.⁵⁵

In Cohn's argument the witch-hunt is marked out by its complete dependence on the myth of the Sabbat for its legitimisation. It was the direct result of a widespread adherence to a fantasy,

that there existed, somewhere in the midst of the great society, another society, small and clandestine, which not only threatened the existence of the great society but was also

⁵¹ Rowland, "Fantastical and Devilish persons", p. 161.

⁵² Ibid, pp. 161-169.

⁵³ This discussion concentrates on Cohn's work as the most self-conscious investigation into the relationship of demonism and the phenomenon of *persecution*, but his approach is representative of that of other historians whose concern over victimisation has been more implicit.

⁵⁴ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 259.

⁵⁵ The latter quote is taken from the general subtitle of the series of books written under to auspices of the Columbus Centre.

addicted to practices which were felt to be wholly abominable, in the literal sense of anti-human.⁵⁶

Such nightmares, he argues, are almost universal. These accusations were levelled at the early Christians, and, as Christendom itself became increasingly troubled with movements of religious dissent, heretics such as the Waldensians and the Fraticelli were demonized and punished as Devil-worshipping sects.⁵⁷ In the fourteenth-century the fantasy was applied cynically, and with chilling success, to the political efforts of Philip IV to destroy the Knights Templars.⁵⁸ But these groups were marked out for persecution, and their association with Satan only served to intensify the course on which the fanatical inquisitors and cynical politicians were already set. Had diabolism not provided a justification for their persecution, other means would have been found. But the prosecution of witches had no pre-existing momentum. Only because, in Cohn's words, 'the minds of the authorities were obsessed by the central fantasy itself' did the witch-hunt reach its massive proportions in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. It was first and foremost an attack on the perceived servants of the Devil.⁵⁹

Unfortunately the Devil responds well to the index of significance implicit in this argument, marginalising the concept at the extremes of early modern culture. Even within the contemporary remit of diabolic agency—which included violence, murder, raising storms, bringing illness, temptation and possession—the narratives of the Sabbat orgies were extreme. Moreover, the willingness of women to confess to impossible crimes demands an explanation.⁶⁰ Perhaps most importantly the difficulties in proving witchcraft were, until the later seventeenth-century, no deterrent to its prosecution. Instead a whole judicial system was manipulated and reshaped to overcome the lack of direct evidence left by the secret crime which was rarely witnessed.⁶¹ The famous swimming test and the search for the Devil's mark sought to use proof of Satan's involvement to make witchcraft more tangible.⁶² Cohn makes the point—'the great witch-hunt can in fact be taken as a supreme example of a massive killing of innocent people by a

⁵⁶ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. xi; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Elaine Pagels has now traced in detail the process by which early Christians went from being the object of these kind of accusations, to themselves perpetuating them, first against the Jews, then against pagans, and finally against Christian heretics, see *The Origin of Satan*, passim.

⁵⁸ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, chapters 2, 3, & 5, passim.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

⁶⁰ Of course it was entirely possible for woman and men to believe that they were witches, and the practice of folk magic, and magic employing the aid of spirits was widespread throughout early modern Europe. But historians agree that witchcraft was probably not practised in covens, and that the murder and cannibalism of the Sabbat were fictions.

⁶¹ Levack, *The Witch-hunt*, chapter 3; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 88-94; Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours*, pp. 187-208.

⁶² Holmes, 'Women, Witnesses and Witches', *Past and Present*, 140 (1993), pp. 65-75.

bureaucracy acting in accordance with beliefs which, unknown or rejected in earlier centuries, had come to be taken for granted, as self-evident truths'.⁶³

The acceptance of this index of significance has especially marginalised the Devil within early modern English culture. In its witch-trials England has been presented as the exception which proves this rule, for, according to the interpretation of Keith Thomas, English witch-beliefs remained remarkably impervious to elite attempts to focus attention on the diabolism of the crime. Fear of witchcraft in England, Professor Thomas argues, was driven by a need to explain misfortune, not by concern over the witches' compact with the Devil. Europe's mass hunts for Satan's servants must be contrasted with England's far more moderate persecution, which was concerned to redress the wrongs individual witches inflicted on others. It was the ability to inflict magical harm—*maleficium*—not apostasy that in England defined a witch. Thus for Thomas, Devil worship constituted 'the narrow theological definition of witchcraft'. Concerted efforts were made by magistrates and divines to introduce continental theories to England, and they were disseminated widely in print, but they failed to take hold, and so the impetus to mass persecution was absent.

Thomas demonstrates this by the gap between the definition of the crime and the offence for which women were actually convicted. The statutes of 1542, 1563 and 1604 which defined the crime were also increasingly attentive to the invocation of spirits as a felony. By 1604 the definition of felonious diabolism had extended to include activities more in keeping with the narratives of the English animal familiar spirit than the rituals of the magician. The Statute noted that it was a felony to 'consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward any evil spirit to or for any intent or purpose'. But despite the extensive theoretical power to prosecute diabolism the vast majority of trials were undertaken to redress maleficium. Trials for diabolism alone were extremely rare, and Thomas notes that no reference to an oral compact with Satan can be found before 1612. Not until the unusual trials of the Hopkins witch-hunt did an English court hear sworn testimony as to the existence of a written contract with the Devil. Nothing in English trials approaches the conception of the witches' Sabbat. The few instances in which witches were described meeting together were, in Thomas' words, 'literally picnics by comparison with their continental counterparts'.⁶⁴ Thus, in England, the Devil is marginalised even further within the area of culture in which historians assume the concept to have had most significance.

⁶³ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, p. 255.

⁶⁴ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 525-529.

The Devil and Religious Despair in Early Modern England

The wider interpretation of demonism has been influenced by this marginalisation, most significantly its place in Protestant religious culture. For Professor Thomas, Protestantism's deep sense of human sin and vulnerability to the forces of evil left it largely hostage to the concept of the Devil, despite its emphasis on single divine sovereignty.⁶⁵ Divines such as Hugh Latimer, Thomas Becon and James Calfhill were convinced that an enormous number of evil spirits afflicted mankind, bringing disease, storms and temptation.⁶⁶ Protestant sermons brought the medieval cautionary *exemplar* tales up to date, and stories of the Devil's providential appearances to punish sinners were common in the pulp press and in conversation. But in this context, the language of the Devil was the language of religious despair. Schooled in childhood by a popular folklore of the diabolic, the religious imagination easily found in the Devil a satisfying, if crude, personification on which to unload the responsibility for inconstant godliness and prohibited desires.⁶⁷ In this role, Professor Thomas notes, 'Satan's overtures were a common form of temptation', as evidenced in the sufferings of the patients of physicians such as Richard Napier, and the obsessive writings of Puritans and radicals.⁶⁸ The widespread employment of the maxim, 'no Devil, no God', clearly demonstrates the tangibility the medieval Devil continued to enjoy in the minds of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Englishmen.⁶⁹

The work of Paul Seaver, Michael MacDonald and, most recently, John Stachniewski, has greatly elaborated this picture of religious despair, but has also tended to confine intense experiences of the Devil to a minority of the (overly) zealous godly.⁷⁰ 'Afflicted consciences' emerged from a dislocation between the individual's religious convictions and his belief that he was unworthy of salvation. Although crises of faith were not the preserve of Protestantism, the Reformation's denial of the significance of good works, and its emphasis on predestination almost enshrined doubt as a central experience of faith. Dr. Stachniewski argues that Calvinism, and English Puritanism, were particularly conducive to despair. Calvin's emphasis on double predestination—that God decreed individual

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 560-561.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 562-563.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 566.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 565-567; MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 198-207.

⁶⁹ The theologian, Roger Hutchinson, the one-time atheist, Richard White, the Puritan, Richard Greenham and James I were only a handful of those who expressed this position, Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 567-568; for a more detailed discussion see Stuart Clark, 'King James's *Daemonologie*: Witchcraft and Kingship', in S. Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), pp. 156-181.

⁷⁰ Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, 1985); MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 220-222; Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 37-61 & passim.

damnation as explicitly as he did salvation—made the experience of reprobation as important to God's scheme as that of grace. Weakness or inconstancy in faith became a sign of probable reprobation, and Calvin was adamant that the experience of anxiety that this created should not be circumscribed in an attempt to protect those of weak faith.⁷¹ Such dogma could translate into experiences of paralysing fear and doubt for those individuals who felt they did not meet the criteria of the elect. The most famous example was that of the Paduan lawyer and relapsed Protestant, Francis Spira, whose conviction that he was damned led to 'spectacular despair' and eventually to his suicide.⁷² The story was widely circulated throughout Europe, and found its way into many of the English books which dealt with afflicted consciences and the divine punishment of apostates.⁷³ Unpublicised, but by no means less spectacular, were the sufferings of the London artisan, Nehemiah Wallington, whose voluminous writings record a life of savage introspection and self-loathing. Wallington identified with Spira, copying his and other stories of religious despair into his notebooks, and he attempted suicide himself on several occasions.⁷⁴

Satan loomed large in experiences of these despairing Christians often providing a focus for their torment. As Richard Godbeer has noted, 'it was when Puritans sought to account for their spiritual deficiencies that Satan figured most prominently in their thoughts.'⁷⁵ The perception of imminent spiritual danger could prompt them to believe they encountered the Devil as a physical manifestation. Wallington screamed at his father's maidservant that she was Satan incarnate, and later explained that he 'did think the Devil would come in the likeness of some maid or some beautiful woman, I being so full of lust'.⁷⁶ God's Hangman threatened to sweep these great sinners to perdition at any moment. During John Bunyan's protracted search for faith he became so acutely aware of Satan's presence that he 'thought I should see the Devil, nay, thought I have felt him behind me pull my clothes'.⁷⁷ Many of the cases of suicide, recorded in

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 19-21.

⁷² Michael MacDonald, 'The Fearful Estate of Francis Spira: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies* 31(1992), pp. 32-33; Stachneiwski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 37-39.

⁷³ See for example Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Judgements* (London, 1597), pp. 62-64; Robert Bolton, *Instructions for the Right Comforting Afflicted Consciences* (London, 1631), pp. 18-19.

⁷⁴ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 21-24, 199-203. The minister, Thomas Peacock, who suffered a famous bout of affliction also explicitly identified with Spira, see Robert Bolton, *The Last Conflicts and Death of Mr Thomas Peacock, Batchelor of Divinity and Fellow of Brasen-nose College in Oxford* (London, 1646), preface.

⁷⁵ Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic And Religion in Early Modern New England* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 97.

⁷⁶ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 23.

⁷⁷ John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. R. Sharrock (Oxford, 1962), p. 34. As a boy the future fifth monarchist, John Rogers, slept with his hands clasped in prayer, lest he be

second-hand accounts and in the autobiographies of those who failed, were attributed to the Devil, who deluded men into thinking there was no point in putting off their inevitable damnation.⁷⁸

Again, implicit in this picture is the assumption that the force of the concept of the Devil lay in its tendency to victimise. In Blair Worden's phrase, it was part of 'the darkness of Puritanism'.⁷⁹ Satan was used by the clergy to brow-beat their parishioners into a perpetual fear of the torments of hell, an exercise in social control which A. L. Morton and Christopher Hill see valiantly challenged in England in the radical antinomianism of the 1640s and 1650s.⁸⁰ A testament to the power of such preaching is the experience of John Rogers who as a boy slept with his hands clasped in prayer in case the devils came for him in the night.⁸¹ Unremittingly strict soteriological dogma could inflict agonising torments on the most susceptible of the godly, leaving them unable to function in their communities. A disproportionate amount of time was given over to fathoming the depth of their own sin, and expecting the Devil. At best, personal relationships suffered from this self-obsession, at worst victims became completely incapable of meaningful interaction.⁸² They might become a burden to their families and friends, and their self-destructive tendencies required constant vigilance.⁸³ According to Dr Stachniewski, Puritan obsession with Satan was passed through generations in the brutalization of children in some families. Children were considered 'limbs of the Devil' whose influence produced their stubborn wilfulness. They were subjected to a violent discipline which sought to constrain such manifestations of satanic control. These children experienced hugely inflated guilt over juvenile infractions, and were often unable in adulthood to escape the force of their conditioning, finding, and punishing, the Devil in their own children.⁸⁴

carried away by the Devil. By day he perceived Satan in a variety of 'ugly shapes and forms', see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 561-562.

⁷⁸ Hannah Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled* (London, 1683), pp. 31-33, 36; Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 46-52; Michael MacDonald & Terrence Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 34-41, 50-60.

⁷⁹ Blair Worden review of Seaver's *Wallington's World*, *London Review of Books* (23 Jan.-6 Feb., 1986), quoted in Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, p. 1.

⁸⁰ See Stachniewski's account of the fire and brimstone preaching of 'sons of thunder' like William Perkins and John Rogers, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 86-87; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 561-562; Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 151-183; for a challenge to Hill's argument see Davis, *Fear, Myth and History*, pp. 132-134.

⁸¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 561-562.

⁸² Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 23-24, 26-30.

⁸³ Nehemiah Wallington was talked out of taking his life on several occasions by his family and their servants, whilst the brother of Hannah Allen had to visit a friendly apothecary to get a purgative to make her vomit up the poisonous spider she had swallowed in one of her many attempts at suicide, Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 22-23; Hannah Allen, *Satan his malice Baffled*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 96-99.

This interpretation presents an overly functionalised picture of the Devil, in which the concept operated as a symbol for guilt and unacknowledged desires. For example, Richard Godbeer's study of demonology in Puritan New England, interprets the Devil as a barometer of the godly conscience, rather than a discrete experience in itself. Samuel Parris, at the centre of the Salem witch trials, presented his congregation with an image of Satan's all-pervasive power and malice, which tended to downplay individual responsibility for sin. By contrast those with more self-confidence, like Samuel Willard and Michael Wigglesworth, were adamant that men must accept the blame for their lapses from godliness, and had relatively little sense of diabolic power. The norm, Godbeer argues, was to divide responsibility for sin on 'a continuum of blame from self to Satan'.⁸⁵

In the light of Protestantism's pessimistic and destructive need for the Devil, the challenge of scepticism appears all the more significant, and the views of more forward thinking individuals like Reginald Scot, Thomas Ady or Thomas Hobbes seem to contrast unfavourably with those of demonologists and Puritans.⁸⁶ Motivated by a disgust at the prosecution of witchcraft, they challenged the possibility of spiritual and material interaction, and by the mid-seventeenth-century, challenged the reality of incorporeal substances themselves.⁸⁷ For materialists like Thomas Hobbes the idea was ridiculous. Instead spirits were material creatures whose bodies were so fine that they could not be perceived by the human eye, but they were material nevertheless and thus incapable of possession and the other activities commonly attributed to devils.⁸⁸ Radical groups like the Ranters were prepared to interpret the Devil symbolically, rather than as a physical entity, and towards the end of the seventeenth-century such views were more prevalent in mainstream thinking. Again the burgeoning scientific community had no place for Satan, and clerics like Bishop Stillingfleet played down the ability of the Devil to afflict the truly godly.⁸⁹

But the evidence of demonism in English culture challenges both the assumption that the Devil resided on its margins, and that victimisation was inherent to the concept. The post-Reformation Devil was a powerful figure not because the reformers neglected to clip his wings, but because they were adamant he should remain so. As chapter 3 will demonstrate, Protestant demonism was the product of a willingness to engage with the Devil in an immediate and proactive way. Whilst the Reformation stripped devotional practice of its

⁸⁵ Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion*, pp. 93-106, quote at p. 97.

⁸⁶ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584, reprinted New York, 1972); Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 50-57.

⁸⁷ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 566-567, 682-684; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (London, 1985), pp. 166-177, chapters 44 & 45, *passim*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171, 660-664; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 682.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 683.

intercessionary protectives, it did not leave man, as Russell and Thomas suggest, defenceless against Satan. Protestantism sought to recognise the fact of evil, but also to bring a vigorous introspection to the methods by which demonic agency might be countered. Its emphasis on temptation attempted to bring the Devil's power into the most intimate aspects of people's lives; aiming to render him a more immediate force than the uncertain and irregular bringer of storms and blights. Moreover, English godly writings demonstrate clearly that, far from being a symptom of a lack of self-confidence, demonic experience was often taken to be an indication of election. Zealous Protestants could attach a profound importance to the experience in their sense of spiritual progress, believing it had given them unique insights into the working of God, who allowed the Devil to tempt them to test their faith.

Protestantism's rhetoric often placed prevention above cure, exhorting the godly to a constant vigilance over their own thoughts which might stop the Devil gaining a hold over their wills. The message was presumably far less palatable to the average parishioner than the ready 'magical' cures offered by the traditional church, and Protestant demonism must have alienated those of a less rigorous faith for whom it made no attempt to cater. But it did offer a method of cure as well as prevention. Prayer was the ultimate recourse in the face of diabolic affliction; specifically prayer that instilled a detailed knowledge of the Devil's significance in the relationship between God and man. The primers and conduct books published in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England provided examples of prayers that aimed to bolster resistance by rehearsing the demonological truths which asserted that Satan would always be ultimately constrained by God, and that demonic affliction could often be read as a test of faith, indicating election.

Ultimately the emphasis on internal temptation actually mitigated against the functionalist, projected demonization that has been a central part of the history of persecution. In anti-Catholicism, in narratives of diabolically-inspired crime, and in political propaganda, demonic influence was understood to be a form of temptation, qualitatively identical to that experienced daily by ordinary Christians. In order to make satanic activity tangible, demonization appealed to common experience, rather than a sense of the alien.

Inversion, Popular Culture and Re-writing Witchcraft: recent interpretations of the Devil

Whilst the study of the Devil continues to be confined within witchcraft, more sophisticated interpretations have emerged in recent studies. Historians have

been more willing to address the question of the diabolic and to challenge the Thomas/Macfarlane orthodoxy. James Sharpe and Robin Briggs have both noted the overtly diabolic characteristics of the familiar spirit in English witch narratives.⁹⁰ The familiar, almost unique to English witch beliefs, was a demon in the shape of an animal, most usually a cat or other small mammal.⁹¹ It appears to have emerged out of the practices of medieval magicians, who were alleged to operate with the assistance of demons whom they summoned and traded with.⁹² The first pamphlet account of a witchcraft trial was published in 1566, and here the diabolic was brought to the fore in the name of the witches' cat, 'Sathan'.⁹³ Subsequently the concept of the familiar developed in complexity until it encompassed both the bizarre familiars of the Hopkins' witch-hunt and the presence of the Devil in human form who donated personally to witches his demon minions in the shape of animals.⁹⁴ The familiar has always been symptomatic of the most baffling elements of witch-beliefs. On the one hand it seems to provide support for the dismissal of diabolism in English witch-beliefs, it is a pale shadow of the demonic presence in the European narratives. On the other hand it jars with the logic of Thomas' explanation of the motivations of accusation. If the familiar has no intrinsic place in concern over *maleficium*, where do confession accounts come from?

Thomas warns against seeing the familiar as an indispensable part of witch-trials, or assuming that it was present in the majority of informal accusations that, bandied among neighbours, never reached the courts.⁹⁵ Dr Sharpe has contested this assumption, arguing that the familiar may be part, not of a popular notion of witchcraft, but of a popular concept of the Devil. Nineteenth-century folklorists found the Devil to be a key figure in the popular narratives of the period, and Sharpe suggests that the same would be true of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, could such folklore be accessed.⁹⁶ For Thomas the patients of Richard Napier expressed a belief in the Devil consistent with that experienced by the religiously committed. For Sharpe the sufferers' descriptions of men in black and spirits that move up and down inside the body are more persuasive of a wider

⁹⁰ James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 71-75; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-31.

⁹¹ For the only other appearance of the familiar in Basque witch-trials see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition* (Reno, 1980), p. 94.

⁹² Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 164-205; Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials*, pp. 6-7, 34-35, 69-71; Brian Levack, *The Witch-hunt*, pp. 32-35.

⁹³ *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex, before the Quenes Maiesties Judges, the xxvi day of July 1566* (London, 1566).

⁹⁴ Thomas Potts, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (London, 1613), sigs. B2v-C2; Anon., *the Witches of Northamptonshire* (London, 1612), sigs., C3-C3v; Matthew Hopkins, *The Discovery of Witches* (London, 1647), *passim*.

⁹⁵ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 531.

⁹⁶ Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p. 75.

engagement of the popular consciousness with the Devil.⁹⁷ Robin Briggs concentrates on the evidence the familiar provides for the diabolic pact in England. The assumption that English witch-beliefs did not centre around the pact is, he argues, misplaced. The standard pattern of the witchcraft narrative, in which the witch is approached by the Devil who trades magical power for her soul, is approximated by the confessions of interaction with the familiars who 'quite clearly performed the role of the Devil'. Familiars were believed to be nourished by the witch's blood, the same blood sacrifice continental witches offered the Devil. Where the overt exchange of the soul is missing from the narrative, this act is implicitly expressed in the diabolic pact. The consistency of narratives given in confessions is significant, Briggs notes 'everyone seems to have known how the Devil carried out his seductions'. In terms of familiarity with demonology, English witch-beliefs were no exception.⁹⁸

But arguments supporting the general tenor of Thomas' picture have also become more nuanced. According to Clive Holmes, continental doctrines did affect the course of many trials in England. Accusations of *maleficium* arriving in court could become allegations of devil-worship in the hands of interested lawyers and clergy. *Maleficium*, the most secret of crimes, carried out at a distance from the victim, was notoriously difficult to prove. Tangible evidence of diabolism might be considered tangible evidence of witchcraft, and as a result magistrates became concerned with the identification of the witches mark (a teat by which the Devil was supposed to suck blood). Thus for Dr Holmes very specific legal concerns might drive together elite concern over diabolism and the popular fear of *maleficium*, and they were found 'side by side, sometimes apart, sometimes intermingled'.⁹⁹

The interest of literary critics in narratives of witchcraft has provided more detailed readings of the role of the Devil and the familiar. Deborah Willis, employing an interpretative scheme derived from the work of the psychologist Melanie Klein, has argued that witches represented an example of 'malevolent nurture', an inversion of female roles.¹⁰⁰ The witch's power derived from her influence over spirits, which derived from her ability to feed. Acts of *maleficium* were exchanged for food, most significantly as the witch suckled her imps with blood from a nipple-like protuberance on her body.¹⁰¹ For Dr Willis suckling is suggestive of an inversion—mothers were believed to feed infants by converting

⁹⁷ Ibid.; MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 203.

⁹⁸ Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-31.

⁹⁹ Holmes, 'Women, Witnesses and Witches', pp. 51-59; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 534.

¹⁰⁰ Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, chapter 2.

¹⁰¹ The earliest signs of demonic suckling were scratches found on the face of a convicted witch, but the location and form of the witches' mark did become more standardised, most often a teat increasingly found in the genitalia.

blood to breast milk; the witch, beyond the age of child-bearing, did the reverse.¹⁰² In the learned discourse which was to emerge in England the Devil was used to re-write this essentially popular narrative of female power in order to deprive the witch of her autonomy and place her in subjection to a male master. The familiar, originally part of the 'sycrestistic multiplicity' of medieval supernature, became a mere tool of the Devil, and thus the denial of the relevance of malevolent nurture denied the witch's power.¹⁰³ With a different focus Laura Levine has identified a similar process of re-writing. Examining concerns over referentiality in early modern England she finds that demonology used the Devil to deny the power of sympathetic magic—the production, at a distance, of a magical effect by the enactment of a small-scale ceremony resembling it (for example harming a wax image). In Scotland, Agnis Tompson confessed to planning to use toad's venom on one of James VI's shirts in order to bewitch him to death. In the wake of this famous trial witch tracts sought to show that sympathetic magic was a 'a charade orchestrated by the Devil'.¹⁰⁴ It was Satan who fooled women into thinking they had the power to control him, and Satan who conveniently performed *maleficium* to drive the credulous to fear the witch's power.¹⁰⁵ The identification of the Devil's mark removed the power of the witch by placing her within a diabolic scheme of counterfeited magic. In the narratives of examination and torture, the point at which the mark was discovered, and certainty of referentiality was re-established, was a watershed after which the witch confessed to her apostasy. Thus, whilst in popular narratives the witch might subvert referentiality by her practice of sympathetic magic, in tracts and in the torture chamber the Devil could usurp this role, placing it within a more manageable Christian scheme in which Satan was constrained by God.¹⁰⁶

The most significant re-examination of the concept of the Devil within witchcraft has been provided by Stuart Clark, who argues that the Devil had essentially a 'contingent reality', expressed in the discursive conventions of the period, most notably that of inversion.¹⁰⁷ Satan was not understood positively in terms of what he was, but only in terms of what he was not. Inversion was central to the 'common stock of familiar ideas' which pervaded European culture of the period.¹⁰⁸ Universal order was shaped by a conception of 'substantive contrariety' in all natural, intellectual, moral and social phenomena. For instance traditional

¹⁰² Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, pp. 52-55; Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, p. 134.

¹⁰³ Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, pp. 89-91.

¹⁰⁴ Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and effeminization 1579-1642* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 108.

¹⁰⁵ See also George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (London, 1593).

¹⁰⁶ Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing*, pp. 109-133.

¹⁰⁷ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, p. 9; the term 'contingent reality' is borrowed from Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 12.

medicine relied on the notion of opposed elements, qualities and humours in the constitution. Most discussions of morality, of psychology and good conduct employed simple dichotomies, between the spirit and the flesh, or reason and passion.¹⁰⁹ The challenge offered by the Devil to the perfection of government and order represented just such a contrariety. In Clark's words, 'the devil's regimen was a compendium of the paradoxes of misrule; a hierarchy governed from the lowest point of excellence, a society in which dishonour was a badge of status, and a speculum imitable only by the politically viscous'.¹¹⁰ Inversion was not simply a policy by which Satan undermined Christendom, it was what he was. He could only be understood as an inversionary rebel, whose parodic rituals, embodied by the Sabbat baptism, were expressions of his defining characteristic. All contemporary demonologists reinforced the point by asserting that the Devil's inversion represented a counterfeit, a dissembling mockery of the nature of God.¹¹¹ It was by understanding the nature of God, of the true church, and of the ordained political and social order that Satan's shallow impersonation could be comprehended.

This emphasis on contrariety has supported the claims of revisionist historians that the English political nation possessed no language of opposition. Political rhetoric was dominated by an emphasis on consensus, thus conflict, culminating in the breakdown of government in the Civil War, originated in disagreements over the practical operation of the constitution.¹¹² Within this framework an equation between witchcraft and rebellion provided, in Peter Elmer's words, a 'normative system of discourse which fostered unity and concord in the body politic'.¹¹³ The ideas, and the practice of divine kingship were bound up with a perceived opposition between what Dr Clark has called 'marvellous monarchy' and witchcraft as anti-government. The position was expressed by consistent reference to 1 Samuel 15: 23.—'For Rebellion is the sin of witchcraft'.¹¹⁴ This rhetoric of consensual politics was employed widely through early modern Europe to demonstrate the mirror kingly authority provided to its divine origin. Challenges to that authority must by definition be an expression of the contrariety practised by God's ape. Theocracy, as with so many early modern political, religious and social tenets, was best understood through an exploration of its antithesis. If the witch's pact with Satan represented spiritual apostasy, it

¹⁰⁹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 46-53, 61-68.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹¹² Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution*, p. 9; Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, chapters 5-7.

¹¹³ Peter Elmer, "'Saints or sorcerers': Quakerism, demonology and the decline of witchcraft in seventeenth-century England', in Barry, Hester & Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, p. 174.

¹¹⁴ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 610-612; Elmer, "'Saints or Sorcerers'", pp. 164-165.

also embodied a literal, if indirect, resistance to secular authority. Through their acts of *maleficium* witches brought disorder and a symbolic threat to the commonwealth, perhaps nowhere better expressed than in their well known ability to undermine marital hierarchy through the infliction of impotence.

The only significant reinterpretation of the Devil outside the area of witchcraft has been offered by the art historian, Luther Link, who is overtly sceptical as to the emotive reality of Satan, which he describes as 'a mask without a face'. He argues that artists in medieval and early modern Europe were unable to develop a central iconographic unity in images of the Devil, in contrast to that they found for Christ. Images of Lucifer being cast out of heaven, and Satan chained in hell were derived from entirely separate pictorial traditions which never overlapped or implied each other.¹¹⁵ The meaning of such images could only be derived from an extrinsic tradition, and this discontinuity stemmed from the fact that artists were unable to engage emotionally with the concept of the Devil.¹¹⁶ Satan, Link argues, was never a character, only an abstraction; 'not convincingly felt as a "person", he could not be convincingly shown as an evil force'.¹¹⁷ Often the Devil's lack of iconography was useful in associating one's adversaries with him. But the Devil was not simply 'the other'. Although heretics, Jews and Saracens were demonized in writings, they tended not to be in the arts. The reason, Link argues, hints at the Devil's true meaning—that he essentially works for God and is not therefore an image of evil.¹¹⁸ Since he punishes sinners on behalf of God, he cannot be a Jew or heretic, and, although he may be chained, the Devil is never shown suffering in hell. Until the sixteenth-century the Devil was always defined in terms of his opposite—Christ—he could never be an independent symbol of evil.

But Link, in the end, returns to the question of theodicy that has so troubled Russell and others. The failure of artists to depict the Devil does not, he argues, indicate that they were unable to feel the reality of evil, or that evil had no face. For instance evil found a convincing human representation in the twelfth-century Winchester Psalter, or in Giotto's depiction of Judas receiving payment for betraying Christ (1304-1313), in stark contrast to the unsuccessful execution of devils in both these works.¹¹⁹ Nor does this failure indicate any lack of belief in the reality of the Devil himself, instead it suggests that such belief was abstract. The Devil was an easy way to divorce responsibility for evil from man. Once this abstraction was put to the test however, once artists were called upon to give a shape to this powerful figure, they failed utterly to achieve any emotional

¹¹⁵ Luther Link, *The Devil: A Mask without a Face* (London, 1995), p. 15, illustrations pp. 142-143.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191, illustrations, pp. 129-130, 138.

engagement with it. The best they could come up with was an empty costume, 'impersonating' some aspect of the Devil's story, but failing to imply to the viewer that behind it was a real demonic presence whose history was that of rebellion and fall.¹²⁰ For abstract theodicy the Devil might just have sufficed, for 'emotional theodicy' he was profoundly un-satisfying.¹²¹

Whilst these studies have greatly sophisticated the understanding of the Devil's place within witchcraft and theodicy, they have provided less insight into the wider significance of the concept. The important identification of a popular conception of the Devil in the familiar spirit is seemingly impossible to trace further because of the lack of surviving evidence (as Sharpe admits) beyond that contained in witchcraft narratives. Moreover the narrow focus of some studies has tended to prevent insights being gained into what was the subjective *experience* of the Devil in early modern England. Histories of the 're-writing' of witchcraft focus only on the discursive use made of the concept of Satan by a small group of magistrates and divines. Again the Devil is interpreted as a functionalist symbol, a recourse to which a (male) Christian elite resorted in the face of a complex popular supernatural over which they otherwise had no control. Stuart Clark's work has opened up many new avenues in the study of demonology, recognising the importance of language and discourse, the complex relationship between demonology and natural science, and the importance of the perception of demonic power to the practice of theocracy. Demonology, he reveals, was a vastly more complex area of early modern culture than historians have credited, and one which provides vital insights into the contemporary mind more generally. But even here, Dr Clark's interpretation of the Devil himself is shaped by his concentration on witchcraft. By arguing that, through the linguistic conventions of demonology, the Devil had only a contingent reality, Clark's study implicitly downplays the possibility of a 'positive' experience of demonic agency. Satan was more 'understood' than he was actually 'felt', since insights into what his agency was were provided only by knowing what it was not. But, whilst it is undeniable that contrariety and inversion were of great importance to the concept of the Devil, they did not define it. As this study will seek to show, demonism maintained a hold in early modern culture because its identification of diabolic agency within religious, social and political commonplaces allowed people to engage with an experience of the devil which was positively felt.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 193.

¹²¹ The term 'emotional theodicy' is not used by Link himself but is a useful way of distinguishing the different responses to evil that he is highlighting.

Sources for the Study of Demonism

This study aims to provide a more widely contextualised picture of the Devil within early modern culture which does not rely on, and hence become constrained by the frameworks of witchcraft and theodicy. It adopts an broadly thematic approach and, whilst encompassing theological works and witchcraft texts, examines them only as part of this more widely conceived demonism. Thus the source base for the study is also broad, allowing a model of demonism to emerge from characteristic emphases across early modern culture. The majority of sources are printed material intended for public consumption, for it was in the liturgy, in sermons, conduct books and pulp press pamphlets that the fullest descriptions and narratives of demonic agency were recorded, and transmitted to a wider audience. More private sources, such as diaries and commonplace books, are examined in order to trace everyday lay demonological beliefs and experiences. Often these provide evidence of a keen awareness of conventional demonism filtered through personal experience to make it meaningful. Spiritual autobiographies and godly lives are similarly of central importance. These narratives of spiritual progress and conversion often depicted intense periods of struggle with the Devil. A broad sweep of political culture illustrates further the influence of demonism in the period. For whilst the Devil could not be said to pervade political considerations, his presence in the minds of many individuals of the governing elite was pronounced, and a conception of demonic subversive agency was fully congruous with the political rhetoric of the times. Thus this study also incorporates parliamentary debates, political diaries, pamphleteering and propaganda.

None of these sources are without problems. The difficulty presented by the absence of evidence from the illiterate or semi-literate mass of the population is perennial in cultural history, and the study of demonism is no exception.¹²² The vast majority of the population of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England have left no record at all of their demonological beliefs. It is simply impossible to say with any certainty to what extent the Devil played a significant role in the lives of those who either lacked the education, or the inclination to record their experiences. Such judgements as have been attempted have largely been based on absences in court and parish records, the forum in which the voice of the illiterate majority might be heard, even if it was mediated by the process of recording. As we have seen, Keith Thomas has argued that a concern over *maleficium* rather than diabolism dominated the evidence given at English witch trials. Similarly, Alan Macfarlane has suggested that an absence of words such as 'devil' and 'evil' in the

¹²² Tim Harris, 'Problematising Popular Culture', in Harris, (ed.), *Popular Culture in England, c.1500 – 1850* (Houndsmills, 1995), pp. 6-9.

records of the Essex parish of Earls Colne, indicates the prosaic nature of ordinary parishioners in the seventeenth-century found little place for notions of cosmic evil of the agency of the Devil.¹²³ Whilst the more recent willingness amongst historians to interpret the familiar as a popular conception of the Devil would seem to effectively challenge these conclusions, the relative lack of evidence for popular demonism means that the researcher has to rely on 'literate' sources in order to study demonism beyond witchcraft. The model of demonism presented here is, therefore, offered in the knowledge that its pervasiveness within early modern culture might be significantly qualified if detailed, localised studies into popular occult beliefs could be carried out.

Literate sources themselves bring further problems. Whilst the sheer number of expositions, conduct books, catechisms and sermons which discussed diabolic agency testify to the importance the Devil was accorded within Protestant culture it is difficult to gauge precisely their influence on their readership. Theological discussion of the Devil was of course academic, whilst the *practical* influence of prescriptive conduct literature is difficult to judge. On very rare occasions we can trace the influence of a specific book on a specific individual, but invariably the individuals concerned were self-consciously godly, and we cannot be confident that theology had a wider lay audience. Yet to look for such definite chains of influence is unrealistic, and seeks to impose a hierarchical structure onto early modern culture which did not exist. The influence of demonism as part of contemporary culture was more fluid and more opaque, based as it was—this study will argue—on a subtle re-alignment of emphases rather than a fundamental change to the concept.

The fullest demonological narratives were left by the literate, whose education and reading must have allowed them a far more sophisticated articulation of demonological experience than the uneducated. And, amongst this group, those who wrote about the Devil were, by definition, those who felt his presence most keenly. Thus the beliefs of zealous Protestants and Puritans will feature prominently in any history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonism. Moreover, spiritual autobiographies were influenced by conventions of narrative which encouraged authors to highlight early struggle with the demonic as a prelude to eventual conversion and assurance. These sources then, are not necessarily a fully reliable testament as to 'real' demonological experience in early modern England. Yet they are by no means too jaded to be useful. The very nuances of narrative, prescription, selectivity and fiction provide in themselves vital insights into the culture of demonism and the ways in which it might be expressed. Whilst this study largely eschews psychological speculation

¹²³ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 627; Macfarlane, 'The root of all evil', pp. 62-65.

which projects modern psychoanalytical models back onto the early modern mental world, it accepts that, within the social context which defined emotional norms—illustrated by prescriptive and imaginative literature—sense of self and self-evaluation could be constructed in terms of narrative.¹²⁴ The narrativity of experience was at least as meaningful (and probably far more so) to the contemporaries who constructed them as any historically imposed picture of the ‘reality’ that underlay it.

Nor is it acceptable to dismiss literate sources as ‘elite’ and thus unrepresentative. The tendency of much recent work is to challenge the simplistic separation of elite and popular culture, and to increasingly emphasise the extent to which people were exposed to written material by reading aloud, oral transmission and illustration.¹²⁵ The Devil featured prominently in the ‘populist’ literature of the pulp press, and the early modern stage. He was a consistent figure in the pamphlet narratives of crime and sin, often finding a central place in the motivation of murderers, and similar depictions found a regular place on the stage. The narrative of the witches’ pact, of course, became a staple of the pulp press. Whilst such works were produced (in part at least) ‘for’, as opposed to ‘by’ the populace, they were influenced by the financial pragmatism of the market place. The consistency with which the Devil was presented in these sources suggests—if it does not prove—that prevalent religious concepts of diabolic agency appealed to the popular imagination. Moreover, it is argued in chapter 5 that these narratives consistently relied on the reader's sense of identification with the internal experience of temptation in order to make comprehensible moralistic warnings about the potential dangers of cumulative sin. By highlighting the very real connection between minor sins and crime, they sought to place the Devil's agency within the most commonplace experiences of their audience, both popular and elite. Indeed this study has found no basis on which to delineate differences between popular and elite conceptions of the Devil. The entrenched historical separation between concern over diabolism and *maleficium* has more to do with the peculiar situation of dealing with supposed pacts made between the witch and the physical Satan than it has to do with fundamental demonological belief. It will be suggested that the physicality of this conception of the Devil in fact made it unusual in contemporary demonism, which showed a far greater concern with his ability to enter into the mind. Perception of satanic agency was broadly shared at all levels of early modern society. Equally scepticism might be found amongst the highest and lowest, but at all levels it was attributable to personal conviction rather than class culture.

¹²⁴ MacDonald, ‘The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira’, pp. 35–37.

¹²⁵ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1991).

Perhaps more surprisingly, the study has also not found significant evidence of gender-based distinctions in the experience of the Devil. Whilst contemporary witchcraft theory assumed that women's physical and spiritual weakness, combined with a dangerous curiosity, made them particularly vulnerable to demonic temptation, this does not appear to have provided an identity for those women who suffered affliction at the Devil's hands.¹²⁶ Men and women were equally likely to suffer diabolic assaults, and do not seem to have understood the experience in any gender-specific way. When women featured in pulp press accounts of diabolic crimes such as murder, reference was invariably made to their spiritual weakness, but it was not made a distinct aspect of the agency by which the Devil drove them to violence, rather they were vulnerable to his agency in general. Though women might be 'devilish', the Devil himself was always conceived as a man (even if he might sometimes disguise himself as a woman). But again the Devil's sex was unrelated to his agency, which encompassed both violence (historically associated with men) and the power of words (associated with women).¹²⁷

For several reasons this study also contains no discrete treatment of the subjects of witchcraft and possession, rather they are incorporated where relevant into broader discussions of demonism. An enormous amount of attention has been devoted to the study of witchcraft in England and Europe, with as many explanations forwarded as there are scholars studying it. The details of the diabolic pact are well known and accurately examined in existing studies, and whilst the wider study of demonism throws new light on their context, it does not fundamentally challenge the interpretation advanced in recent studies such as those of James Sharpe and Robin Briggs.¹²⁸ The history of possession is a burgeoning subject emerging at a tangent from the study of witchcraft. Whilst it is increasingly understood to have consequences for scientific and confessional disputes, possession continues to be understood primarily as a symptom of bewitchment and thus a subset of witchcraft studies. Much attention has been focused on the academic disputes in which theories of demonic agency and the powers of exorcism were contested. Again these studies are in no need of

¹²⁶ The few gender-oriented discussions by women of the fall of Eve, for example, written in the controversy over misogynistic polemic of Joseph Swetnam aimed to refute the assumption that Eve's sin was qualitatively greater than Adam's. See Constantia Munda, *The Worming of a mad Dogge: or, A Soppe for Cerberus the laylor of Hell. No confutation but a sharpe Redargution of the byter of Women* (London, 1617); Ester Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman: or An Answere to a lewd Pamphlet, entitiled, The Arraignement of Women* (London, 1617); Rachel Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus, The Cynicall Bayter of, and foule mouthed Barker against Evahs Sex* (London, 1617); see also *Hic Mulier: or the Man Woman; Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our times* (London, 1620), sig. C.

¹²⁷ Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and women in seventeenth-century England: some Northern evidence', *Continuity and Change* 6 (2), 1991, p. 186.

¹²⁸ Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 70-78, 83-88; Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-38.

revision, rather possession also needs to be contextualised within the wider culture of demonism. It will be suggested here that concerns over various aspects of possession—such as its physical symptoms, and whether witches had the power to send devils into their victims—were considered within a more broad context which understood possession as a spiritual phenomenon with physical consequences. As such it was influenced by the spiritual imperatives of reformed demonism. To those who sought to 'dispossess' devils by prayer and fasting, possession, the invasion of the body by a devil, was temptation in its most extreme form.

Thus in employing a broad source base this study concentrates on the aspects of demonism that were most prominent across the various genres of early modern culture. As a consequence the model of demonism it describes cannot be entirely comprehensive. As a familiar and complex belief, demonism was employed in widely differing areas of contemporary culture, and the extensive remit the Devil had adopted by the sixteenth-century—from pseudo-deity to providential hangman, trickster and tempter—provided a rich source for religious and political manipulation. Whilst this study argues that an emphasis on the Devil’s role as tempter came to dominate contemporary demonism, no aspect of his traditional agency was dismissed and all continued to find expression after the Reformation. Thus the study does not argue that there was a single demonism in early modern England to which all subscribed. Rather it argues that emphasis on certain aspects of demonological belief changed as a result of the Reformation, and that the change was highly influential within a demonism that maintained the central tenets of the Devil’s established conception.

* * *

This study is organised thematically within a broad chronology. The first part deals with the emergence of a characteristically Protestant conception of the Devil from the midst of the English reformation to the theological and devotional literature of the first half of the seventeenth-century. Chapter 2 examines the recourse the concept of diabolic subversion adopted by Protestant polemicists who sought to demonstrate the hidden contrariety of the Catholic church, and who necessarily highlighted the unseen agency of the Devil as his most threatening power. Chapter 3 deals with the Reformation’s changes of devotional emphasis, in which Satan’s hidden threat was more precisely conceived as internal temptation by a literal invasion of the mind. Part 2 traces the influence of this shift of emphasis on demonological experience in the period. Chapter 4 looks at the self-conscious godly who left the most detailed accounts of suffering at Satan’s hands, and who can be shown to have internalised the emphasis on temptation, but also to have shaped it into a personally meaningful experience. Chapter 5 examines the wider influence of temptation in literate culture. Examining the

genre of pulp press murder and witchcraft narratives it argues that they relied for their meaning on the transmission of a vicarious experience to the audience, who were to comprehend the danger of temptation by an empathic identification with the mind of the criminal. Part 3 provides a chronological history of the role of demonism in political discourse after the accession of Elizabeth and challenges the prevalent historical view that demonology was a rhetoric of consensus. Chapter 6 examines the perception of active diabolic subversion of the body politic to the crisis of the 1640s. It argues that an understanding of the dynamic of temptation allowed for an analogous political conception that identified elements as *de facto* diabolic potentials within society. But these were heavily contested, and Catholics, Puritans, conformists and bishops might equally be characterised as devilish. Chapter 7 examines how demonism's potential for political expression was fully exploited during the Civil War, in which each side employed demonic images of the other which did not simply demonize, but in themselves encouraged an engagement with the politics of the conflict.

Thus this study seeks to demonstrate that the concept of the Devil in early modern England was neither a left-over from the medieval world, nor an uneasy half-way house on the way to a purely human conception of evil. It was not an empty symbol of evil, or simply a well-worn tool of persecution. Satan was felt as a powerful and proactive force in the lives of individuals and in the wider commonwealth. God's ape was prevalent in English culture not because the Devil had no intrinsic reality, but because the notion diffused the threat of his most frightening agency—his hidden subversion. Temptation might be inchoate, subjective and contentious, but it was powerfully felt as an active force.

The Synagogue of Satan: Anti-Catholicism, False Doctrine and the Construction of Contrariety

The study of the Devil in early modern English culture begins with the Reformation, or, more precisely, with the understanding of satanism that emerged out of Protestant attempts to comprehend the corruption of traditional Catholicism. As the will to reform in England gathered pace, Protestant polemicists targeted not only specific clerical abuses but the Roman faith as a whole. They adopted a long established heretical association of the Pope with Antichrist, and behind Antichrist lay the Devil, the guiding hand of Apocalyptic subversion.¹ In describing how Satan came to exact such a profound influence over generations of ostensibly pious men and women, Protestants articulated a demonic agency which placed the Devil's power firmly in the human consciousness and in the manipulation of man's instincts, both godly and ungodly. In effect Catholicism might be a parody, a contradiction of everything sacred to the true faith.² But this was hidden behind a pious gloss which had hoodwinked millions into their own eternal destruction. Nor were its victims naive or ignorant, many learned and zealous Christians continued to believe in the veracity of the Roman church. It fell then to the reformers to explain why Catholicism was such a convincing fake, and in so doing reveal its contrariety with Christianity. Paradoxically, this very process forced Protestants to engage with the spiritual and emotional experience which bound men to Catholicism, and to find a congruous place for the Devil within it. As a consequence Protestantism emphasised the Devil's presence in the everyday religious instincts of the average Christian and, as this emphasis pervaded its more general devotional considerations, the Devil's greatest threat seemed to be his power to invade the consciousness disguised as the most commonplace thoughts and desires. We will see in the next chapter that this emphasis crystallised in the elevation of internal temptation as the most

¹ R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth-Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Abingdon, 1978); K.R. Firth, *the Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979); C. Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1971, reprinted London, 1990), pp. 1-25; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 346-353.

² P. Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in R. Cust & A. Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1660* (London, 1989), pp. 72-74; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 349-351.

significant aspect of Satan's agency, and that it was enormously influential in shaping demonism in the century to 1660. This chapter examines how the concerns and conflicts of the English Reformation shaped the perception of the Devil's agency as an intimate everyday experience with profound consequences within a wider Apocalyptic cosmic scheme that saw the world divided between the powers of light and darkness.

The Devil as Fact: The Protestant Perception of Diabolic Power

Peter Lake has described anti-Catholicism in seventeenth-century England as 'the most obvious and important example of that process of binary opposition, inversion or the argument from contraries which, we are increasingly being told, played so central a part in both the learned and popular culture of early modern Europe'. Anti-Catholicism, Professor Lake argues, was a form of inverted self-advocacy. By highlighting the diabolism of hated aspects of Catholic worship, Protestants implied an ideal of faith in practice to which they believed they conformed. Balanced against superstitious popery was the purity of the Protestant faith, which asserted by implication the values of *sola scriptura*, clerical humility and iconophobia.³ Anti-Catholic inversions might also be the result of wider social tensions. David Underdown argues that a widespread adherence to millenarianism in the seventeenth-century made the identification of Catholics as agents of Satan 'natural'. Scapegoats were necessary at all levels of a society facing, or so it believed, a combination of crises of order, and in the fears of many, Catholics and witches became fused into a single diabolic threat to society.⁴

This was the culmination of a process begun in the English Reformation, in which the success of the identification of Catholicism as a diabolic church was far less certain. Protestant reformers became convinced that Catholicism embodied a complete inversion of true religion, substituting an empty and diabolic piety based only on the authority of man, for faith in the word of God. In thus corrupting the church, Catholicism was the 'synagogue of Satan'. The term was coined in the Book of Revelations to describe the apostasy of the Jewish church, but, whilst St. Augustine introduced the division of the world into rival camps of light and darkness into orthodoxy, the language of the 'two churches' came into its own

³ Lake, 'Anti-popery', p. 73; on the concept of contrariety and inversion see Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, misrule and the meaning of witchcraft', *Past and Present*, 87 (1980); Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 3-93; Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978), pp. 185-191.

⁴ Professor Underdown notes that it was no coincidence that a number of Protestant writers, James I among them, noted that women were especially susceptible to both witchcraft and recusancy, see David Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 17.

only when it offered medieval heretics a needed critique of the established faith.⁵ In England it was Lollardy that had most recently attacked the papacy with accusations of diabolism.⁶ But whilst the rhetoric of the synagogue of Satan associated the reformers with a long tradition of attacking the Roman church, its use in sixteenth-century England emerged out of a specific interaction of an experiential approach to the forces of evil and a concern that the satanic corruption of the papacy was not being recognised. In reforming polemic then, 'the synagogue of Satan' described a very specific process whereby piety was distracted from its true course by the Devil, and it required Protestants to claim a monopoly of insight into the workings of the demonic which greatly influenced the shape of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonism more widely.

In England, demonism was not reformed in the sense that Eucharistic theology or the cult of the saints were reformed. There was no attempt to alter the fundamentals of belief in the Devil or to deny him the power he had previously been accorded. Indeed the major writers of the early Reformation produced no dedicated works of demonology, and, with the exception of discussions of witchcraft, such works remained rare throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries.⁷ But mainstream Protestant writing was pervaded by a profound sense of the Devil's power. The Lutheran William Tyndale's works are littered with references to Satan's relationship with man. His first known book, *A pathway into the Holy Scripture* (1525), contains a passionate account of man's fall from grace into diabolic slavery. During his long career, Thomas Becon turned his attention to a wide variety of religious subjects, and Satan is rarely absent from his 33 identifiable works. Whether he was turning out anti-Catholic polemic, devotional prayer books or instructions for children, Becon found the Devil to be a pertinent, if not fundamental subject.⁸

⁵ Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, pp. 56-57.

⁶ In 1406 William Taylor described the clergy as the 'mynystis of antecrist' and the limbs of Satan, *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. A. Hudson (Oxford, Early English Text Society, 1993), pp. 10-11. The Lollard text of 1409-10, *The Lantern of Light* (which was printed in 1530) noted there was a 'church empropred to the devil, the which is the number of them that be encumbered to serve him after his tising [enticing] against God's hests', *Here begynneth the Lanterne of lyght*, ed. L. M. Swinburn (Oxford, Early English Text Society, 1971), p. 127.

⁷ Whilst continental witchcraft texts seem to have been widely known in England, English versions began to be produced only after 1584. Early examples include George Gifford, *A discourse of the subtyll preactices of devilles by witches and sorcerers* (London, 1587); *A dialogue concerning witches and witchcraftes* (London, 1593); James VI, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597); William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft*, pub. Thomas Pickering (Cambridge, 1610). Stuart Clark suggests that witchcraft drew the attention of Protestant theologians because it had an 'unforced relevance' to their program of establishing doctrinal purity and eradicating superstition, see 'Protestant Demonology, Sin, Superstition and Society (c.1520-c.1630)', in B. Ankarloo & G. Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft*, pp. 80-81.

⁸ Thomas Becon, *Early Works*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844); *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, with other pieces*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844); *Prayers and Other pieces of Thomas Becon*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844).

This powerful sense of the Devil's presence was combined with a pragmatic focus on scriptural authority in questions of doctrine. The result was a '*de facto*' approach to Satan's reality in which his agency was to be experienced rather than speculated about. The emphasis is clearly seen with regards to the question of the Devil's fall from heaven. Lucifer's rebellion had, in all probability, introduced evil into the cosmos, but the truth remained obscure. 'Some murmur', Jean Calvin noted in his *Institutes of Christian Religion*, 'because the Scripture does not in various passages give a distinct and regular exposition of Satan's fall, its cause, mode, date and nature'. But this only indicated that the information was 'of no consequence to us'.⁹ The same approach was implicit in virtually all English reformed discussion of the Devil from the early Lutheran-inspired texts to the Protestant writings of the Elizabethan 'orthodoxy'. In his *A Pathway into Scripture*, William Tyndale did not mention the Devil's fall. In his devotional work of 1550, *The Image of God*, Roger Hutchinson argued that belief in the Devil was fundamental, but offered only proofs in the story of Job, and in the writings of St Paul and St Peter.¹⁰

Thus English reforming theologians were relatively unconcerned with what might be termed 'fundamental' theodicy—the cosmic origin of evil. But in stark contrast to this reticence was their concern over Satan's earthly activity. The Devil's agency was not a theological puzzle to pondered on, but a demonstrable certainty to be recognised and reckoned with, and the havoc he wreaked on earth was only too apparent. Preaching to Convocation in 1537, Hugh Latimer expressed this experiential approach to demonism. Man's only experience of the Devil was of his agency, and hence his agency was *all* that could be known of him:

I cannot wholly express him, I wot not what to call him, but a certain thing altogether made of the hatred of God, of mistrust in God, of lyings, deceits, perjuries, discords, manslaughters; and to say at one word, a thing concrete, heaped up and made of all kind of mischief. But what the devil mean I to go about to describe particularly the devil's nature, when no reason, no power of man's mind can comprehend it? This alonely can I say grossly, and as in a sum, of which all we (our hurt is the more) have experience, the devil to be a stinking sentine of all vices; a foul filthy channel of all mischiefs; and that this world, his son, even like a child meet to have such a parent, is not much unlike his father.¹¹

⁹ Jean Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, Bk. I, chap. xiv, trans. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids, 1989), vol. I, pp. 152-153; similarly see Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, ed T. Harding (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1849-52), vol. IV, pp. 348-349.

¹⁰ William Tyndale, *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (1525), in *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to different Portions of the Holy Scriptures*, ed. H. Walter (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1848), pp. 7-28; Roger Hutchinson, *The Image of God, or the laie mans booke*, in *The Works of Roger Hutchinson*, ed. J. Bruce (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1842), pp. 140-141..

¹¹ Hugh Latimer, *Sermons by Hugh Latimer*, ed. G. E. Corrie (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844), p. 42.

Satan's 'evils no man can number nor rehearse', observed Thomas Cranmer in 1548. But he made a fair attempt notwithstanding, listing among the afflictions suffered at the Devil's hands, 'sadness, sorrow, trouble of conscience, faintness of heart, sickness of the body, poverty slanders, despising, reproaches, persecutions, battle, sedition, hunger, pestilence and all plagues'.¹² If scripture revealed little of the Devil's origins, it provided him with a powerful didactic nomenclature which expressed well this intimate power over man. 'The tendency of all that scripture teaches us concerning devils is to put us on our guard against their wiles and machinations', explained Jean Calvin, 'the object of these descriptions is to make us more cautious and vigilant, and more prepared for the contest'.¹³ The Greek and Hebrew names, 'Devil' and 'Satan', were derived from expressions of his agency, the first meaning a slanderer, the second an opposer.¹⁴ In England the traditional lists of the individual demonic powers were all but abandoned in favour of a concentration on man's relationship with the Devil himself.¹⁵

The experience of persecution lent an even greater tangibility to the notion of a demonic assault on the faithful, as individual impulses to bible-based piety came into conflict the government's determination to stamp out Lutheranism and vernacular translation. Historians have noted that 'fiery clerical reformers' were largely absent from England's political and factional reformation. Enthusiasts for bible-based piety, like William Tyndale and Robert Barnes, were more or less thrown into the arms of Lutheranism by clerical intransigence, and much flirtation with heresy came from individual crises of faith.¹⁶ In the 1530s, the needs of Henry VIII's divorce catapulted cautious figures such as Thomas Cranmer and Nicholas Ridley into prominence, tensely balanced with more radical men like John Hooper.¹⁷ But whether on trial for heresy, or defending the King himself against the papal supremacy, the Devil's persecution provided a powerful sense of

¹² Thomas Cranmer, *Catechismvs, That is to say, a shorte Instruction into Christian Religion* (London, 1548), fols. 151v-152.

¹³ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk. I, ch. xiv, p. 150.

¹⁴ Bullinger, *Decades*, IV, p. 355.

¹⁵ Whilst demonologists in continental Europe, such as Johan Weyer, devoted great energy to calculating the exact number of individual demonic 'powers', figures such as Agares, Amon, Bathin, Eligor, Bileth, Gamigin and Balam, were almost entirely absent from English demonology in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. There was no attempt among English theologians to investigate the infernal hierarchy or to produce lists and breakdowns of the identifiable demonic generals. Indeed the most important English work which provided any such a hierarchical picture did so in order to dispute its reality. This was Reginald Scot's much vaunted sceptical tract *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), see the edition of Montague Summers (New York, 1972), pp. 217-225.

¹⁶ Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 57-60, 67-68; Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'England', in A. Pettegree (ed.), *The Early Reformation in Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 166

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-169.

identity to reformers in England. For the London merchant-tailor, Richard Hunne, the Pope was 'Satan'.¹⁸ John Stilman, tried before the Bishop of London in 1518 noted that the college of Cardinals was the limb of Antichrist whilst 'all other inferior prelates and priests are the synagogue of Satan'.¹⁹ As William Tyndale's writing became increasingly polemical, so too did his demonism. His exposés of clerical abuse, *The Practyse of Prelates* (1530), *The Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Jhon* (1531), and *An Exposition uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew* (c.1532), focused the sense of vulnerability to Satan that he had expressed in *The Pathway into holy scripture* more clearly on the Catholic church.²⁰ In *The Practyse of Prelates* Tyndale described how the Pope had 'put down the kingdom of Christ, and hath set up the ministers of Satan'.²¹

At his trial for heresy in 1532, Thomas Bennet, an Exeter schoolmaster and protégé of Thomas Bilney, denied the church's jurisdiction since it was based on papal authority. 'The church that is built upon a man', he told his examiners, 'is the devil's church or congregation, and not God's'.²² One of Bennet's protagonists was a relapsed heretic named Gregory Basset. In John Foxe's polemical account of the trial, Basset became representative of the prosecution as a whole, and thus when Bennet declared that Basset's arguments contained nothing 'but what maintaineth the Devil', he implied an accusation of betrayal by apostasy.²³ Such self-conception imbued the Protestant cause with a palpable sense of urgency. 'Mark out the people of God from the synagogue of Satan', the ex-Carmelite monk, John Bale, exhorted in 1548, 'and delay not to nourish them with the sweet fruits of the Spirit'.²⁴

Henry VIII's government was itself willing to perceive diabolic persecution in its conflicts with the Pope over the royal divorce. In the wake of Henry's excommunication in 1533, churchmen such as Stephen Gardiner and Cuthbert Tunstall defended the royal supremacy in print and from the pulpit. Tunstall, the bishop of Durham, preached a sermon before the King on Palm-Sunday in 1534 in which he characterised the Pope's claims to supremacy as Luciferian. 'The bishops

¹⁸ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes, touching matters of the Church*, ed. S. R. Cattley (8 vols., London, 1841-89, hereafter A & M), IV, p. 186; Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, corrected edition, 1991), pp. 98-103.

¹⁹ A & M, IV, p. 208. See also the heretical views of Patrick Hamilton (Scotland, 1528), A & M, IV, pp. 559-561; James Bainham (1532), pp. 699, 705; Thomas Bennet of Exeter (1532), A & M, V, p. 23; Alexander Seton, A & M, V, pp. 449-451.

²⁰ William Tyndale, *The Practyse of Prelates* (1530); *The Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Jhon* (1531); *An Exposition uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew* (c.1532) in *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of Scripture*, ed. H. Walter (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1849).

²¹ Tyndale, *The Practyse of Prelates*, pp. 273-275

²² A & M, V, p. 23.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches*, in *Select works: containing the examinations of Lord Cobham, William Thorpe and Anne Askewe, and the Image of both churches*, ed. H. Christmas (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1849), p. 384.

of Rome' he apparently preached, 'following the pride of Lucifer their father, make themselves fellows to God...and will be like to Almighty God'.²⁵ Demonism demonstrated just what was at stake in the disputes with Rome. Tunstall and John Stokesley, the bishop of London, warned Cardinal Pole in a letter of 1534, that if they heeded 'the bishop of Rome' over the nation's monarch they risked becoming 'but the ministers of Satan'.²⁶

Schooled in a tradition of attacks on heresy, conservatives were equally prepared to see diabolism in the reformer's schismatic tendencies. Reforming doctrine carried *too* far became an upstart satanism, and Protestants were the deluded instruments of the Devil's latest assault upon the true faith. The curate of Harwich, Thomas Corthorp, appalled at the headway made by 'new-fangled' preaching in London, complained that 'the Devil reigneth over us now'.²⁷ The bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, denounced the violent Lutheran, John Barnes, in a sermon at Paul's Cross on the 14 February 1540. Satan sought to subvert the reform of clerical abuse, he noted, for if it were no longer possible to buy salvation, 'the deuyll hath excogitate to offere heaven without works for it'. Thus new styled 'ministers' were but the latest diabolic agents. 'If the Kinges Majestie', he noted, 'as he hath banyshed freres by the Frenche name, wolde also baysh these that call themselves bretheren in Englishe, the deuyll shulde be greatly discomforted'.²⁸ In a broadside describing Barnes' execution, the refusal of the 'vicar of Hell' to recant was said to be at Satan's instigation.²⁹ Thomas Becon did recant his Protestantism in 1541 and declared that in all his preaching he had 'continuallye laboured in the service of the Dyvell'.³⁰ Around the controversy over transubstantiation Gardiner published *A Detection of the Devils Sophistrie* in 1546, in which he argued that through the 'carnal' arguments of the reformers the Devil was poised to lead men 'captive and thralde from the true Catholique byleefe in this moost holye sacramente'.³¹

The very indeterminacy of England's reformation encouraged Protestants to develop a diabolic rhetoric which incorporated the elasticity of progress and reversal. Tunstall, preaching against the Pope's supremacy, characterised the desertion of Reginald Pole as a diabolic subversion of a subject's natural loyalty.³² William Turner, writing against Gardiner in *The huntynge and findynge out of the*

²⁵ A & M, V, pp. 84-85.

²⁶ A & M, V, p. 90.

²⁷ Quoted in Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 256-257.

²⁸ Stephen Gardiner, *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J. A. Muller (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 168-170; Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 309-310.

²⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324.

³⁰ A & M, V, p. 448, appendix XII.

³¹ Stephen Gardiner, *A Detection of the Devils Sophistrie, wherewith he robbeth the unlearned people, of the true byleef, in the most belssed sacrament of the aulter* (London, 1546), fol. 5v.

³² A & M, V, p. 88.

Romish Fox in 1543, saw the central experience of reformation as a tug-of-war between the anti-papal policies of Henry VIII and the backsliding of a demonic episcopate. The Pope had been driven from England, and Gardiner had been one of those appointed to institute the King's policy. But rather than lose his entire hold in the nation, the Devil had persuaded the bishop to subvert the reformation and protect Catholic doctrine, particularly clerical celibacy, in exchange for land and riches.³³ Satan also sought to subvert committed reformers' own progress towards doctrinal purity. 'A more sincere and pure feeling of religion has begun to flourish with success', John Burcher commented of England's religious progress in 1548, 'but Satan, through his hatred of this, has been endeavouring to throw every thing into confusion by means of dissension'. In particular Burcher referred to Cranmer's defence of the real presence in the Eucharist.³⁴ To continental reformers England could appear a frontier of reformation in which all progress was countered by diabolic action. Peter Martyr perceived satanic reprisals in the response to his attack on transubstantiation at Oxford in May 1549. 'If you knew what numerous and powerful enemies the devil has stirred up against me on this account, you would be surprised', he told Heinrich Bullinger in a letter of January 1550.³⁵ But the international network of Protestants provided a means of mutual support by which strength could be gained in the face of Satan's most concerted activity. In 1552 Calvin wrote to both Edward VI and Thomas Cranmer exhorting them to remain faithful in the face of the Devil. He sought to consolidate Edward's sense of the importance of his own Protestantism, noting 'I doubt not, sire, but that Satan is placing many hinderances in the way, to retard and cool your zeal. A great portion of your subjects are not aware of the good you are procuring them.' To Cranmer he observed that diabolic activity was a central experience of reformation, and that England could never have too many champions 'well qualified to confute the lies of Satan'.³⁶

A sensitivity to the political fortunes of those who were sympathetic to their cause infused the reformers' perception of the struggles around Edward VI's minority with an awareness of diabolism. Peter Martyr wrote to Martin Bucer in January 1549 of the arrest of Thomas Seymour, brother to the protector, and 'a

³³ William Turner, *The huntyng and findyng out of the Romish Fox: which more than seven yeares hath bene hyd among the Byshoppes of England, after the Kynges Hyghnes, Henry VIII, had commanded hym to be dryven out of his Realme* (reprinted Cambridge, 1851, 1st. ed. 1543), p. 37; Gardiner answered Turner in *The Examination of a Prowd Præsumptuous hunter* (1544?, no longer extant in print), attributing his arguments to the malice of the Devil, see Gardiner, *Letters*, p. 480.

³⁴ John Burcher to Heinrich Bullinger, 29 October 1548, in *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1846), pp. 642-643, also his letter of 21 January 1551, concerning satanic accusations of heresy against John Hooper, pp. 676-677.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 478; see also the comments of Martin Micronius to Bullinger on the troubles experienced by the stranger churches, 7 November 1551, pp. 577-578.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 708, 712; see also Thomas Lever, *A Sermon preached...in Lent before the Kynges Maiestie*, in *Sermons*, ed. E. Arber (London, 1870), pp. 61-62, 68.

great friend to religion'. 'The devil is using every endeavour to drive away Christ, he concluded.³⁷ A letter written by Calvin to Somerset following his release from the Tower (February 1550) is striking. It cautioned the Duke to resist the temptation to take revenge on those who had deposed him, and instead to concentrate on the spiritual significance of events in England. 'Let us not...wait trifling with men', he commented, 'but rather turn our attention to Satan..., as there is not doubt but that he has been the author of the mischief that has been devised against you, to the end that by this means the progress of the gospel might be hindered'. In pardoning his enemies Somerset might 'repel the malice of him who has made use of them'.³⁸

By the 1550s the nomenclature by which the Devil was commonly known fully reflected the prevalence of these concerns. Two scriptural terms in particular became central to the Protestant expression of Satan's reality and power. 'Baal', the name of an ancient Persian deity, described his role in idolatry. In the prophesy of Jeremiah it was used to characterise the idolatry of the pagan Chaldeans, whilst in Judges it expressed the faithlessness of the Hebrews who 'forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Astaroth'.³⁹ Even more commonly employed was the description of I Peter 5: 8 in which Satan was 'a roaring lion', who roamed constantly about 'seeking whom he may destroy'. This image haunted the Protestant imagination, embodying their conviction that true faith survived on a knife-edge over complete destruction. Peter 'compareth him to a lion', commented Roger Hutchinson in *The Image of God*, 'he walketh, he seeketh'. 'The deuyl seking like a roryng Lyon, whom he may deuoure', noted Thomas Lever in 1550, 'nyghte and day, winter and sommer, wyth a wonderful sorte of wicked spirites, doth euer besyge byshoprykes, shyres, townes and parishes'.⁴⁰ Other descriptions were plainly derivative. 'How doth Satan spread his nets in every forest and park, that no deer may escape his devouring teeth and ravening paws', was one of Thomas Becon's slants.⁴¹

³⁷ *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, p. 475.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 704-705.

³⁹ Book of Jeremiah, 33: 29; Book of Judges, 2: 13.

⁴⁰ Hutchinson, *The Image of God*, p. 141; Thomas Lever, *A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse*, in *Sermons*, p. 98; Thomas Becon, *The New Years Gift*, in *Early Works*, p. 323; *A Fruitful Treatise of Fasting*, in *The Catechism and other pieces*, p. 543; John Bradford, *The Writings of John Bradford*, ed. A. Townsend (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1848), vol. I, p. 136; Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 492-493; see also 'An Exhortation against the Fear of Death', 'An Homily against Gluttony and Drunkenness' and 'An Homily against Idleness', in *Certain Homilies appointed to be read in Churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory*, ed. J. Griffiths (London, 1864, reprinted 1908), p. 107, 311, 555; Edwin Sandys, *Sermons, to which are added some miscellaneous pieces*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1842), p. 181, 175, 263; William Perkins, *Four Godly Treatises; very necessary to be considered of all Christians* (London, 1587), p. 1; Thomas Pierson, 'Epistle Dedicatory', in Perkins' *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, sig. Kkk6; Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Piety*, p. 475.

⁴¹ Thomas Becon, *The Early Works*, p. 125; 'An Homily concerning the coming down of the Holy Ghost and the manifold Gifts of the Same', in *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, pp. 498-500.

* * *

Having made headway with reform under Edward VI, Protestant perception of diabolic activity was sharpened even further by the set-backs of the Marian regime.⁴² English Protestants had to come to terms with a stark reversal of fortune. They were removed from the ascendancy in the church which Northumberland's regency had afforded them, and forced into exile or persecuted at home.⁴³ Two distraught letters by Heinrich Bullinger, written as events were unfolding in August and October 1553, give a sense of the shocking palpability which Mary's accession lent to the Devil's agency. 'Where is our Martyr?', he wrote in August to Theadore Beza, 'Where John à Lasco? Where is Hooper, bishop of Worcester? Where is Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury?...Lord, have mercy upon them! I cannot easily express how greatly these things distress me.'⁴⁴ To Calvin in October he wrote of his fear that John Hooper was already dead, and of the execution of Northumberland, noting 'let us pray the Lord to preserve his people in these sad commotions, and to beat down Satan under his feet'.⁴⁵ The enormity of the sense of betrayal felt towards those who deserted the Protestant cause is demonstrated by a scathing letter written in 1554 by Lady Jane Grey to Thomas Harding, the one-time Protestant divine who became chaplain to Gardiner. 'I cannot but marvel at thee, and lament thy case', she said, 'who seemed sometime to be the lively member of Christ, but now are the deformed imp of the devil; sometime the beautiful temple of God, but now the stinking and filthy kennel of Satan'.⁴⁶ According to the martyr, Richard Woodman, in 1557 the renewed Catholic parish church was 'church of Satan' where man went to 'hear the detestable doctrine, that they spit and spew out of their churches and pulpits, to the great dishonour of God'.⁴⁷

For many Protestants the explanation for the crisis lay in biblical precedent—God was punishing the nation for its sins. The people, offered the gospel, had refused to take the opportunity to live according to the word. 'We set nought by the ministration of the holy and blessed communion of the body and blood of Christ', Thomas Becon explained in 1554, 'therefore this plague is worthy to come upon us, that in stead of the Lord's supper we have the most wicked and

⁴² The role of demonism in the Protestant reforms under Edward VI will be discussed with particular reference to the Liturgy and baptism in chapter 3, pp. 67-72.

⁴³ Joy Shakespeare, 'Plague and Punishment', in P. Lake & M. Dowling (eds.), *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England* (London, 1987), pp. 103-104; Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 11; Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, pp. 46-47, 64.

⁴⁴ Heinrich Bullinger to Theadore Beza, 30 August, 1553, in *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, p. 741.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 742-743.

⁴⁶ *A & M*, VI, pp. 418-419.

⁴⁷ *A & M*, VIII, p. 369.

abominable masses set up, invented by the devil, brought in by antichrist'.⁴⁸ The return of popery was a plague in the biblical style, not solely punitive, but also intended to open the eyes of the nation⁴⁹, and the Devil allowed Protestants to comprehend and engage with the extent of the set-back.

Only Satan could persuade an entire nation to recant, and Protestant polemic exaggerated England's relapse by exaggerating the success of its pre-Marian reformation. 'Of late in every congregation throughout all England was made prayer and petition unto God, to be delivered from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome', wrote Nicholas Ridley from his cell in Oxford, 'and now alas! Satan hath persuaded England, by his falsehood and craft, to revoke her old godly prayer.'⁵⁰ Ridley's prison writings found their emotional drive in a powerful sense of being engaged with the forces of Satan, and it was an understanding that must have bolstered many of the Marian heretics. He wrote a letter to be circulated amongst Protestant prisoners throughout the country in which he made clear that imprisonment was the agency of the roaring lion, 'that goeth about by all manner of subtle means to beguile the world, and also busily laboureth to restore and set up his kingdom again, that of late began to decay and fall to ruin.'⁵¹ In this atmosphere dissensions among the exiles on the continent also appeared to be a symptom of Satan's malice. Thomas Sampson described to Calvin disagreements in Strasbourg over the English prayer book, noting that 'Satan is permitted both at home and abroad to rage against the English'.⁵²

The return to an official Protestantism in 1559 did appear to be the deliverance from Satan promised by the reassuring polemic of the Marian persecution, even if the Elizabethan religious settlement left large numbers of zealous Protestants disaffected with the state of England's reformation.⁵³ For Edwin Sandys, newly made Archbishop of York in 1576, Elizabeth's accession was a providence that paralleled Christ's passion. 'As Christ hath delivered all his out

⁴⁸ Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle to the afflicted people of God* (1554), in *Prayers and Other Pieces*, p. 207.

⁴⁹ Shakespeare, 'Plague and Punishment', p. 107, 109.

⁵⁰ Ridley, *A Piteous Lamentation of the Miserable Estate of the Church in England in the time of the late Revolt from the Gospel*, in *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, ed. H. Christmas (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1843), pp. 49-50.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 342-345, quote at p. 342; see also pp. 349-352, 366-368, 369, 374, 385, 404, 410, 415-416; Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle*, p. 211.

⁵² Thomas Sampson to Jean Calvin, 12 February, 1555, in *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, pp. 170-171. See also Sampson's letter to Heinrich Bullinger of 6 April 1556, p. 174.

⁵³ Hierome Zanchius wrote to Edmund Grindal in 1563 comparing England's 'peace and Agreement in pure doctrine' with satanic persecution being suffered by the church in Strasbourg, *Zurich Letters (Second Series) comprising the Correspondence of several English Bishops and other with some of the Helvetian Reformers*, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1842), pp. 81-82. The controversies over the 'half-reformed' state of the church after 1559 themselves incorporated a contested perception of diabolic subversion inherent in maintenance of popish remnants such as the episcopate. A provocative parallel between the temptation of the body and the temptation of the body politic increasingly found a place within political rhetoric. These issues are discussed in full in chapters 6 and 7.

of the captivity of Satan and sin', he preached, 'so hath he also us...out of that prison of Romish servitude, out of the bloody claws of that cruel and proud antichrist.' 'Let us serve no more him that serveth Satan', he concluded.⁵⁴ But balanced against such optimism was a continued perception that Elizabeth's England struggled against the satanical synagogue. The apologist for the English church, John Jewel, wrote to Heinrich Bullinger in 1566 of his dispute with Thomas Harding.⁵⁵ It was his 'lot', Jewel bemoaned, 'to be always battling with these monsters. May the Lord give me strength and courage, and beat down Satan under our feet!'⁵⁶ In 1577, the perceived spread of recusancy around Southampton caused the Bishop of Winchester, Robert Horne, to write of the 'fearful deceivers Satan has heretofore raised up, and daily continues to do, that he may throw all things into confusion, and especially destroy the peace of the church'.⁵⁷ The arrival of the first of the Jesuit missionaries in 1580 provided a new focus for fears of Catholic subversion. According to Sir Walter Mildmay, addressing parliament in January 1581, the Jesuits sought to 'corrupt the realme with false doctrine, [and] also under that pretence to stirr sedition to the perill of her Majestie'.⁵⁸ Thus the words of the former playwright turned Puritan minister, Stephen Gosson, summed up England's predicament. The Devil, he noted, 'feeling such a terrible push, given to his breast by the change of religion, and by the happy entraunce of her maiestie to the crown, hath played wily beguillie ever since'.⁵⁹

So central had diabolic persecution become to the Protestant identity that it provided a framework for a much wider social critique. Whilst Catholicism had been ejected from England, the popularity of 'sinful' past-times such as the theatre, the alehouse and dancing, appeared to many Protestants to re-introduce the synagogue of Satan by the back door. The minister, Henry Roberts, noted in 1572, that although England had been freed from 'the filthy corruptions of the popes

⁵⁴ Edwin Sandys, *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1852), pp. 180-181.

⁵⁵ Harding retired to Louvain during Elizabeth's reign, and his *A Confutation of a booke, Intituled An Apologie of the Church of England* in Antwerp in 1565.

⁵⁶ 'Bishop Jewel to Henry Bullinger and Lewis Lavater', February 8, 1566, in *The Zurich Letters, comprising the corresponding of several English Bishops and others, with some of the Helvetican Reformers*, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1842), pp. 147-148.

⁵⁷ 'Bishop Horn to [certain brethren]', Jan. 16, 1577, in *Ibid.*, pp. 321-323.

⁵⁸ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, Volume I 1558-1581, ed. T. E. Hartley (Leicester, 1981), p. 504; James Aske, *Elizabetha Triumphans. Contayning The Damned Practices, that the diuelish Popes of Rome haue used sithence her Highnesse first coming to the Throne* (London, 1588), pp. 10-11; Anthony Marten, *An Exhortation to stir up the minds of all her Majesties faithfull Subjects* (London, 1588), sig. Bv.

⁵⁹ Stephen Gosson, *Plays confuted in five actions* (London, 1584), sig. B6-B6v. According to Gosson the Devil's first ploy was to import into England a great number of wanton Italian books to poison the nation's manners with an appetite for sinful 'foreign delights', but Satan had overlooked the fact that England was largely illiterate. See also Aske, *Elizabetha Triumphans*, pp. 2-3.

decrees', yet the general abuse of the sabbath remained, 'whiche might make us muche to marvell, were it not that the gospell doth manifestly testifie, that Sathan our Auncient Enemye, is now busie wt us, as he was in tempting of our first parents Adam & Eve'. It was manifest ingratitude for God's reformation that 'Sathan so much prevaileth in this our time wherein raigneth coveitousness & usury, whoredom and fornication, pride and vainglorie, swearyng & forswearieng, fraude and deceit, almoste amongst all sorts of people'.⁶⁰ If the Catholic 'throne' of Satan had been ejected, William Perkins noted, others remained. 'All dicing', he declared, 'and all brothell houses, wherein abhominable wickednesse is freely committed, are Satans thrones'.⁶¹ The theatre and Catholicism were so closely linked that they were almost inter-changeable. Anthony Munday noted in 1580 that if the stage was tolerated England would fall 'into the handes, if not of foraine enemies, which I feare; yet of our spiritual adversarie, the Pope or Diuel, which I am sure of'.⁶² Such associations continued to haunt the Protestant imagination in the seventeenth-century. In 1609 the Puritan, William Crashaw, prebend at Ripon, noted that England was beset by the machinations of a triumvirate of the Devil, the Catholics and the players. 'I would gladly separate them', he noted, 'but they will not: for who but the Diuell, and Papists, and Players do mocke at religion, and abuse the holie Scriptures'.⁶³

Without an heir, Elizabeth herself appeared a precarious guarantor of Protestantism in England. Satan's hand was discerned behind the plethora of conspiracies to replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots, who herself was styled as a devil incarnate.⁶⁴ Similarly the Spanish threat of 1588 was the work of 'the beast from the bottomless pit'.⁶⁵ In the face of the Armada, Anthony Marten exhorted his countrymen to 'strengthen yourselves against that horrible beast who hath received power from the dragon'.⁶⁶ Spanish propaganda declaring that Francis Drake had been captured and that Elizabeth's army had mutinied was denounced in England as a diabolic plot to bolster a discredited assault on a godly nation. The pamphlet *A Packe of Spanish Lyes* sought to expose the desperation of such

⁶⁰ Henry Roberts, *An earnest complaint of divers vain, wicked and abused exercises, practiced on the sabbath day* (London, 1572), p. 2.

⁶¹ William Perkins, *A Godly and learned Exposition...of the Revelation*, in *Works*, III, pp. 292-293.

⁶² Anthony Munday, *A Second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theatres* (London, 1580), sigs. A3v-A4.

⁶³ William Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the right honourable the Lord Lawarre, Lord Governour and Captaine Generall of Virginea* (London, 1610), sig. Hv.

⁶⁴ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I, p. 312; II, p. 228; Aske, *Elizabetha Triumphans*, pp. 12-13; the perceived connection between Mary Stuart, the Devil and treason is discussed below, see pp. 183-184.

⁶⁵ Marten, *An Exhortation*, sig. A3v; William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: the development of Anti-Spanish sentiment 1558-1660* (Durham, N. C., 1971), pp. 76-87.

⁶⁶ Marten, *An Exhortation*, sig. A2v.

strategies carried out by the 'intelligencers for the deuill'.⁶⁷ Events in Europe provided a chilling example of what would happen if the Devil ever regained his presidency in England. For the layman John Norden, writing in 1596, the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre had seen the Parisian Huguenots 'swallowed up in [a] devilish fury'. 'Who doth not see how manifestly it appeareth' Norden asked, 'that our church is that church which resembleth our head Christ Jesus in suffering, and the other to be the church resembling their father the devil by massacring and killing'.⁶⁸ Thus he was able to sum up of the experience of being a Protestant in Elizabeth's England, 'How hath the rage of Satan appeared against us with bitter threats from Spain, with excommunications and condemnations from Rome!'.⁶⁹

Fears of diabolic Catholic aggression continued throughout the early Stuart period, but they became far more certainly focused on the threat of internal subversion.⁷⁰ We must now consider in detail how these perceptions of persecution shaped the Protestant conception of the dynamic of diabolic Catholicism.

The Devil's Church: The Construction of Contrariety

Oppositional rhetoric was central to both the elite and popular culture of early modern Europe, and notions of contrariety and parody fed common fears over the destructive potential of disorder and the horror of 'the world turned upside down'.⁷¹ Everybody, it seems, understood the notion of contrariety, and fantasies such as the witches' Sabbat embodied fears of the inversion of the ordered world.⁷² As Peter Lake has argued, it was into this framework that attacks on Catholicism as an 'anti-religion' fitted. But despite its prevalence, contrariety was not an uncontested rhetoric. Whilst the reformers became convinced that popery embodied a direct inversion of Christianity, their conception of diabolic Catholicism was shaped by the need to persuade others, for whom its contrariety was far from obvious. As a consequence Protestant polemic aimed to reveal the hidden contrariety of Catholicism by emphasising the insidious demonic

⁶⁷ Anon., *A Packe of Spanish Lyes, sent abroad in the world* (London, 1588), sigs. A2, A4, B4.

⁶⁸ John Norden, *A Progress of Piety, whose Jesses lead into the Harbour of Heavenly Hearts Ease* (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1847), p. 93.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 93-95; Philip Stubbes, *The Second part of the Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), sigs. B5-B6.

⁷⁰ This is discussed fully below, pp. 185-193.

⁷¹ Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 185-191; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, chapters 3-6, passim; Davis, *Fear, Myth and History*, pp. 96-107; Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 17-18.

⁷² Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, chapter 6, passim; Rowland, "'Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons'", pp. 166-169.

subversion of faith inherent in its practice. It was this focus which produced Protestant demonism's wider emphasis on the hidden dynamic of diabolic agency.

Maintaining the Protestant inverted self-presentation was extremely demanding. A close reading of reformers' demonism reveals that their self-confidence was belied by a deeper fear of the Devil's power to disguise himself within Christian piety. Catholics were often reasonable men, rather than vicious malcontents, and Protestants had to assume that they had been brought to apostasy by a desire to express a genuine, if misconstrued Christian faith. Thus Protestant writers had to admit that Catholicism was a very convincing fake. It answered most of the requirements that were placed on it by ordinary parishioners and laymen. It gave comfort and security, made the world more comprehensible and offered extensive protection against the vagaries of providence. The concerns that popery inspired might be worldly, but worldly or not they answered to much of the human condition. For the reformers, therefore, Catholicism was pernicious precisely because it could appear altogether reasonable, comforting and just.

The Cambridge theologian and martyr Robert Barnes made a typical show of confidence in his contention that the Catholic church 'did no more agree with the manners of holy church, then darkness and light, then God and the devil'.⁷³ Whilst the papacy was Satan's synagogue, Protestants, noted John Rogers, the one-time prebend of St. Paul's, 'are by Gods grace assuredly certified in our own consciences—that we are no heretics, but members of the true catholic church'. But such sentiments were often accompanied by wary qualifications admitting that these convictions needed some justification. From his prison cell in 1555 Rogers recognised how far the message still had to spread. 'If I might have life and books', he enthused, 'I would so set forth, that all the world should see it: that our adversaries, with their antichristian head, are the members of the devil's church, as they undoubtedly are'.⁷⁴ In his earlier conflict with Sir Thomas More, William Tyndale showed himself sensitive to the possibility that the widely held assumption that the Catholic church was the sum of the Christian faith was in danger of perpetuating the satanic hold over the world.⁷⁵ In his translation of the New Testament, he chose to employ 'congregation', instead of 'church', as a translation of *ecclesia* in order to highlight the contrariety of the Catholics with the

⁷³ Robert Barnes, *What the Church is: and who bee thereof: and whereby men may know her*, in *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, ed. John Foxe (London, 1572), p. 242; Tyndale, *An answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, ed. J. Walter (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1850), p. 104; Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 252; Hooper, *A godly Confession and protestation of the Christian Faith* (1550), in *Later Works of Bishop Hooper*, ed. C. Nevins (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1852), p. 71.

⁷⁴ *A & M*, VI, p. 607.

⁷⁵ Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, pp. 11-15; John Hooper, *A Declaration of the Ten Commandments* (1548), in *Early Writings of John Hooper*, ed. S. Carr (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1843), pp. 276-277.

godly. 'For wheresoever I may say a congregation', he noted, 'there may I say a church also; as the church of the Devil, the church of Satan, the church of wretches, the church of wicked men, the church of liars, and a church of Turks thereto'.⁷⁶

A number of reformers drew up lists of antitheses to demonstrate more clearly the opposition of the two churches. In 1529 the martyr John Frith composed *Antithesis, wherein are compared together Christes actes and the Popes*. The tract listed 78 differences, concentrating on the contrast between the humility of Christ and the arrogant ostentation of the Pope.⁷⁷ A similar device was used repeatedly by Thomas Becon who, writing during Mary's reign, listed 50 ways in which the church of Satan differed from the that of God. Later he would enumerate 126 oppositions in the acts of Christ and Antichrist, and 100 more in points of doctrine.⁷⁸ These texts drove home the contrariety between satanic Catholic and godly Protestant with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer. 'What concord hath Christ with Belial?', Becon asked, taking his cue from II Corinthians. The answer was simple—'there is not one thing in the world that is so contrary to another thing, as the synagogue of Satan is contrary to the church of Christ, both in doctrine and life'.⁷⁹ Christ's church honoured God 'in spirit and truth', Becon noted in a typical passage, 'the synagogue of Satan honoureth God with surplices, copes, vestments, bells, organs, censers, candlesticks, fire, palms, ashes, bread, water, oil cream, building of monasteries, free chaples, chanteries, &c'.⁸⁰ Other observations included that the Catholic church forbade clerical marriage, bred superstition in reliance on the saints, and was obsessed with worldly riches. 'Who seeth not now', the reformer asked, 'what great diversity there is between these two churches?'⁸¹ Again the implication was that many people did not appear to see at all.

The contrariety of 'God's ape' and the witches' Sabbat was of little use in persuading people of the diabolism of Catholicism.⁸² Located on a distant mountain-top, the anti-world of the Sabbat drew its force from the imagination of people who never witnessed it, and it could have little persuasive power over

⁷⁶ Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, p. 15.

⁷⁷ John Frith, *Antithesis, wherein are compared together Christes actes and the Popes* (1529), in *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, pp. 97-106.

⁷⁸ Becon, *A comfortable Epistle to the afflicted people of God and The Actes of Christe & of Antichrist concerning both their life and doctrine, both in Prayers and Other Pieces*.

⁷⁹ Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle*, p. 195; *The whole workes of W. Tyndale, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, pp. 242-243; 'An homily of the right use of the church', 'An homily against the peril of idolatry', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 172-173, 192-193.

⁸⁰ Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle*, p. 195-6; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 12.

⁸¹ Becon, *A Comfortable Epistle*, p. 201; *The whole workes of W. Tyndale, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, pp. 242-243.

⁸² On 'God's Ape' see Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 81-82.

their familiarity with Catholic worship.⁸³ Even the most imaginative anti-Catholic had difficulty in arguing that the mass was *open* Devil-worship, even if he thought (and many of them did) that such acts took place hidden in Rome.⁸⁴ The reformers had to concede that disguise was perhaps the greatest of Satan's talents. Rather than inverted religion, English Protestants concluded that the dynamic of Devil-worship was false doctrine. As 2 Corinthians 11: 14 predicted, 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'.⁸⁵ Whilst the rituals and paraphernalia of Catholic worship might debase Christianity, and ultimately replaced faith with idolatry, their effects were largely hidden from the perception of the ordinary parishioner. Satan's impersonation of God, rather than his parody, was his greatest threat. 'The subtilties of the Devil must be taken heed of', wrote Bishop John Hooper in 1548, 'lest he shew us God in another form than he sheweth himself in his word'.⁸⁶ It was a theme that pervaded anti-Catholic polemic into the seventeenth-century. 'Into what shape cannot he transform himself?', asked John Jewel, 'in whose name will not he craftily set forth his errors, which dareth falsley to set himself in the place of God?'.⁸⁷ According to James Calfhill in 1565, the Devil 'compasseth by all means to win himself some credit with us' and to destroy the knowledge of God. But 'he hath of himself too ill a name to be esteemed so; and therefore, under visor of that that he is not, he wins men to yield to that they should not'.⁸⁸ Oliver Ormerod sought in his tract of 1606, *The Picture of a Papist*, to demonstrate that this disguise was 'the very cunningest strategeme the deuill hath...he being a fiend of darkenesse'.⁸⁹ Thus John Boys summed up a fully established polemical tradition when in 1615 he warned that the Devil was 'the most diligent preacher in the whole world'.⁹⁰

⁸³ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 100-102; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 80-86; Muchembled, 'Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality'; Rowland, "'Fantastickall and Devilishe Persons'", pp. 161-169.

⁸⁴ See for example the German anti-Jesuit pamphlet of 1607, reprinted in England in 1641 as *Camilton's Discovery of the Devillish Designs, and Killing Projects, Of the Society of Jesuits...intended, but graciously prevented in England*, which described in detail the diabolic ceremonies and initiation rituals carried out in chthonian vaults hidden in the major cities of Europe. The pamphlet is reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany* (London, 12 vols. 1810), V, pp. 103-117.

⁸⁵ James Calfhill, *An Avnsver to the Treatise of the Cross wherein ye shall see by the plaine and vndoubted word of God, the vanities of men disproved* (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1846), p. 12.

⁸⁶ Hooper, *A Declaration of the ten holy commandmentes*, p. 294.

⁸⁷ John Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, in *The Works of John Jewel...second portion*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1848), II, p. 894.

⁸⁸ Calfhill, *An Avnsver to the Treatise of the Crosse*, p. 12; 'An homily against the peril of idolatry', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 192-193, 240-241.

⁸⁹ Oliver Ormerod, *The Picture of a Papist: or, A Relation of the damnable heresies, detestable qualities, and diabolickall practices of sundry hereticks in former ages, and of the papists in this age* (London, 1606), sig. A2.

⁹⁰ John Boys, *An Exposition of the festivall Epistles and Gospels used in our English Liturgie* (London, 1615), p. 82; Issac Bargrave, *A sermon preached before the Honourable Assembly...of the lower House of Parliament* (London, 1624), p. 24.

This emphasis on subversion rather than inversion required Protestants to conceive a dynamic of satanic agency which explained why man's perception was so woefully inadequate in discerning his strategy. In Calvinist terms the fall of man had resulted in an alienation from God, which was conceived as the loss of spiritual gifts, such as faith and the study of holiness, but also as a weakening of the physical senses. Indeed the physical and spiritual senses were inseparable, and Adam's apostasy had removed the spiritual insight that brought him close to God. 'Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind', Calvin commented, 'having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart'.⁹¹ 'We threw away the love of God's eternal truth', noted Edwin Sandys, 'and, according to the blindness of our hearts, hungerly fed upon all poisoned error, and plunged ourselves into all wickedness'.⁹² For Protestants this spiritual blindness became the first principle of the Devil's agency. No longer able to perceive godliness, man floundered about helplessly, easily falling prey to Satan's hidden suggestions. In 1538 John Lambert, another of Bilney's protégés, accused his examiner, Archbishop William Warham, of naivety. 'Be ye not children in wit and understanding; but concerning maliciousness, be you children', he quoted from I Corinthians. St. Paul's words articulated mankind's lack of 'discretion to judge the good from the ill, and the ill from the good', and Catholicism exemplified this failure.⁹³ Similarly, John Jewel paraphrased II Thessalonians. 'The devil is subtile', he noted, 'you are weak and simple: he will soon deceive you'. Such weakness was general to man's condition, as Jewel continued 'when I say man may be deceived, I mean not boys, or children, or fools, or the simpler sort of men; but the learned, the wise, the politic'.⁹⁴

It was spiritual blindness then that explained Satan's ability to corrupt Christendom through the Catholic church. Whilst man had been degraded by the fall of Adam, he remained a creature of God, imbued with an instinctive need to worship his creator. This, and man's spiritual blindness, was a potent mix for Satan to prey on. The understanding was central to the reformers' conception of the dynamic of Catholic idolatry. Idolatry was an expression of helplessness, as the mind, unguided by spiritual insight was simply unable to escape the limitations of its own imagination. As John Hooper noted:

⁹¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk. II, chap iii, pp. 249-250.

⁹² Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 178-179.

⁹³ A & M, V, p. 185. Lambert was saved by the death of Archbishop Warham in August 1532, but was burned in 1538 as a convenient demonstration of Henry VIII's orthodoxy, Haigh, *English Reformation*, pp. 136-137.

⁹⁴ Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 891.

the mind of man, when it is not illuminated by the scripture, it imagineth and feigneth God to be like unto the imagination and conceit of his mind, and not as the scripture teacheth. When this vanity or fond imagination is conceived in the mind, there followeth a further success of the ill. He purposeth to express by some figure or image God in the same form and similitude that his imagination hath first printed in his mind; so that the mind conceiveth an idol, and afterward the hand worketh and representeth the same unto the senses.⁹⁵

Unguided, expressions of faith were channelled through an image considered a reasonable embodiment of God, and taken to be 'a testimony of his presence'. Hooper continued, 'the original cause why they [idols] are made, is, that man thinketh God would not be present to help him, except he be presented someways unto their carnal eyes'.⁹⁶ Thomas Pickering, prefacing William Perkins' posthumous tract on witchcraft, showed how the Devil made use of man's confusion:

First he knowes that man naturally out of the light of grace hath but a meere soule, indued onely with some generall and confused notions; and as for matters of deeper apprehension touching God and heavenly things, there is a vaile of ignorance and blindness drawne over the eyes of his minde. Whereupon, though he be apt to knowe and worship a God, and learn his will, yet for want of information by the word, he is prone to erre in the practice of his notion. Here Satan applyes himself to mans measure and at his own will, drawes the minde into error, by his delusions and impostures.⁹⁷

Catholic false doctrine provided the superficial piety and immediacy of God's presence which man's degraded soul yearned for. As William Grey, a member of Thomas Cromwell's household, described it in a ballad of around 1538 (written to promote the royal injunctions against shrines) idolatry promoted a 'fantasie' of religion. 'We poore soules', he noted, are 'Begyled with idolles, / With fayned myracles and lyes, / By the devyll and his doctors, / The pope and his proctors: / That with such have blerid our eyes.'⁹⁸ 'The papists' preached Hugh Latimer in 1552, 'which are the very enemies of Christ, make him to be a Saviour after their own fantasy, and not after the word of God'.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Hooper, *A Declaration of the ten holy comandmentes*, p. 318.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁹⁷ Thomas Pickering, 'Dedication', in William Perkins, *The Damned Art of Witchcraft*, in *Works*, III, sig. Kkkk5v.

⁹⁸ William Gray, 'The Fantassie of Idolatrie', in *A & M*, V, pp. 404-409, quote at p. 409; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 408-10.

⁹⁹ Hugh Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 146; 'An homily against the peril of idolatry', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 280.

From this understanding the entire Catholic clergy might readily be demonized as diabolic servants in Christian camouflage. 'Judas was an apostle, and taken as so of all his company, but yet our master Christ calleth hym a deuill', remarked Robert Barnes, identifying the archetype for disguised diabolism.¹⁰⁰ For Tyndale, Catholicism had trampled down Christ's teachers and 'set up the ministers of Satan, disguised yet in names of and garments like unto the angels of light and ministers of righteousness'.¹⁰¹ John Frith noted that if the Devil was accustomed to presenting himself as a godly servant it should be considered 'no great thyng, if his ministers do take upon them a similitude, as though they were the ministers of Iustice'. Although men might be known by their works, Frith had to concede that the papists put on a convincing show of godliness, and to the unwary could be successfully 'transfigured into Christ's apostles'.¹⁰² Thomas Becon employed the same scriptural reference to denounce the 'false prophets' of the Catholic church who were and remain 'deceitful workers [that] fashion themselves like unto the apostles of Christ'.¹⁰³ Satan's servants were instructed to use the scriptures in their deceits. 'Because his lying chaplains should the better fight against Christ', bishop Miles Coverdale noted, 'he teacheth them to go craftily to work, to lie and spare not, to call the disciples of Christ new fellows..., and not only this, but also to wrest and wring the scripture from the manifest understanding of it'.¹⁰⁴ The text of Matthew 7. 15. was the most prevalent of a number of scriptural warnings that provided a basis for the demonization of the Catholic clergy. 'Beware of false prophets', it read, 'which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves'.¹⁰⁵

Catholic false piety made a direct appeal to man's tendency to look for religion in simplistic and unconsidered displays of commitment. Rome's image worship was of course little more than idolatry, the institutionalised betrayal of the second commandment. It was the 'suggestion of the Serpent that lurketh within' that made men believe they were devout when they honoured material

¹⁰⁰ Robert Barnes, *What the Church is, and Another declaration of the Church, wherein he answereth to Maister More*, in *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, pp. 243, 251-253, quote at p. 253; Calfhill, *An Aynswere to the Treatise of the Crosse*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰¹ Tyndale, *The Practice of Prelates*, p. 273; see also William Fulke, *A discoverie of the dangerous rocke of the Popish Church*, p. 378.

¹⁰² Frith, *Antithesis*, p. 97; Calfhill, *An Aynswere to the Treatise of the Cross*, p. 15; Thomas James, *A Manuduction, or Introduction unto Divinitie: containing a confutation of papists* (Oxford, 1625), p. 51.

¹⁰³ Thomas Becon, *Articles of Christian Religion*, in *Prayers and other pieces*, p. 405; see also John Terry, *The Trial of Truth: containing a plaine and short Discouery of the greatest pointes of the Doctrine of the Great Antichrist* (Oxford, 1600), p. 145.

¹⁰⁴ Miles Coverdale, *The Order of the Church of Christ in Denmark and other countries for the Lord's Supper, Baptism and Holy Wedlock*, in, *Writings and Translations of Miles Coverdale* (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844), pp. 484-485; John Terry, *The Triall of Troth*, p. 145.

¹⁰⁵ Tyndale, *An Exposition uppon the V. VI. VII. chapters of Mathew*, pp. 121-128.

objects.¹⁰⁶ Idolatry was meaningless because it allowed for no covenant between man and God. Robert Barnes took the temptation of Christ as an exemplar, noting, 'the deuill required that hee should fall downe and honour him, hee required no faith nor any hope on him, nor yet that hee should make any prayers, or desire any petition of him...but alonely to fall downe, and so with exteriour service to honour him'.¹⁰⁷ Overblown Catholic ceremonial cheapened God's ordinances by an excess of such empty piety. James Calfhill noted with disgust that the baptism of bells was afforded more 'majesty' than the baptism of children. 'Papists', he declared, 'by the spirit of the Devil, ordained that a bishop must needs christen a Bell; whereas every poor Priest may christen a Child.'¹⁰⁸ Satan used the seductive excitement of intense devotion to disguise the emptiness of the gesture. 'When they come before her image, all, yea the greatest persons in the basest manner that may be humble themselves before her', William Perkins noted of the worship of the Virgin in Laretto in Italy, but 'the thing worshipped vnder the name of the Ladie of Laretto is indeed neither God nor Saint, but the diuell himselfe'.¹⁰⁹ False piety was so dangerous because it was self-perpetuating. It encouraged further empty gesturing by persuading men that godly intent only was paramount. Thomas Becon noted 'Antichrist affirmeth that it is lawful to worship God in any manner of way, so it commeth of a good intent, good mind, good zeal, good devotion, &c'.¹¹⁰ God would not cast away the sincere devotion of any man. For James Calfhill this was exposed in Catholicism's compromise with paganism, in which it took the 'superstitious and detestable rites of the heathen folk', and covered them with the 'manners' of Christianity.¹¹¹

False piety bolstered the position of the Catholic clergy by convincing men that they embodied godliness above and beyond the capabilities of ordinary men. In this process clerical celibacy was a particularly diabolical device. According to William Turner in his attack on Stephen Gardiner, *The huntynge and fynding out of the Romish Fox* (1543), the God-given need to procreate imbued man with an appetite that few could deny, but which was legitimised through the ordination of marriage. 'The devil gat many a prey' by subverting this through a mixture of corrupted doctrine and papal authority which moved 'all men to think that

¹⁰⁶ Robert Barnes, *That it is against the Holy Scripture to honore Images, and to pray to saintes*, in *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, p. 346.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 352; Turner, *The huntynge and fynding out of the Romish Fox*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Calfhill, *An Aynswere to the Treatise of the Crosse*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *A warning Against the Idolatry of the Last Times. And an instruction touching religious or divine worship*, in *Works*, I, pp. 678-679.

¹¹⁰ Becon, *The Acts of Christ and Antichrist*, p. 522; 'An Homily of Good Works: and the First of Fasting', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 297.

¹¹¹ Calfhill, *An Aynswere to the Treatise of the Cross*, p. 13.

marriage was sin, and that the estate of marriage was a sinful estate'.¹¹² 'Who would think there were any evil forcing of virginity, chastity, or single life?', asked John Jewel. Such committed abstinence from the world and the flesh must, by its very nature, be pious—'he that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, that he may be holy both in body and spirit'. Moreover, who could seriously object if the papacy attempted to save the world from itself by enforcing celibacy on the clergy and degrading sex as a sin in the laity.¹¹³ 'Strange attire, difference of meats, refusal of marriage, rising at midnight, shutting up in a cloister, erecting of images, worshipping of Saints, service in Latin, gadding on pilgrimage', were, according to Calhill, ordinances by which the Devil marked out his servants in contrary to the unpretentious faith required by God. But 'the simple have been so deluded, that they thought God's service consist herein'.¹¹⁴

* * *

If the contrariety of Catholicism could not be readily seen, means had to be found to make it apparent. The assumed principles of uncluttered 'primitive' Christianity formed the basis of the Protestant's monopoly on interpretation which privileged their own judgement of contrariety. 'All doctrine that withdraweth thyne hope and trust from holy Christ', noted Tyndale, 'is of the deuill and the doctrine of antichrist'. 'Examine ye Pope by this rule', he advised, and the reader would soon discover the demonic reality of Catholic doctrine, dressed up in a perversion of the scriptures.¹¹⁵ James Calhill was more cautious, arguing that human reason alone was incapable of penetrating Satan's deceit. In disguising himself as an angel of light the Devil had 'handled himself so workmanly, that he looks very narrowly that can discern the difference'. 'The eyes of [man] must be better cleared than by the light of reason', Calhill believed, 'or else he shall be blinded in the mist'.¹¹⁶ The Protestant attempt to monopolise the interpretation of diabolic subversion is well illustrated by the inclusion in John Day's 1572 edition of the works of Tyndale, Frith and Barnes of a compendium, *A General Collection out of Doctour Barnes Woorkes*, in which he identified valid scriptural and traditional sources, quoting from the work of renowned theologians such as St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom. In the preface 'T.G.' noted how the book might be put to use to determine whether the writings and laws of the papacy originated in God. If they did not accord with Barnes' sources, he noted, 'then mayest thou suspect, that they have gone astray, and that the Deuill hath transformed him selfe

¹¹² Turner, *The huntynge and fyndyng out of the Romish Fox*, pp. 36-37; Coverdale, *A confutation of that treatise which one John Standish made agaynst the protestacion of D. Barnes in Remains of Myles Coverdale*, p. 400; Sandys, *Sermons*, pp. 51, 321-322.

¹¹³ Jewel, *An exposition upon...Thessalonians*, p. 911; *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, p. 242.

¹¹⁴ Calhill, *An Avnswere to the Treatise of the Cross*, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁵ Tyndale, *An Exposition upon the first Epistle of S. Iohn*, p. 196-197.

¹¹⁶ Calhill, *An Avnswer to the Treatise of the Cross*, pp. 12, 316-318.

into an Aungel of light, and that they are his ministers'.¹¹⁷ In filtering the writings of the established church, Barnes' work had thus provided a guide by which the deceptive papist gloss might be stripped away.

It was partly as a means to discern false doctrine that the apocalyptic prophesies of Revelations assumed such a prominent place in Protestant thinking. As John Bale explained in the preface to his exposition on the subject:

herein is the true christian church, which is the meek spouse of the Lamb without spot, in her right-fashioned colours described. So is the proud church of hypocrites, the rose-coloured whore, the paramour of antichrist, and the sinful synagogue of Satan, in her just proportion depainted, to the merciful forwarning of god's elect. And this is why I have entituled this book, *The Image of both Churches*.¹¹⁸

Encompassing a symbolic depiction of the entire of Christian history—conceived as a constant struggle with the synagogue of Satan—Revelations contained all the knowledge necessary to meet his assaults. 'He that will be strong when adversity shall come', Bale continued, 'and avoid all the assaults of antichrist and the devil; let him give himself wholly to the study of this prophecy'.¹¹⁹ Revelations itself contained an allegorical illustration of the Christian's 'diligent' search for the false church. In the thirteenth chapter the prophet is given a rod with which to measure the temple of God—the congregation and doctrine of the faith. 'Prove all beliefs', the scripture demonstrated, 'examine their works, whether they spring from God's commandments or men's traditions'. Even the altar, which represents Christ, must be measured (tested), since 'many false Christs are abroad in the world to seduce his people'.¹²⁰

From the study of Revelations an influential picture of the Church's history developed which provided a scheme for discerning the hidden diabolism of the Roman faith. For Bale the form of the dragon of Revelations, with its seven heads, presented a chronological picture of Satan's attempts to corrupt mankind.¹²¹ Although the form of the seven heads was not made explicit in the text, 'very easy it is to conjecture what matter of heads they were, marking other places in scripture'. The first head was that of a serpent, indicating the corruption of Eden, the second, a calf, symbolised the idolatry that had become rife after the great flood. Other heads denoted the cruelty of historically specific oppressors of the godly such as the Assyrians and the Persians. The fifth, 'a leopard's head of many

¹¹⁷ [?T.G.], *A Generall Collection out of Doctour Barnes Woorkes*, in *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, p. 368.

¹¹⁸ Bale, *Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 251.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 383–385.

¹²¹ Book of Revelations, 12.

colours' symbolised fickleness and the 'inconstant reign of the Greeks', whilst the sixth, 'the head of a beast unlike all other beasts', denoted Rome and its persecutions. The seventh head expressed contemporaneous concerns. Shaped like that of a man it expressed carnal wisdom and false religion, and symbolised 'the very papacy here in Europe'.¹²²

Although they differed on details, Protestant eschatologists agreed that post-incarnation ecclesiastical history followed a progression defined by the status of the Devil—*free on the earth—chained in hell—free on the earth*. The Apocalypse predicted that an angel (commonly identified as Christ by the reformers) would descend from heaven carrying a great chain with which he would bind up the Devil and cast him into hell for a thousand years. At the end of which, in preparation for the Last Judgement, Satan would be set free once more to torment the godly 'for a little season'.¹²³ Thus, if correctly filtered through Protestant polemical interpretation, the history of the church might point to the distinguishing features of unfettered diabolic activity that could be seen beneath the gloss of false doctrine.¹²⁴ The binding and loosing of Satan imposed a cycle on ecclesiastical history which saw the Devil's agency as timeless, unchanging and recorded. The primitive church was persecuted by a satanical synagogue that was openly pagan, and parallels with the aggression of the Roman church illustrated the latter's hidden contrariety. This redefinition of the demonological parameters of church history was necessarily proactive. As John Foxe noted, 'the opinion of many is deceived by ignorance of histories, and the state of things done in the church'.¹²⁵

Within the interpretative cycle a linear progression of successive manifestations of the Devil's church might be discerned. 'He hath his kingdome in this world', wrote William Perkins in 1595, 'and for the establishment thereof, he must have his thrones where wickedness and idolatrie is maintained without controlment...in all ages it hath been thus, and will continue so to the ende'. History could be made to embody a linear progression through the successive manifestations of the Devil's church:

in the olde world he had his thrones among Caius posteritie: in the church of the Iews, euen in the dayes of the Kings of Israel, the high places and groues, wher the people sacrificed to their idols, were the devils throns: the oracles of the gentiles where the deuils gaue answer vnto men, were his chiefe throns...in the daies of poperie, every church and

¹²² Bale, *Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 407.

¹²³ Revelations 20; Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 558; A & M, II, p. 725.

¹²⁴ Hugh Broughton, *A concent of Scripture* (London, 1590), sig. G2.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 724.

chapel were the throns of Sathan, wherein were erected images and holy roods for the worship of saints.¹²⁶

The history of the Devil's contrariety was an exercise in hindsight, which placed the origin of his agency, not with the temptation of Adam and Eve, but at the point at which he was first able to divide human society between the faithful and the reprobate. Satan did not simply impose his synagogue on the world, it emerged only when man actively received his word over that of God, and contrariety began with the corruption of Cain. As God had built his church in the righteousness of Abel, so the Devil had responded with the corruption of Cain, introducing murder into the world.¹²⁷ From this starting point, all those who had opposed the Hebrew or Christian faith might be characterised as members of Satan's synagogue. The godly Lot and his house had to live among the 'stinking Sodomites and filthy Gomorrians' who maintained the Devil's religion with their 'corrupt lives'. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived as a manifestation of God's church, 'so likewise did the devil build his chapel in the Egyptians...and in such other ungodly people'. Of course the incarnation itself had been opposed by a diabolical monarch in the shape of Herod, who led the Jews 'hurly-burly against the Lord and his Anointed'.¹²⁸ The dichotomy was easily extended into the history of the primitive church. Ignatious, Polycarp and Justin Martyr succeeded scriptural figures as the embodiment of God's church, their enemies, pagans and heretics did very well for the Devil.¹²⁹

In the apostasy of the Old Testament churches the reformers found a tangible example of the fickleness that prompted men to seek out any effortlessly satisfying religious practice. Here were the seeds of the idolatry that would be the foundation of diabolic Catholicism. According to John Hooper the decalogue was given to the Hebrews that they might be redeemed through a 'confederacy' with the divine but, through spiritual blindness and laziness, they 'believed and trusted better the devil' and rejected God's covenant.¹³⁰ Similarly in his paraphrase on Revelations, James I described God's many attempts to save the Hebrews from themselves. Notwithstanding they were given prophets, miracles and holy laws to protect them from their 'weakness and incredulitie', 'there crept in such a

¹²⁶ Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition...of the Revelation*, p. 292.

¹²⁷ Thomas Becon, *Certain articles of Christian Religion*, p. 400; Miles Coverdale, *The old faith, an evident probation out of the holy scripture, that the christen fayth which is the right, true, old and undoubted fayth hath endured sens the beginning of the worlde*, in, *Writings and Translations*, pp. 27-31; James Calfhill, *An Avnswere to the Treatise of the Crosse*, p. 12.

¹²⁸ Becon, *Certain Articles of the Christian Religion*, p. 400; Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition...of the Revelation*, p. 293.

¹²⁹ Becon, *Certain Articles of the Christian Religion*, p. 401; Henry Lawrence, *Of Our Communion and Warre with Angels*, p. 86.

¹³⁰ Hooper, *A Declaration of the ten holy commandmentes*, p. 256.

generall corruption amongst them, that scarce one might be found that bowed not his knee to Baal'.¹³¹ For John Jewel the ingrate Hebrews delivered out of Egyptian bondage provided a striking illustration of man's fickleness. Isreal, 'the apple of the Lord's eye' had been led through the Red Sea, but the Hebrews' subsequent behavior could scarce be credited. 'Who would think', Jewel asked, 'so great mercies would ever be forgotten? or that such a people, so well instructed in the knowledge of God, and so often put in mind of their duty, should either the most part, or all of them turn from God?' But no sooner was Moses absent but fickleness drove the Hebrews to idolatry, and into the arms of 'Baal and Astaroth'.¹³²

The Jewish deicide was a watershed in the history of demonic contrariety. According to Bale, Satan could 'not shew him self in his own likenesse, that is to saye, Christes open adversary, tyll Christe came in the flesh'. The incarnation allowed the Devil to drive Herod and his people into open rebellion in seeking the messiah's death.¹³³ 'Never could Satan have put Christ unto death', Bale wrote in *The Image of Bothe Churches*, 'had he not entered into Judas, and so betrayed him; had he not entered into the bishops and lawyers, and so condemned him'.¹³⁴ The crucifixion was not a victory for Satan—no suggestion of the sort could ever be countenanced—but it did represent a final consolidation of the diabolic agency which had beset the Hebrew church. It had ever been the Devil's policy to prepare for the incarnation by undermining belief among the Jews in the prophesies of the messiah. The reaction of the onlookers as Christ was crucified demonstrated the strength of the hold the Devil exercised over their minds. Christ was reviled on the cross by those, Miles Coverdale noted, who 'should have bewailed their own great sins: but there is no compassion of mercy in them; their hearts are stopped, Satan hath the leading of them'. At the time when the meaning of Christ's sacrifice should have been apparent, as a fulfillment of their prophesies, the Jews were utterly blinded by the Devil.¹³⁵ If in the end the redemptive power of the crucifixion overturned Satan's triumph, it was largely because a minority of Christian converts replaced the apostate Jews as God's chosen people.¹³⁶

Yet when discussing the Jewish apostasy, Protestants never lost sight of their primary target. This greatest apostasy of all was polemically significant only because the crimes of the Catholic church could be made all the more

¹³¹ James I, *A Paraphrase Vpon the Revelation of the Apostle S. Iohn*, in *The Workes of the Most High and Mightie Prince, Iames* (London, 1616), pp. 4-5.

¹³² Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, pp. 891-892.

¹³³ Bale, *The Actes of English Votaries* (London, 1560), p. 32.

¹³⁴ Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 422.

¹³⁵ Miles Coverdale, *Fruitfull Lessons vpon the Passion, Burial, Resurrection, Assention, and of the sending of the holy Ghost*, in *Writings and Translations*, pp. 300-301; 'An homily or sermon concerning the nativity', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 430-431.

¹³⁶ Lawrence, *Of Our Communion and Warre with Angels*, pp. 84-85.

comprehensible by comparison. 'I may well compare you unto the wicked Jewes that crouched & kneeled unto Christ', Robert Barnes berated his Catholic opponents, 'they did it neyther of loue, nor favour, but of mockage, as you doe honour your sayntes and images'.¹³⁷ The 'example of the Iewes', argued William Perkins, 'must be set before our eies continually' since 'now for their unbeleefe they are cast off from God, and are become a synagogue of the Devil'. 'And so' he continued significantly, 'we must say of the church of Rome'.¹³⁸ Perkins treated the idea at length in his commentary on the first three chapters of Revelations. The Devil had played on the Jews' conception of themselves as the chosen people of God, persuading them that they were pious by simple virtue of their birth. Such complacency led them to maintain only the outward appearance of Judaism, allowing Satan's false doctrine to permeate beneath the surface. Thus the contrariety that had been open in paganism, found a hiding place in a Jewish faith emptied of all meaning. 'A company of men that seemed to serue God after the Iewish manner', ran Perkins description, 'but did indeede worshippe the Deuill'.¹³⁹ 'Hence we may learne', Perkins concluded, 'what we are to think and iudge of the church of the Papists'. 'Though they holde the Bookes of the Olde and Newe testament, with the Creede of the Apostles', he elaborated, 'yet the truth is, that indeede they hold them not. The Christ of the Papists is but a fained Christ'.¹⁴⁰

Perkins could even downplay the importance of the deicide in order to emphasise the continuity of contrariety from the Jewish to the Roman faith. The Jews did not become a satanical synagogue at the moment at which they began to hold a heresy 'against the foundation of religion'—i.e. at the point when they first denied Christ's divinity—but when they used the church's authority to persecute the early Christians. In effect it was the rejection of the apostles, rather than the actual crucifixion, which marked Judaism's irredeemable descent into diabolism. This functioned entirely as a prelude to the persecutory practices of the Catholic church which, according to Revelations, were the hallmarks of the synagogue of Satan, and the very essence of contrariety. John Terry perceived a similar continuity. 'The Deuil in the primitive Church made his chiefe battery against the doctrine of the most glorious Trinity', he noted in 1600, 'but that his repulse therein was not such, as caused him altogether to giue ouer that enterprise'. 'He hath in some cuntryes renewed the same assault', Terry continued, noting that the Roman antichrist would usurp divine authority to enforce apostasy whilst posing as God's lieutenant.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ *The whole workes of W. Tyndale, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes*, p. 353.

¹³⁸ Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition...of the Revelation*, p. 286.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 285; Bale, *Image of Bothe Churches*, pp. 276-277

¹⁴⁰ Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition...of the Revelation*, p. 286.

¹⁴¹ Terry, *The Triall of Troth*, pp. 145-146.

Rewritten, the history of the corruption of the pope encompassed an inversion of the story of Christ. In *The Practice of Prelates* William Tyndale described the Pope's seduction into diabolism as a sequel to Satan's temptation of Christ in the desert. 'The kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, which Christ refused', Tyndale recounted, 'did the devil proffer unto the pope; and he immediately fell from Christ, and worshipped the devil, and received them'. The deal struck, the Pope adopted his role as 'Satan's vicar', offering the same avaricious temptation by proxy, to the corruption of religion. The Pope 'took up in the like manner all Christendom on high, and brought them from the meekness of the Christ unto the high hill of the pride of Lucifer'.¹⁴² The image became increasingly focused as an overt diabolic pact entered into by a number of identified popes.¹⁴³

It was in the construction of contrariety that the figure of the papal Antichrist became the exemplar of the Devil's procurator. The thirteenth chapter of Revelations described the beast rising out of the sea, which Protestant eschatologists identified as the Antichrist in the pope. The symbolic differences between the beast and the dragon expressed the persecutory power of the Catholic church which, by the example of the Jewish apostasy, marked it out as the second of the principle synagogues of Satan. Whereas the dragon had seven crowns upon seven heads, the beast wore ten crowns upon his ten horns. 'In this only point', noted Bale, 'differeth the dragon from the beast, the devil from his members, or Satan from his carnal synagogue'. The extra crowns of the beast represented the Pope's primacy over the terrestrial world. Whereas Satan attempted to seduce or 'dallyingly persuade' men to apostasy, the papacy had the power to compel. 'When he hath proponed an error', Bale continued, 'they may by their power establish it for an infallible truth, and make of it a necessary article of the christian belief'. 'Much more mischief may they do, they being his spiritual instruments', Bale concluded, 'than he can do alone'.¹⁴⁴

II Thessalonians described the coming of Antichrist as 'the mystery of iniquity'. For Protestant writers like John Jewel the phrase expressed the slow and careful process by which the Devil introduced Antichrist into the world, a process calculated to hide his pernicious nature from the view of man. When St. John commented 'even now there are many antichrists come already', he referred to the

¹⁴² Tyndale, *The Practyce of Prelates*, pp. 274-5; Hugh Broughton, *A concent of scripture*, sig. G2; William Turner, *The huntyng and fyndyng out of the Romish Fox*, pp. 36-37; 'An homily concerning the coming down of the Holy Ghost', in *Certain sermons or homiles*, pp. 498-499.

¹⁴³ Bale, *Actes of English Votaries*, sigs. B3-B4; John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perilous dayes* (London, 1563), p. 11; Barnabe Barnes, *The Divils Charter* (1607), prologue; Thomas James, *A Manuduction, or Intgroduction unto Divinitie: Containing a Confutation of Papists* (Oxford, 1625), pp. 52-53.

¹⁴⁴ Bale, *Image of Bothe Churches*, p. 422; Anon., *A Gagge for the Pope, and the Iesuits: or, the Arraignment and Execution of Antichrist* (London, 1624), p. 1.

way being prepared for the emergence of the papal Antichrist, who would not appear suddenly 'as a robber by the highways, or like a murderer'. Antichrist would not announce his presence, rather he would 'cast himself in the colour of holiness' adopting the empty trappings of false piety—'he shall fast, he shall prey, he shall give alms and shew mercy: he shall walk as if he were a disciple of Christ: he shall counterfeit an angel of light'.¹⁴⁵ He would be adept at perverting the word of God whilst maintaining its basic integrity. 'He shall walk in craftiness and handle the word of God deceitfully', Jewel continued, 'he shall mingle his lies with the truth of God: he shall mingle his poison with the wholesome fruit of our souls, so closely and subtilly it shall hardly be espied'.¹⁴⁶ Such a policy of slow progression was deliberately instigated to bewilder the degraded senses of man, who would be unable to perceive the slow corruption of his faith. Jewel (subscribing presumably to a contemporary notion) described the progression of an earthquake, brought about by the movement of air in the 'hollow places' below the ground, which finally grown strong and violent 'teareth the earth'. Antichrist's progression was comparable, 'so great and mighty at the end, so little and simple at the first'. 'At the beggining he shall be like a little wind', Jewel commented, 'and shall enter into the hollowness and darkness of the church; but after he shall shake the whole world'.¹⁴⁷

Thus the experiential sense of persecution, and the demands of anti-Catholic polemic focused Protestant attention on the hidden agency of the Devil. The reformers sought to undermine the certainty of established piety and reveal the insidious demonic subversion which they strongly believed lay hidden within. In order to do they had to persuade that their interpretation was valid. Thus inherent in the identification of Catholic diabolism was the development of a scheme by which hidden satanic agency might be discerned.

* * *

This emphasis on hidden diabolism and false doctrine shaped much of the Protestant demonological approach. For having given an urgency to revealing satanic power hidden within Catholicism, the resulting model of diabolic agency provided a means of interpreting other troubling phenomena Protestants encountered. One example will suffice here. As we have seen, the Puritan attack on popular pastimes, which was carried out in earnest after the 1570s, was predicated on the belief that Satan used the theatre, the alehouse and the may-pole to re-introduce the popish synagogue of Satan into England under a new guise. The establishment of the permanent playhouses in London around 1575-7 gave

¹⁴⁵ Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 909; William Fulke, *The Discovery of the dangerous Rock of the Popish Church*, pp. 366-373; George Hakewill, *An Apologie of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World* (Oxford, 1627), p. 434.

¹⁴⁶ Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 910.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 911.

satanic subversion an especial palpability. For Puritans like John Northbrooke, writing in 1577, these buildings were constructed with no other purpose than to promote immorality and undermine reformation. Satan, he noted, 'hath not a more speedie way, and fitter school to work and teach his desire, to bring men and women into his snare of filthy lusts of wicked whoredom, than those...plays, and theatres'.¹⁴⁸ In the words of the playwright turned Puritan minister, Stephen Gosson, 'the carpenter rayseth not his frame without tools, nor the Devil his work without instruments'.¹⁴⁹ It soon became a cliché that the multitude preferred the alehouse and the theatre to the observance of the sabbath. Henry Roberts noted, 'a man may find the churches empty, savyng the minister & iii. or iiiii. lame and old folke: for ye rest are gon to follow the Devils dance'. Similarly John Stockwood, preaching at Paul's Cross in 1578, 'wyll not a fylthye play with the blast of a trumpette, sonner call thyther a thousand, that an hours tolling of a Bell, bring to the Sermon a hundred'.¹⁵⁰

But this dichotomy was not simply an expression of ministerial frustration at the apathy of their parishioners. Rather the Protestant understanding of diabolic agency bred a suspicion that popular culture hid a more sinister didacticism. The alehouse or the theatre might offer an escape from the rigours of the sabbath, but their greatest threat lay in their ability to usurp the place of the church within the individual's cultural and moral life. As Catholicism offered a quick and painless piety to appeal to man's corrupted and fickle religiosity, so through popular culture the Devil distracted the individual from introspection by offering an empty equation between physical and spiritual comfort. For Anthony Munday 'the drifts of Satan' in the theatre threatened to 'beguile vs, & drawe vs from the consideration of our estate'.¹⁵¹ But diabolic subversion was seen to be even more proactive, and complaint literature was infused with a perception that the subjective experience of attendance at the tavern/theatre and the church shared a basic, but opposing didacticism. The flesh-pots might delude men into thinking that they offered a rival model of life as meaningful as any put forward in the pulpit. The character of 'Youth' in Northbrooke's dialogue epitomised the naivety of those who believed they could be godly without the edification of the pulpit. Could one not, Northbrooke had his character ask, find Christ as easily in the tavern as the temple?¹⁵² The vehemence with which the complaint writers descended on such a belief did not indicate self-confidence over the issue. Philip

¹⁴⁸ Northbrooke, *Treatise*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse, Containing a plesaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and such like Caterpillers of a Commonwaelth* (London, 1579), sigs. C3v-C4.

¹⁵⁰ Roberts, *An earnest complaint*, p. 41; John Stockwood, *A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse on Bathelmew Day* (London, 1578), p. 23.

¹⁵¹ Anthony Munday, *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies* (London, 1580), pp. 86-87.

¹⁵² Northbrooke, *Treatise*, p. 2.

Stubbes denounced as 'blasphemie intollerable' the opinions he heard that as many good examples might be gained from a play as a sermon.¹⁵³ But, as with the protestations of Frith, Becon or Rogers concerning the obviousness of the contrariety of Catholicism, such assertions suggest that the complaint writers genuinely feared that the play-house did indeed offer a mirror of human life which rivalled that held up in the pulpit. The danger was particularly acute since the reformation had removed popery, but had yet to redress man's lazy religiosity. 'There are the most in number', the Essex minister, George Gifford, noted, 'who having Poperie taken from them and not taught thoroughly and sufficiently the gospel, doe stand as men indifferent, so that they may quietly inioye the world, they care not what religion come'.¹⁵⁴ Plays dealt with human issues, with the emotions and the motivations by which men acted, and they presented a picture of humanity in which the audience might recognise themselves. Moreover, as Patrick Collinson has illustrated, the attack on the theatre marked a watershed in which Protestants abandoned a tradition of making polemical use of plays; a tradition which had recognised and respected their didactic value.¹⁵⁵ Complaint writers could not be confident that the exaggerated didacticism of tragedy and revenge plays might not indeed be more immediately digestible than that of a sermon.¹⁵⁶

Anthony Munday described the theatre as 'the Schoole-house of Satan, and the chappel of il counsel', seeking not merely to point to the corrupting influence of the immoral sights presented on the stage, but more specifically to identify the origin of competing didactic scheme which challenged the church's monopoly.¹⁵⁷ 'God hath ordained his blessed word, and made it the ordenarie mean of our Salvation', Stubbes declared in response to claims for the moral didacticism of the stage, 'the devill hath inferred the other, as, the ordenarie meane of our destruction, and will they yet compare the one with ye other'.¹⁵⁸ But again

¹⁵³ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses: Contayning a Discouerie, or brief summarie of such notable Vices and Imperfections, as now raigne in many Christian Countreyes of the World* (London, 1583), sig. L7v.

¹⁵⁴ George Gifford, *A Breife Discourse of Certaine Points of the Religion* (London, 1582), sig. A4.

¹⁵⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1988), pp. 102-106, 112-115.

¹⁵⁶ Taking his cue from Keith Thomas' argument that widespread occultism substituted the metaphysical aids that had vanished with the Catholic church, Louis Montrose has recently suggested that the Elizabethan theatre did indeed offer Londoners another such alternative to the austerity of the Protestant sermon. The plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries were grounded in fundamental cultural categories such as ethnicity, gender or political faction, and they had an affinity with common rites of passage. He notes, 'we need to remind ourselves that the Elizabethan drama-in-performance...had the capacity to work as a cognitive and therapeutic instrument—that is, to function *ideologically*, in the most general and most enabling senses of that term.' Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago & London, 1996), pp.30-34, quote at p.40.

¹⁵⁷ Munday, *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies*, p. 92.

¹⁵⁸ Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses*, sig L7v.

contrariety was being carefully constructed in response to the belief that Satan was subverting man's corrupted insight through an hidden agency. As John Bale had used the Dragon and the Beast of Revelations to model a means of discerning the hidden contrariety of Catholicism, the complaint writers employed similar analogies to reveal the diabolism of the stage. According to William Rankins, author of a heated attack, *The Mirror of Monsters* (1587), in the play-house could be seen the Devil's inverted equivalent to the Christian body politic. The players themselves were 'the limbs, proportion, and members of Satan'. The playwrights were the Devil's head, they studied to produce 'enticing shows' to seduce the audience. In the performance of the songs they represented the Devil's tongue, whilst the snare that was the play-house constituted his arms.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

Thus when Thomas Becon noted that 'wheresoever God buildeth his church, there the Devil also buildeth his chapel', he referred not to an un-contentious commonplace of oppositional language, but to a painstakingly reconstructed polemical history.¹⁶⁰ If, as Peter Lake has argued, anti-Catholicism was the most important inversionary rhetoric of seventeenth-century English political and religious culture, it was testimony to the success of the reformer's active construction of contrariety that Catholicism could so readily be perceived as the inversion of true Christianity. It was by no means as apparent in the mid-sixteenth-century. After all, the first generation of reformers were by definition lapsed Catholics, and their construction of contrariety perhaps mirrored a very real experience of progressive disillusionment. But beyond the sphere of anti-Catholicism itself, the most significant effect of the construction of contrariety was to focus attention on the Devil's intimate and hidden influence over the individual consciousness. The Protestants' sensitivity to the possibilities of diabolic subversion defined their understanding of demonic agency more widely. The dynamic of false doctrine forced an engagement with diabolic agency which posited an extreme vulnerability of man's corrupted and fragile subjectivity to manipulation by Satan. The reformers' experiential sense of the Devil told them that that this was the most common and most profound expression of satanic agency, and in the reform of the liturgy and in their devotional works they sought

¹⁵⁹ William Rankins, *The Mirror of Monsters* (London, 1587).

¹⁶⁰ Becon, *Certain articles of Christian Religion*, p. 400.

to transmit the experience as a fundamental part of the everyday life of the Christian. It is this dynamic of Protestant demonism to which we must now turn.

Temptation: the Protestant Dynamic of Diabolic Agency and the Resurgence of Clerical Mediation

A child brought to be baptised in 1548 underwent a lengthy ritual of exorcism in which the Devil was driven out by the mediation of the priest and the efficacy of the holy artefacts used in the rite. Through baptism the child entered the church; Satan was denied ownership of his soul, and was publicly forbidden to trouble the infant further.¹ Four years later, a child baptised under the second of the reformed Edwardian prayer books took part in a very different ceremony. There was no longer an exorcism to provide a tangible victory over the demonic, instead the signing of the cross and the promise to renounce the Devil were taken as an indication that the new Christian's life was to be characterised by a constant struggle with the Devil.² This was a fundamental shift in the rationale of Christian initiation, and one which reflected the Protestant belief that Satan constantly afflicted mankind on earth, and that the pursuit of godliness depended on a rigorous defence against his attempts to lure or drive men from their faith.

Traditionally the Devil's assaults were a frightening possibility, but one which might never be realised. Catholic theology laid a quasi-dualist emphasis on Satan's power, and saw mankind as the trophies of his cosmic battle with Christ.³ The church invested in a great number of rituals and artefacts by which the Devil might be fought off at any stage of life, from his automatic possession of the unbaptized child, through the vagaries of weather, health and fortune, to the

¹ The Sarum ritual is available in English in J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965), pp. 158-179.

² The baptism ceremony was reformed in *The booke of the common prayer, and administration of the sacramentes* (London, 1549), fols. 135-152v; and *The Boke of common praier, and administration of the sacramentes* (London, 1552), sigs. P4-Q2; see also *Liturgical services: Liturgies and occasional forms of prayer set forth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. W. K. Clay (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1847), pp. 199-209.

³ C. W. Marx, *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1995).

death-bed's final struggle to determine the destination of the soul.⁴ But it was by no means certain that a man would experience diabolic affliction, and if he did, its assimilation into the culture of intercession provided a scheme by which it might readily be brought to an end by the mediation of a higher power, who ultimately accepted responsibility for protecting the individual. The Protestant *de facto* approach to demonism which we encountered in the last chapter saw satanic affliction as a near certainty within the life of the average Christian. Man's corrupted state was a result of the Devil's temptation of Adam and Eve, and Satan continued to define his earthly experience. His loss of spiritual insight left him vulnerable to the Devil's machinations until his dissolution reunited him with his redeemer. But if the roaring lion was hungry for all human souls, the Protestants' sense of election told them that his malice would naturally be concentrated on the godly. Thus a picture of unremitting diabolic assault—combined with a focused belief in the special responsibility of the godly to resist it—developed in parallel to that of the seduction of corrupted man in synagogue of Satan polemic. Protestant devotional works aimed to transmit the experiential certainty of the Devil that they felt so keenly. As their anti-Catholic writings sought to convince men of the diabolism hidden in the familiar and comforting rituals of the traditional church, their liturgical approach, their sermons and their conduct books persuaded men to feel the Devil's presence by discerning his agency within their most commonplace experiences.

The medieval remit of the Devil had included temptation as one of a variety of activities with which he might afflict mankind. He was equally likely to manifest himself in storms and blights, or to appear as God's Hangman to tear sinners limb from limb or drag them screaming to hell. Protestant theologians, however, elevated temptation into the single most important aspect of satanic agency. They thereby focused the site of diabolic conflict very firmly within the individual soul, and the archetype of temptation became the Devil's power to enter directly into the consciousness and introduce thoughts that were barely distinguishable from man's own. Temptation encapsulated Satan's all-pervasive malice, and allowed his agency to be potentially felt within the life of every Christian. In the face of the Devil's certain agency, Protestants stripped the faith of its 'magical' protectives, but they did so in order that a more rigorous method of resistance might force men to engage with the diabolic and understand its significance. Strength against the Devil was to come from an understanding of the meaning of his agency. Allowed by God as a test of faith, diabolic affliction could indicate election, and enable men to express their trust by relying completely on

⁴ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313-327.

Him to ultimately constrain the Devil, but not to directly intercede. If faith was to be discerned in the correct response to temptation, temptation had to be experienced in full. These emphases allowed the Protestant ministry to adopt a new role as adepts able to mediate the correct response to temptation to their parishioners and, through their published writings, to society more widely. In so doing they re-established, remarkably quickly, part at least of the clerical role as mediators between man and the divine which had been stripped away by the Reformation.

Liturgy, Theology and Conduct Literature

The most obvious place to look for evidence of a distinctive Protestant approach to a devotional experience of the Devil is in the reformed liturgies which were produced between 1549 and 1552. In the redrafted ceremonies of the Edwardian Prayer Books can be seen what reformers intended to be the basic demonological experience of the average parishioner. Personal piety, and hence demonological awareness, had always differed as a result of individual commitment, and Protestantism invested much in the value of study outside the church. Thus the parishioner who relied only on attendance at service for his spiritual needs would not be exposed to the full complexities of the Protestant conception of demonic activity. But the changes in liturgical demonism were so striking that he would have found the reformed emphasis difficult to escape.

Eamon Duffy has described the Edwardian Prayer Books, first of 1549 and later of 1552, as an attempt to transform the lay experience of the Mass, sweeping away many of the central elements of lay Eucharistic piety and most of the liturgical year.⁵ They also encompassed a transformation of the lay experience of the diabolic which was no less dramatic. For the reformers, the traditional rites and ceremonies of the Sarum Missal failed to correctly express or engage with satanic agency as an intimate experience. They dealt largely with externals and superstitions, promising an easy victory over the Devil through the mediation of the Virgin, the saints and the quasi-magical paraphernalia of the sacraments. Highlighting the ever-present threat from Satan, the reformed liturgy drove home the message that only God could be relied upon to free man from his assaults. In the 1552 Litany and suffrages for instance, radically different to the Kyries of the Sarum Missal, God was asked to spare man 'from all evyl and mischiefe, from synne, from the craftes and assaultes of the deuyll, from thy wrath, and from

⁵ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 464.

eueralstinge damnation'. The details of these assaults implied temptation, being 'fornication, and all other deadly synnes, and...all the deceites of the world, the flesh and the deuyll'.⁶ Indeed, the Litany subverted its own rationale, emphasising not so much its tradition of intercession but rather the ultimate responsibility of each Christian to wage his own war with the demonic. The congregation of Christian soldiers requested, 'that it maye please thee to strengthen suche as dooe stand, and to comfort and helpe the weake hearted, and to rayse up them that fall, and finallye to beat downe Satan under our feete'.⁷

Most significant in this transformation of diabolic experience was the reform of the baptism rite. The Sarum rite centred around the formal exorcism of every initiate, a ceremony which was downplayed and finally abolished by 1552. This is well documented, but the reasons for the demonological changes to the baptism have never been fully explored.⁸ Martin Bucer, asked to comment on the 1549 Prayer Book, set out common objections to the Sarum rite in his *Censura* of 1551. Although the practice was ancient it was not endorsed by scripture and in it the clergy claimed for themselves a power over the Devil which belonged only to God. Implicit was the assumption that all unbaptized children must be possessed by Satan, which was simply untrue and robbed the exorcisms performed by Christ and the apostles of their significance.⁹ The issue could be highly emotive. Thomas Becon, writing from exile in 1554 after the second Prayer Book had been overturned, described how 'Baal's priest...conjureth the Devil out of the poor young infant [and] bespueth the child with his vile spittle and stinking slavering'.¹⁰

Behind the changes lay a fundamental shift in the rationale of Christian initiation. In 1548 baptism constituted a very real victory over the Satan, who was literally cast out of the infant and denied further access to his soul. In stark contrast, by 1552 it was understood to initiate the new Christian into a life that would be characterised by a perpetual struggle with the Devil. The traditional assumption that all infants were demoniacs was offensive, but exorcism's real superstition lay in its unrealistic promises of freedom from Satan, rather than its emphasis on diabolic power.

⁶ *The Boke of Common praier* (1552), sig. B4v.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B5v.

⁸ On the reform of baptism see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 62-64; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 280-281, 473; for more general discussion of the association of Catholic ceremony with superstition and witchcraft see, Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 533-535.

⁹ The complete text of the *Censura* is reproduced Martin Bucer and the *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. E. C. Whitacker (Great Wakering, 1974), see p. 92; the belief that the continuing use of exorcism undermined Christ's miracles became a mainstay of the Protestant attack on the practice, see for example Samuel Harsnett, *A Discovery of the Fraudulent practices of Iohn Darrel* (London, 1599), pp. 43-45.

¹⁰ Becon, *An humble supplication unto God*, p. 231.

The triumphalist stance of the Sarum rite was unmistakable. Throughout the series of exorcisms that began at the church door the 'accursed Devil' was commanded to remember his sentence of damnation and that Christian initiation put men beyond his reach. Through baptism the initiate's thoughts were elevated above the carnal, and hence beyond the Devil's sphere of influence. 'With thy envy thou has been conquered', the exorcism declared, 'trembling and groaning depart: let there be nothing in common to thee and to this servant of God'.¹¹ The Sarum rite emphasised the passivity of the initiate. He would be given the opportunity to voluntarily renounce the Devil (through the godparents) only after he had been freed from the possession into which he was born. As the baptism prayers made clear, God had 'called' him to take the first steps in the faith, and it was God who would 'drive' blindness from him and 'break all the bonds of Satan'.¹² In the second of two adjurations Satan was commanded to make way for the Holy Spirit, who was at that moment 'descending from the highest arch of heaven' to cleanse the infant's soul.¹³ Thus baptism was individualised as a victory in which the Devil was robbed of one of his victims. In practice the victory was equivocal. Entire genres of saints' lives, folklore and *ars moriendi* demonstrated how Satan could, and did, renew his attentions the initiated Christian.¹⁴ But as a self-contained piece of liturgical theatre the baptism conquest of Satan was taken to be final.

The exorcism of the 1549 Prayer Book was far less imposing than its predecessor, but it still evidenced a very real victory over Satan, and assumed he was present in the church.¹⁵ In 1552, however, there was no attempt to maintain even this belief. After a prayer asking God to receive the initiate, the ceremony simply bypassed the exorcism, implicitly denying that it was necessary, and that the minister had power of command over the Devil. After a prayer asking God to receive the initiate (written for the 1549 service), the ceremony moved straight to a reading from the Gospel of Mark. Only the godparents' promise and the signing of the cross remained to indicate baptism's demonological significance.¹⁶ The abandonment of exorcism implied its inefficacy, whilst the change in rationale was made explicit in what was added (or re-written) in the Edwardian service. In

¹¹ Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 162.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁴ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W. G. Ryan (Princeton, 2 vols. 1993), I, pp. 192, 238, 369-370, 223, II, pp. 4, 69, 86, 193-195, 224; *Here begyneth a litel treatise shorte and abredged spekyng of the Arte & Crafte to know well to dye* (Westminster, 1490); Richarde Rolle, *Remedy against the troubles of temptacyons* (London, 1519); Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 266-280, 313-327.

¹⁵ *The booke of common prayer* (1549), fols. 136v, 137v-138.

¹⁶ *The Boke of common praier* (1552), sigs. P5, P6, P6v.

particular the signing of the cross, which the Sarum rite understood to have its own efficacy in protecting the infant, became a declaration of the acceptance of life-long conflict with Satan.¹⁷ The 1549 ceremony was transitional. It kept the signing of the cross at the church door (where it may have maintained an implication of exorcism) whilst redrafting its wording to deny its efficacy.¹⁸ In 1552 it was moved to the end of the ceremony with the godparents' promise, allowing baptism's conclusion to centre around the understanding of the diabolic struggle. The cross was now to be a symbol only of the public profession of faith, a 'token' that the child should never be ashamed to proclaim himself a Christian. As Bucer described it in 1551, it was 'an admirably simple reminder of the cross of Christ'.¹⁹ But, more significantly, with this open proclamation of faith the initiate declared also his intention 'manfully to fight under [Christ's] banner against synne, the worlde and the deuill, and to contynue his faythfull soldiour and servaunt unto [his] lyfes ende'.²⁰ The Edwardian Book of Homilies noted that it was not 'our office, after that we be once made Christ's members, to live contrary to the same, making ourselves members of the devil'.²¹

Such statements were more likely to draw Satan's attention than dispel his threat. As Edwin Sandys noted of the Devil in 1574, 'so soon as we profess to be Christ's soldiers, as a malicious and fierce enemy he invadeth us'.²² After all if Christ was tempted immediately after his baptism, how did ordinary men expect to escape?²³ Conflict with Satan was no longer to be sited at the baptismal font, or

¹⁷ On the efficacy of the signing of the cross see, Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 34; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 273-283.

¹⁸ If as Eamon Duffy implies that the signing of the cross retained its implication of exorcism in the 1549 ceremony, if so it could do so only because the congregation remembered its traditional meaning. This was perhaps part of the expedient compromise which some historians have seen as informing the 1549 Prayer Book. See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 473; on the 1549 Prayer Book as compromise see Haigh, *English Reformations*, p. 179.

¹⁹ Bucer, *Censura*, p. 90, 91. Bucer did not actually approve of the words which accompanied the signing of the cross. Although they expressed a 'holy aspiration', they constituted more of a 'theatrical diversion' when addressed to an infant who could not understand them. Bucer therefore argued that the same sentiments should be contained in a prayer expressing the hope that the child might become a soldier of Christ.

²⁰ *The booke of common prayer* (1549), fol. 136. Thus in 1549 the signing of the cross directly contradicted the rationale of the exorcism which would follow, and which claimed that the Devil could no longer 'exercise any tyranny' against the baptised.

²¹ 'A Sermon of the Salvation of Mankind', 'A short Declaration of the True, Lively and Christian Faith', 'A Sermon against Contention and Brawling', 'An homily or sermon concerning the nativity', 'An homily for Good Friday', in *Certain sermons of homilies*, pp. 30, 43, 154, 436-437, 440.

²² Edwin Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 166; William Gurnall, *The Christian in compleat Armour. Or a Treatise Of the Saints War against the Deuil* (London, 1654), p. 94.

²³ Thomas Becon, *The Christen Knighte, teaching the Warriors of God...how they may preuaile against Satan* (n.d.), in *Prayers and Other Pieces*, p. 623; Miles Coverdale, *An Exhortation to the cariege of Chrystes crosse with a true and brefe confutation of false and papisticall doctryne* (1554), in *Remains of Bishop Coverdale*, ed. G. Pearson (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1847), pp. 233-235; writing in 1664,

in any other ceremonial, but within the individual conscience. The baptism prayer asked that God grant the initiate the power to vanquish the Devil himself, implying that the mediation of the priest and the ritual was unnecessary. In the final exhortation explaining the godparents promises on behalf of the child, the nature of the expected diabolic assault was made explicit. Forsaking the Devil involved 'continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections', an understanding which focused attention very sharply on the Devil's supposed ability to be able to enter the mind, and which made temptation the most common form of diabolic assault.²⁴ When, nearly a century later, the Westminster assembly compiled the *Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1645), the baptism was further reformed and both the signing of the cross and the godparents' promise were removed. However, the new rationale of Christian initiation remained as the renunciation of the Devil was now declared to be implicit within the ceremony itself, and a final prayer asked that God 'make [the infant's] baptism effectuall...that by faith he may prevail against the Devil'.²⁵

The reaction of parishioners to this change is irrecoverable. The 1549 Prayer Book met with widespread opposition, and action had to be taken against ministers who continued to use ceremonies that were not explicitly banned, and approximated those that were.²⁶ It is likely that a powerful experience of confrontation with the diabolic was lost after 1549. Even if they could not understand the Latin of the Sarum rite, the congregation were well aware that the Devil was present in the church, hidden within the body of the child. They were witness to Satan being put to flight as the contemptuous tone of the exorcism invited them to believe that they saw a palpable victory being played out. Protected in a consecrated building by the 'magical' paraphernalia of the rite, and by the power of the priest's mediation, they could share in the derision being meted out to a Devil they imagined skulking away, forbidden ever to return. In 1549 removing the adjurations and prayers on either side of the formal exorcism took away the focus of attention from the rite itself. Robbed of a significant period of expectation the exorcism must have lost much of its impact. The Devil was now dispatched with such speed and ease that it is likely the exorcism was no longer satisfying to those onlookers who retained a profound sense of its spiritual and

Richard Baxter described the belief that external baptism only washed away sin as a temptation from Satan, by which he drew men from the pursuit of a godly life and into complacency, see *A Christian Directory: Or, a summ of practical theology, and cases of conscience* (1673), in *Practical Works* (London, 1707), vol. I, p. 22.

²⁴ *The book of common prayer* (1549), fol. 139; *The Boke of common praier* (1552), sig. P6v.

²⁵ *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God, Throughout the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1645), pp. 39-47, esp. pp. 42, 47.

²⁶ Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp. 173-176.

emotive importance. Those used to the triumphalist harangues of the Sarum rite probably found the expedition of the 1549 exorcism confusing and unsettling and its absence in 1552 must have profoundly altered the experience of baptism. It was surely this theatre which imbued the liturgical artefacts with the quasi-magical properties which Eamon Duffy has identified. Baptismal water was commonly considered so powerful a protective that the clergy found it necessary to lock it away to prevent its misuse, and the chrisom had also to be returned by the parents for destruction.²⁷

But it was precisely this kind of demonological experience, mediated through the church, and experienced with the bravery of being out of range, that aroused Protestant suspicion. In their view it clouded parishioners' perception with a smoke-screen of empty ceremonies and victories, substituting a fake demonic experience to distract attention from the real sight of diabolic conflict. In discounting such easy victories, Protestantism demanded a more rigorous engagement with the experience of diabolic agency, a subject we will return to later in this chapter.

* * *

Protestant demonism was laid out for parishioners in more detail in the catechisms, sermons and expositions that sought to transmit the Protestant message. The message that Satan would be a constant and vigilant enemy was constructed around a number of scriptural archetypes. The significance of the fall of Adam lay not so much in the historical event, but in the spiritual condition it bequeathed to man. Thus the story demonstrated that man was born to be Satan's quarry. Christ's temptation in the desert further demonstrated that diabolic affliction was inescapable, and provided a dynamic of satanic agency which focused firmly on the individual rather than the corporate. Finally the Lord's Prayer, which encompassed man's ongoing relationship with God, emphasised his weakness in the face of demonic affliction.

A very large number of catechisms were published in English in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries whose purpose was to instil a knowledge of the fundamentals of Christianity, often to an audience considered unwilling or unable to benefit from sermons.²⁸ These catechisms varied enormously in length, content and style and, as Ian Green has demonstrated, there was no uniform, centrally imposed pattern of catechising.²⁹ Those with a liturgical use were short

²⁷ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 280.

²⁸ See the 'Finding list of English Catechisms' in Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechising in England c. 1530-1740* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 580-751; Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, pp. 232-234.

²⁹ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, p. 5.

and to the point, requiring only a cursory knowledge of the basics. The confirmation catechism which involved a brief rehearsal of the significance of the Creed, the decalogue and the Lord's Prayer, sought to reinforce the demonology of baptism. It required the child to demonstrate that he understood and considered himself bound by the promise to forsake the Devil which had been made on his behalf.³⁰ Other catechisms were designed to be worked through at a more leisurely pace and provided more detailed expositions. If they could vary widely in style and content, most dealt with demonism by a rehearsal of the story of Adam and Eve and an exposition of the Lord's Prayer.³¹ Consistent with Protestant emphases, reference to fundamental theodicy and the fall of the Devil was conspicuous by its absence. Of the most influential catechists, only Alexander Nowell mentioned the fall of Lucifer when using free will to dismiss the notion that God might have abandoned the care of any of his creatures.³² Thomas Cranmer's *Catechism* of 1548, based on the *Nuremberg Catechism* of Justus Jonas, provided a number of short sermons rather than the more familiar series of questions and answers. Satan's role in the fall of man featured in the second of three sermons on the creation, redemption and sanctification. A separate sermon dealt with each petition of the Lord's Prayer in turn, giving a concise but detailed description of the Devil's agency under the sixth and seventh petitions.³³ The most mainstream of the catechisms followed this general pattern. John Ponet's influential *A Short Catechism* (1553) had less to say on the subject of demonism, but dealt with the same issues, as did Alexander Nowell's famous catechism, printed in English in 1570.³⁴ Thomas Becon's *A New Catechism set forth Dialogue-wise in familiar talk between the Father and the Son* (1563) belied its title, providing a longer, more detailed and more scripturally conversant exposition of Christian fundamentals than was likely to have been of use to a child. Here Becon was more interested in the end of redemption than the beginning, and the book touches only briefly on the fall of man. But an exhaustive description of the Devil's agency makes up the exposition of the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer.³⁵

³⁰ *The booke of common prayer* (1549), fols. 143v-144; *The Boke of common praier* (1552), sigs Q2v-Q5v.

³¹ On the subtleties of catechists' readings of the fifth and sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, see Green, *The Christian's ABC*, pp. 497-504.

³² God, Nowell noted, did not create evil angels, instead they 'by their own evilness, fell from their first creation, without hope of recovery, and so are become evil, not by creation and nature, but by corruption of nature', see Alexander Nowell, *A Catechism written in Latin by Alexander Nowell* (1570), ed. J. Bruce (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1842), pp. 147.

³³ Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fols. 123-124v, 147-160v.

³⁴ John Ponet, *A short Catechisme, or playne instruction* (1553), in *The Two Litugies, A.D. 1549 and A.D. 1552*, ed. J. Ketley (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1844), pp. 502-505, 522-523; Nowell, *Catechism*, pp. 148-150, 201-202.

³⁵ Thomas Becon, *A New Catechism set forth Dialogue-wise in familiar talk between the Father and the Son* (1563), in *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, with other pieces*, pp. 184-198.

Satan pervaded the enormous number of sermons that found their way into print, and it is reasonable to assume that he had a similar influence on the parish preaching which left no record. The programme of sermonising contained in the *Book of Homilies*, first published in 1547, contained no dedicated treatment of the Devil, but an awareness of his agency was central to the subjects intended to comprise a basic religious understanding. Of the 33 sermons that made up the book in its Elizabethan format, only ten made no mention at all of Satan. Moreover the book may reflect an increase in the perceived importance of the Devil. Of the twelve homilies of the 1547 edition, five made no mention of diabolism, whilst of those added in 1562, the figure was five out of twenty-one.³⁶ The *Homilies* offered an uncompromising picture of the antithesis of Christ and Devil, and of their human servants.³⁷ Discussions of the fall of man, the reign of the Devil and Christ's victory through the passion, were accompanied by detailed treatments of individual sins which sought to highlight the role of diabolic temptation.³⁸ At the same time the *Homilies* attempted to broaden parishioners' political understanding of demonism. The lengthy sermons against idolatry exposed the Devil's role in Catholic image worship, the discussion of fasting revealed the diabolism of an empty faith in good works, a sermon on the Holy Ghost (to be read on Whitsunday) listed the tyrannical acts of a variety of popes as evidence of 'the spirit of the Devil', and the sermon against rebellion drew direct comparisons with the revolt of Lucifer.³⁹ Whilst it is debatable to what extent any audience might have assimilated the entirety of the *Homilies'* demonism (the message being dispersed over the liturgical year), it is a testament to their authors' intent that demonological knowledge should have a wide devotional, social and political base.

Christ's temptation in the desert provided a scriptural exemplar of man's duty to follow Christ in resisting the Devil.⁴⁰ William Perkins produced a detailed description of the nature of diabolic temptation in his *The Combat between Christ*

³⁶ The majority of the homilies were divided into two or more parts and it is not the case that the Devil would be discussed every week, but demonism was thought pertinent to the majority of subjects. Similarly the Henrican primer of 1545 contained relatively few references to the Devil in its collection of prayers, in contrast to that of 1553, see *The Primer, and Catchechisme, sette furthe by the Kynges Highness and his clergie* (London, 1552, 1st ed. 1545), sigs. P4v, S, T3v, T6v-T7.

³⁷ 'A sermon of Christian love and charity', 'A sermon against whoredom', 'An homily of the right use of the church', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 69, 130, 170.

³⁸ 'A sermon of the misery of all mankind', 'A sermon of good works annexed unto faith', 'An homily of the resurrection', 'An homily against gluttony and drunkenness', 'An homily of the place and time of prayer', in *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 51-52, 311, 362, 463.

³⁹ 'An homily against the peril of idolatry', 'An homily of good works: and first of fasting', 'An homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion', in *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241, 249, 280, 297, 588, 606, 610, 617-618, 626.

⁴⁰ 'An homily against the peril of idolatry', in *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194;

and the Divell displayed In doing so he provided one of the most detailed descriptions of the dynamic of temptation of all the Protestant theologians. Demonic agency continued to be a popular subject into the later seventeenth-century. Henry Lawrence, forced into retirement by the Civil War, found time to pen *Of Our Communion and Warre with Angels* in 1646. The book was mainly a lengthy exposition on Ephesians 6. 12-19, a very commonly cited source for scriptural proof of Protestant demonism. Perhaps the most detailed description of temptation to be produced in England was contained in Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory*. This massive conduct book was written around 1664, but was not published until 1673. It reproduced in great depth the dynamic of demonic affliction that had been expressed by Protestant theologians over a hundred years earlier, isolating each aspect of temptation and revealing how it might be resisted.

* * *

Satan's powerful hold over man was understood to be a consequence of the fall of Adam. Unlike the fall of Lucifer, the question of how evil was introduced to the terrestrial world was not limited by scriptural obscurity. Satan's corruption of Eden was an historical fact. According to Thomas Becon, the Devil, desiring man's perdition, 'like a wily serpent attempted the woman "as the more frail vessel", and ready to be devict [deceived?] and overcome so that at the last, through his subtle and crafty persuasions, she gave place to that wily serpent, the father of lying, and wickedly transgressed God's most holy commandment'.⁴¹ Some put it more simply, like John Ponet who noted only, 'Eve [was] deceived by the devil counterfeiting the shape of a serpent'.⁴² Henry King, preaching a sermon on Lent in March 1625, provided one of the most elaborate pictures, highlighting the speed of man's fall into a Faustian bargain. 'In the morning of the sixt day was Man made', he commented, 'and before the evening of that same day had he, upon the Devil's short parley, surrendered up his innocence & libertie, quite sold away his Patent, the privileges of his birth, and at that scornefull rate wherewith we purchase the love of children, for an Apple'.⁴³ For John Cosin the rebellion of Adam was 'a story delivered to us in Scripture and made good by experience'. Even if the bible had been silent the 'universal irregularity of our whole nature' and man's daily exposure 'to continual afflictions and sorrow' must assure men that they had not been created so by God. Logic then demanded that some

⁴¹ Becon, *News from Heaven*, p. 46; 'A Sermon of Good Works annexed unto Faith', 'An Homily or Sermon concerning the Nativity and the Birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 51, 426.

⁴² Ponet, *Short Catechisme*, p. 502; Nowell, *Catechism*, pp. 148-149.

⁴³ Henry King, *Two sermons preached at Whitehall in Lent* (1626), in *The Sermons of Henry King* (1592-1669), ed. M. Hobbs (Rutherford, 1992), p. 116.

common father must have infected himself and his posterity with sin, and the bible filled in the blanks. 'That poison, to go now by the Scriptures', Cosin noted, 'was brought him by the devil, and down it went'.⁴⁴

The Devil had enticed man into sin, but he also played the role of God's executioner, into whose hands mankind was delivered as punishment. 'The fall of Adam', Tyndale noted, 'hath made us heirs to the vengeance and wrath of God, and heirs of eternal damnation; and hath brought us into captivity and bondage under the Devil'. Thomas Becon highlighted the change in man's nature, passing from the 'glorious state in which he stood' to become the 'servile, thrall, captive, and a very bond-slave of Satan'.⁴⁵ 'We are all become dirt by the fall of the first Adam' was Roger Hutchinson's succinct comment in his *The Image of God*. Man's rebellion, according to Alexander Nowell, left him 'holden bond, and fast tied with impiety and wickedness, and wrapped in the snares of eternal death, and holden thrall in foul bondage of the serpent the devil'.⁴⁶ Henry King described man's punishment in line with his conception of the fall as a fateful transaction that got its just rewards. 'The first man sold himselfe to sin', he noted, '& in that luckles bargaine concluded us, his wretched posteritie-passed us away into the power of the Devil, who bought him from all Obedience'.⁴⁷

But when Protestants spoke of slavery they had something very specific in mind. Mankind's degradation actually made his nature similar to that of the corrupted angels. The rebellious angels had become hideous monsters, but man's debasement manifested itself in physical weakness and loss of spiritual insight. For John Hooper, fallen man exchanged his 'original perfection' for 'the image of the devil'.⁴⁸ Adam, argued Alexander Nowell, had been endued with all the best 'ornaments' of mankind, to keep or to lose as his free will determined. In rebelling

⁴⁴ John Cosin, *The Works of the right Reverend Father in God John Cosin*, (Oxford, 4 vols, 1843-1851), vol. I, p. 209.

⁴⁵ Tyndale, *Pathway into Holy Scripture*, p. 17; Becon, *David's Harp*, in *Early Works*, p. 292; Coverdale, *The old faith, an evident probacion out of scripture, that the christen fayth...hath endured sens the beginnyng of the worlde* (1547); *A Spiritual and most precious perle, teaching all men to love and imbrace ye crosse as a most swete and necessarye thing unto the soule*, in *Writings and Translations*, pp. 3-4, 100; Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, ed. P. G. Stanwood (Oxford, 2 vols., 1989), pp. 42-43..

⁴⁶ Hutchinson, *The Image of God*, p. 59; Nowell, *Catechism*, p. 151; Miles Coverdale, *The Old Faith*, p. 18; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 178. Whilst Protestants tended to emphasise the desperate state of mankind, diabolic punishment and divine mercy were understood to exist in balance, as the homily on salvation noted, 'God in his mystery of our redemption; who hath so tempered his justice and mercy together

⁴⁷ Henry King, *A Sermon of Deliverance. Preached at the Spittle on Easter Monday* (1626), in *Sermons*, p. 100.

⁴⁸ John Hooper, *A Declaration of Christe and of his offyce compylyd by Johan Hoper* (1547), in *Early Writings*, p. 87; 'An Homily or Sermon concerning the Nativity', in *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, pp. 426-427; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 7;

against God he forfeited them for himself and his descendants, leaving mankind with 'short...and uncertain race of life', 'infirmity of our flesh', 'feebleness of our bodies' and 'horrible blindness of our minds and perverseness of our hearts'.⁴⁹ Positing a common nature between corrupted men and devils enabled Protestant theologians to push the issue of human complicity in sin. For Tyndale the Devil might have become man's 'prince' or 'god' after Eden, but man was zealous in his complicity. 'Unto the devil's will consent we all our hearts', he noted, 'so that the law and will of the devil is written as well in our hearts as in our members, and we run headlong after the devil with full zeal'. That fallen men and devils would suffer equally at Judgement Day was the final proof that their nature was essentially the same. When Tyndale described Adam's posterity as 'heirs' to God's vengeance, he implied that humans now shared in the divine wrath which predated the corruption of Eden. Mankind simply swelled the ranks of those angels that were already damned eternally, as the widely cited judgement in Matthew 25: 41 made clear — 'depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels'.⁵⁰ For Hooper no creature was as great a rebel to his maker as man, 'saving the devil'.⁵¹ In spiritual blindness Protestant writers were able to express the fine balance they saw between the condition of man sent by God, and man's own responsibility for overcoming it. II Thessalonians put it succinctly— 'God shall send them strong delusions, that they believe lies; that all they might be damned which believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness'.⁵² John Jewel connected the text with I Corinthians 2. 14— 'the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him'.⁵³

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Increasingly Satan's ability to intrude directly into the consciousness dominated this understanding of man's relationship with the diabolic. He could enter the mind and place sinful thoughts within it producing, according to Thomas Cranmer, 'sodein and vehement motions to do euell'. 'For the Deuel is a spirit, whom we can neither feal nor see', he continued, 'wherefore he can set our hartes

⁴⁹ Nowell, *Catechisme*, p. 149; Taylor, *Holy Living*, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁰ Tyndale, *Pathway into Holy Scripture*, pp. 14-18; Bullinger, *Decades*, pp. 352- 353; Bayly, *Practice of Piety*, p. 63.

⁵¹ Hooper, *Declaration of Christe*, p. 90; *Confession and Protestation of Faith*, pp. 70-72; 'The Second Homily concerning the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ', in *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, pp. 448-449, 455-456; Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Piety*, p. 41.

⁵² II Thessalonians 2. 11-12; See John Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 924; 'A Sermon of the Salvation', *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 30; Alexander Cooke, *Pope Iaone. A dialogue between a protestant and a papist* (London, 1625), sigs. A2-A2v.

⁵³ Jewel, *An Exposition upon the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 924; The later King James version of the New Testament translated this passage differently, replacing 'percieveth' with 'recieveth'.

a fyre so sodenly, that we shall not knowe from whence such soden fire and sparkes do come'.⁵⁴ 'The deuill in tempting a man to sinne', Perkins commented in *The Combate between Christ and the Divell displayed*, 'conueyes into his mind, either by inward suggestion or outward obiect, the motion or cognition of that sinne which he would have him to commit'.⁵⁵ This conception of satanic agency continued to dominate into the seventeenth-century. To Henry King, preaching on deliverance at Spital Fields in 1626, man was a 'beleagured Citie', the five senses 'ports' by which the Devil gained entrance. 'Hee bribes the Eye to wound the Heart', he noted, 'and by those windows of our bodies, He throwes in Lust like wild-fire'.⁵⁶ Satan was the 'internall cause' of sin, observed the demonologist Henry Lawrence in 1646, 'for hee mingles himself with our most intimate corruptions, and because the seate of his warfare is the inward man'.⁵⁷

The notion of internal temptation was not, of course, an invention of Protestantism. The exact dynamic of temptation was traditionally an open question, complicated, as William Perkins himself pointed out, by different possible readings of the temptation of Eve and that of Christ.⁵⁸ Both internal and external temptation were central to the medieval remit of satanic agency. The 'saints lives' embodied numerous tales of the Devil disguised as a beautiful woman, or as the physical tormentor who tempted men to impatience. Temptation as an internal working of the mind also found a place in devotional works. The fourteenth-century *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* predicted a 'war of temptacions' for the Christian in which Satan 'putteth in oure mende diuerse ymaginations, as worldliche and fleshliche hoghts, [and sumtime other hoghts] whiche be ful greuous and perlous, eyther to make us to haue a gret lust and liking in hem that be worldliche and fleshliche, or els to bring ous in gret heuynes or drede thoru tho hoghts wiche be greuous and perlous'.⁵⁹ Temptation was described in the homily on the Lord's Prayer contained in the *Festial* of John Mirk, but here internal temptation was presented more as a direct control over the physical senses rather than an intrusion into the mind. For

⁵⁴ Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fols. 147v-148.

⁵⁵ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 376.

⁵⁶ King, *A Sermon of Deliverance*, p. 106.

⁵⁷ Henry Lawrence, *Of Our Communion and Warre with Angels*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Perkins highlighted the difficulty presented by the two scriptural archetypes for temptation. In biblical phraseology the "'tempter came unto" Christ, by which phrase it is probable, though not certaine that the deuill tooke upon him the forme of some creature'. It was certain that he had appeared to Eve as a serpent, but in the temptation of Christ the case was less clear cut. 'Some indeed think' Perkins continued, 'that these temptations were in the mind onely, and by vision'. William Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 382.

⁵⁹ *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, ed. M. Connolly (Oxford, Early English Text Society, 1993), p. 33.

example, tempting man the Devil ‘makyth hym cacche a delyte’ in the object of his sight and so lust after it.⁶⁰ But internal temptation was perhaps less prevalent in traditional religious corporatism where intercession and ceremonies such as Candlemas and Rogationtide provided powerful communal means of warding off the Devil. The Candlemas ceremony predicted that ‘wherever [the candle] be lit or set up, the devil may flee away in fear’, whilst Rogationtide re-established parish boundaries each year by literally driving the demons who were believed to infest the air into a neighbouring parish.⁶¹ The devils of the mystery plays were imaginatively grotesque and always presented as physical manifestations, as were those of the church misericord carvings, doom paintings and stained glass.⁶² All this may well have combined to focus attention primarily on the Devil’s external reality. Protestant ministers certainly believed this to be the case. Thomas Pierson noted in 1605: ‘The naturall man doth not percieve that working of Satan which doth procure his woe, it may be that he hath seene the plaiers and the painters diuels, some black horned monster with broad eies, crooked clawes or clouen feet; and till such thing appeare vnto him, he neuer feareth hurt by Satan’.⁶³

For Protestants, emphasising the most insidious aspect of satanic agency provided the most ready means to transmit it as a comprehensible experience. The Devil who was hidden in storms was an uncertain visitor; God’s hangman or the incubus might be notorious, but they were beyond the experience of most. But the desire to eat, to rest, to have sex, to give church a miss in favour of the alehouse—these were within the experience of all men and women. A blanket interpretation of diabolism offered to bring the Devil’s agency convincingly into the most intimate aspects of people’s lives. ‘Like as an artificer that is cunning and

⁶⁰ John Mirk, *Mirk’s Festial: A Collection of Homilies, by Johannes Mirkus (John Mirk)*, ed. T. Erbe (London, Early English Text Society, 1905), p. 286.

⁶¹ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 16–17, 279.

⁶² For the characterisation of the physical Devil in medieval exemplar tales see Frederick C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales* (Helsinki, F.F. Communications No. 204, 1969), tale types 1527–1665, pp. 125–137; Katherine Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-tales in the English Language: Part B, Folk Legends, volume I* (London, 1971), pp. 43–155, gives an indication of the types of traditional stories that were told of the Devil although their dating is uncertain since the dictionary often relies on the collections of local nineteenth-century folklorists; the presentation of the Devil in the English Mystery Plays is discussed in L. W. Cushman, *The Devil and the Vice in English Dramatic Literature before Shakespeare* (London, 1900, reprinted 1970), pp. 1–53; for only a handful of examples of the presentation of the physical Devil in illuminated manuscripts see *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles: Volume 4 (I), Early Gothic Manuscripts 1190–1250*, ed. N. Morgan (Oxford, 1982), illustrations 72, 73, 129, 201, 237, 238; for the Devil in medieval church decoration see G. L. Remnant, *Catalogue of Misericords in Great Britain* (Oxford, 1969); Kathleen M. Openshaw, ‘Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter’, *The Art Bulletin*, March 1993, Vol. LXXV, No. 1, pp. 17–38.

⁶³ Thomas Pierson, preface to William Perkins’ *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, sigs. Kkk6–Kkk6v.

expert in his craft', Hugh Latimer remarked in a sermon on the Lord's Prayer, 'the devil knoweth all ways how to tempt us...insomuch that we can begin nor do nothing, but that he is at our heels and worketh some mischief, whether we be in prosperity or adversity, whether we be in health or sickness, life or death; he knoweth how to use the same to his purpose'.⁶⁴ Temptation was dangerous to man because his nature was so corrupt that diabolic intrusions not properly resisted threatened to explode within the soul, allowing sin to grow exponentially. 'Put a burning match to tinder or gunpowder and it will kindle presently', William Perkins observed, 'our hearts like tinder do easily suffer corruption to kindle in vs'.⁶⁵ The *Book of Homilies* described the process in its discussion of adultery. Adulterous thoughts, it argued, were the consequence of idleness, and were a form of gluttony. The adulterer was covetous and envious, constantly fearing to lose his 'prey' to others, and he was ireful every time his advances were refused. It was because adultery was 'a monster of many heads' that it was so 'pleasant to Satan'.⁶⁶

After the corruption of Eden, a powerful triumvirate—the 'World', the 'Flesh' and the Devil—ruled over the earth and enveloped the individual Christian.⁶⁷ Enticing him this way and that into sin, the three powers were commonly afforded animistic characteristics by theologians and moralists. Thomas Becon described them as individual 'princes and rulers', and so associated them with the 'principalities and powers' spoken of in Ephesians.⁶⁸ The flesh enticed men to all things which were pleasurable to the carnal body, and operated in direct opposition to the influence of the Holy Ghost. It may 'prouoke us to lecherye, adulterye, dronkenness and such lyke', stated Cranmer's catechism, or provoke us 'to leaue any thinge vndone, which is paynful and greuouse to the fleshe'. 'The flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit', noted Becon in his *New Catechism*,

⁶⁴ Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 429-230; Perkins, *Foure Godly Treatises; very necessary to be considered of all Christians* (London, 1587), p. 1.

⁶⁵ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 376; John Northbrooke, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vaine playes or enterludes are reprov'd*, p. 61; Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse*, sigs. D2v-D3. This understanding informed views on witchcraft. In Thomas Pickering's preface to Perkins' *Damned Art of Witchcraft* this explosion of sin was presented as an insatiable greed for knowledge and power that resulted from an initial curiosity into magic. The idolatry of paganism, the power-lust of the Catholic popes, and the popular recourse to cunning men were all explained as a consequence of an exponential growth of sin resulting from a weakness in the face of temptation. See Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, sigs. Kkkk5-Kkkk6.

⁶⁶ 'A sermon against whoredom', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 131.

⁶⁷ 'A Sermon of the Salvation of Mankind by only Christ our Saviour from the Sin and Death Everlasting', in *Ibid.*, p. 26; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 175; Miles Coverdale, *A Spiritual and most precious perle, teaching all men to love and imbrace ye crosse as a most swete and necessarye thing unto the soule*, in *Writings and Translations*, pp. 95, 157, 165, 173; Symons, *The Lord Jesus his Commission*, p. 8; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 83.

⁶⁸ Ephesians, 2: 2; 6: 12.

'and the Spirit contrary to the flesh'. He individualised the flesh by allowing that it was capable of enslaving men, and by unsubtly associating it with female promiscuity. Infinite numbers of people, he said, 'willingly offer themselves subjects, servants, and slaves to this vile strumpet, the flesh; and the flesh again as a most mighty empress ruleth in them, and carrieth them as bond-slaves whither she willeth'.⁶⁹ The world encompassed all the external influences that might drive men to sin, 'when'—in Cranmer's words—'thorowe euel companye, we be corrupted in our awne lyuyng, and prouoked to folow noughty examples'. But sin through fear was also part of the world's remit, as when men were driven from godliness under the threat of persecution. For Becon the world was a deceiver which dazzled the individual with wealth and prosperity, whilst disguising its transience. The world makes us forget we are 'strangers and pilgrims', who bring nothing into it and can ultimately take nothing out. In the world is collected all the things which are not of God, and to be in love with the world is to be his enemy.⁷⁰ The tempting triumvirate emphasised the pervasive nature of sin upon the earth, but most importantly it demonstrated man's utter reliance on God to protect him. 'Father', ran a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer by William Tyndale, 'seeing our corrupt nature can go but downward only, and the devil and the world driveth thereto that same way, how can we proceed further in virtue or stand therein, if thy power cease in us?'.⁷¹

Increasingly, as emphasis was laid on Satan's intrusive power, the world and the flesh were subordinated as tools and accessories to diabolic temptation. They were the means by which he gained entry to the mind. For Cranmer, Satan was an opportunist who took advantage of man's temptation by the flesh and the world to 'enter in at the gate', thus making the combined assault so strong that it was hard to withstand.⁷² In his 1551 book *A Fruitful treatise of Fasting*, Thomas Becon described them as the 'two special servants' of Satan, 'the one being his waiting-man, the other being his hand-maid'.⁷³ Alexander Nowell had his catechumen expand on the 'temptation' of the Lord's Prayer as meaning the 'violence of the devil, the snares and deceits of this world, and the corruptions and enticements of our flesh'. But when discussing how God might defend men from them, he subsumed the latter two under the agency of Satan.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fol. 147; Becon, *New Catechism*, pp. 150-151, the former quote Becon took from Galatians, 5; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 175.

⁷⁰ Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fol. 147v; Becon, *New Catechism*, p. 150.

⁷¹ Tyndale, *An Exposition upon the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew*, p. 85.

⁷² Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fol. 148.

⁷³ Becon, *A Fruitful treatise of Fasting*, in *Catechism and other pieces*, p. 543.

⁷⁴ Nowell, *Catechism*, p. 202; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 300.

In the hands of the Devil the world and the flesh became supremely powerful weapons offering him potential access to every single human consciousness. For if Satan might introduce whatever thoughts he wished into the mind, his cunning told him to discern the sins to which each individual was most susceptible. 'There is nothing either so high or low, so great or small, but the devil can use that self-same thing as a weapon to fight against us withal', concluded Latimer. 'It is true that euery man hath all sins in him', Perkins observed, but God might repress sin in some and renew grace in others. Thus Satan must find the easiest point of entry and so, like an army besieging a city, 'he goes about a man, and as it were turnes him to and fro, to spie out his weaknesse, and to what sinnes he is most inclined, and there he will be sure to trie him often, and to assault him with great violence'.⁷⁵ Satan caused rich men to value their wealth above God, and to use it to oppress others, whilst poor men were driven to steal. Men held in 'great estimation' the Devil made lofty and high minded, and filled their hearts with such ambition that they would trample down any that stood in their way. Those who fell into ignominy found, 'the devil is at hand, moving and stirring [their hearts] to open irksomeness and at length to desperation'. Of course the young were tempted to lust and carelessness, whilst Satan moved the old to avarice and covetousness. The healthy man was driven to take advantage of his state to pursue lechery, and those who were sick the Devil encouraged to impatience and resentment of God.⁷⁶

Again this picture of diabolic agency crystallised in the Protestant attack on popular culture. Spiritual vulnerability at the theatre, the ale-house or the dance exemplified the threat of demonic intrusion. Stage-plays were instruction manuals in sin which encouraged their audiences to copy the violence and lasciviousness they observed, whilst drinking and dancing fired men's carnal appetites.⁷⁷ For the minister John Northbrooke, plays were 'Sathan's Banquets' where he gorged

⁷⁵ Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 432; Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 380; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 13. This picture had its origins in medieval allegory, where a castle or fortress could signify a sanctified soul. According to John Bromyard faith and charity constituted the walls of a fortress to keep the Devil at bay, but the senses were doors by which he might gain entry, 'for many traitors may knock, and enemies of the Soul, desiring to capture the Castle of the soul and shut God out, and hand it over to the Devil'. Quoted in Owst, *Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933, republished Oxford, 1961), pp. 80-81.

⁷⁶ Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 430-432; 'A Sermon against Whoredom and Uncleaness', 'An Homily against Excess of Apparel', 'The Sermon against Idleness', in *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, p. 139, 331, 555; Bayly, *Practice of Piety*, pp. 185-6; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 85.

⁷⁷ Henry Roberts, *An Earnest complaint of divers vain, wicked and abused exercises, practiced on the saboth day* (1572); Northbrooke, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vaine playes or enterludes are reprov'd* (1577); Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London, 1579); *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions, proving that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale* (1582); Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583); more generally see 'An Homily of the Place and Time of Prayer', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 362.

himself on the souls of his victims. In observing sin in the theatre, men opened the gateway to the Devil, who entered into their souls through their physical senses. 'Thou shalt', Northbrooke noted, 'by hearing diuelishe and filthie songs, hurte thy chaste eares, and also shalt see that which shall be greeuous vnto thine eyes; for our eyes are as windows of the mynde: as the prophete sayeth, Death entred into my windows, that is, by mine eyes'.⁷⁸ According to the playwright turned Puritan minister, Stephen Gosson the senses had been given to man that he might hear the scriptures and see the justice of God's precepts—by design they provided direct access to the soul. The senses lulled by pleasure were particularly vulnerable to diabolic invasion. The effect of poetry is to 'wonderfully tickle the hearers eares', and so Satan 'hath tyed this to most of our playes, that whatsoever he would have sticke fast to our soules, might slippe down in sugar by this intisement, for that which delighteth never trouble to swallow'. In the evocative phrase of the minister of Southfleet in Kent, Henry Symons (1657), the effect of Satan's temptations was to 'rub our temples with his opium of poysonous suggestions'.⁷⁹ With a rhetoric of invasion and pollution an especially sinister picture could be drawn of those cultural items that were ingested, such as tobacco or alcohol. The exotic origins of tobacco allowed the anonymous author of *Work for Chimney-sweepers: or A warning for Tabacconists* (1602) to argue that smoking was 'first found out and invented by the diuell, and first vsed and practised by the diuels priests'.⁸⁰ As Catholic false piety dulled the senses with an outward show of holiness, tobacco and alcohol produced similar effects by ingestion. 'Dark and swart' tobacco fumes entered directly into the brain and augmented melancholy, 'the very seate of the Diuell in bodies possessed', and so the soul was prepared 'to receaue the prestigations and hellish illusions of the Diuell himself'.⁸¹ Wine, preached Samuel Ward in 1622, was Satan's 'venom' which 'expelled' the spirit of grace from the heart, 'as smoake doth Bees out of the hive'. In this way alcohol 'makes the man a meere slave and prey to Satan and his snares'.⁸² Ward drew an analogy between dulled senses of the drunkard and the spiritual blindness of man abandoned by God, noting 'by this poyson [the Devil] hath put out his eyes, and

⁷⁸ Northbrooke, *Treatise*, pp. 61, 132-133.

⁷⁹ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions*, sig. D8v; Symons, *The Lord Jesus his commission*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ Anon., *Work for Chimney-sweepers: or a warning for Tobacconists* (London, 1602), sigs. F4-F4v. According to this pamphlet 'Indian' priests first used tobacco to effect prophetic trances, a well known ploy of the Devil.

⁸¹ *Work for Chimney-sweepers*, sigs. B, F4v-G4v.

⁸² Samuel Ward, *Woe to Drunkards* (London, 1622), pp. 8-14, quotes at p. 14; Anon., *Schola Cordis or The Heart of it Selfe gone away from God brought back againe to him & instructed by him, in 47 Emblems* (London, 1647), pp. 24-27.

spoiled him of his strength; he useth him as the Philistines did Sampson, leads him in a string wither hee pleaseth like a very drudge'.⁸³

Through temptation the Devil worked his most insidious harm, for regardless of whether man acted on these thoughts, his soul was damaged by their very presence. 'In temptations vsually be corrupt motions', was Perkins' assessment, 'for though a man doe not approue, neither entertaining with delight, the deuils temptations, yet shall he hardly keepe himselfe from the staine and taint of sinne, because the imaginations of his owne heart are natvrally evil'.⁸⁴ As Northbrooke noted of the theatre, 'David...was sore hurt (in beholding Bersabe) and thinkest thou to escape? He did but behold an harlot, but on the top of his house...thou beholdest them in an open theatre, a place where ye soule of the wise is snared and condemned'.⁸⁵ The author of *The Second and Third Blast of retrait from plays and theatres* noted that in the 'chappel of ill counsel', where so much iniquity could be readily observed, it was a wonder that any returned 'not either wounded in conscience, or changed in life'.⁸⁶

Resisting Satan: Prayer and Dialogue

For Protestants, Catholic ceremonial was unable to provide adequate protection against Satan because, concerned only with externals, it failed to aim its counter-measures at the real site of diabolic conflict. The use of candles, bells and holy water to ward off Satan was superstitious, not because the Devil's threat was unreal, but because the items themselves could have no efficacy against a creature with the power to enter into the soul. Hugh Latimer ridiculed bell-ringing in order to drive away the Devil lurking in a 'storm or a fearful weather'. 'If the holy bells would serve against the devil, or that he might be put away through their sound', Latimer noted, 'no doubt they would banish him out of all England'. After all, if all the bells in the country were rung at the same moment, 'there would be no place, but some bells might be heard there'.⁸⁷ Traditionalists were certainly disturbed by the idea that man might be left defenceless against the Devil, and such glib attitudes seemed only to demonstrate the reformers' naivety

⁸³ Ward, *Woe to Drunkards*, p. 14; 'An Homily against Gluttony and Drunkenness', in *Certain Sermons or homilies*, p. 310.

⁸⁴ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 376.

⁸⁵ Northbrooke, *Treatise*, p. 61.

⁸⁶ Munday, *The Second and Third Blast of retrait from plays and theatres*, p. 92. That pamphlet was a compilation including a translation of a third-century anti-stage tract by Salvian. Munday himself would write eighteen plays between 1584 and 1600.

⁸⁷ Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 498.

and carelessness. In 1554, the Catholic Thomas Watson preached before Queen Mary and pointed to the protective power of the real presence in the communion. 'O what wonderful effectes be these', he proclaimed, 'which bi this blessed Sacrament by wrought in the worthy receiuer, agaynst the deuyll and his temptation'. The reformers' willingness to dispense with this vital weapon beggared belief. 'What meant they', Watson asked, 'that toke away this armour of Christes flesh and bloud from vs, but to leaue us naked and vnarmed against the deuyll'.⁸⁸

If they have not always shared his sectarian position, historians have tended to agree with Watson that Protestantism was particularly bad at protecting Christians from the Devil. For some, like Keith Thomas, this was a symptom of Protestantism's moral pessimism, and he notes that the whole faith itself was infused with 'a sense of powerlessness in the face of evil'.⁸⁹ John Stachniewski understands Protestantism to have actively shaped a self-perception of reprobation among its adherents which, through imagery of damnation, encouraged an obsessive fear of Satan.⁹⁰ For Jeffery Burton Russell, Protestant conflicts with Satan had to have been intensely lonely experiences, as, stripped of all intercessionary aid, the Christian was left alone to face the Devil with no other comfort than his bible.⁹¹ Similarly the recent emphasis on the vitality and popularity of traditional religion, which argues that ceremonies such as Candlemas and Rogationtide had profound emotional significance for ordinary parishioners, tends to imply by contrast that the removal of intercession against the Devil left a significant gap in religious and communal experience.⁹²

Of course there is much truth in this picture. We have already seen that the reformed baptism must have been a confusing and dissatisfying experience for those used to the triumphalism of the Sarum rite. But to argue that Protestantism left its adherents unprotected against the Devil is misleading. Whilst the reformers were concerned to undermine reliance on ceremony and intercession, and to make the experience of the diabolic a constant of Christian existence rather than formalised part of the liturgical year, they did not fail to substitute their own understanding of how the Devil might be fought off. The battle with Satan was

⁸⁸ Thomas Watson, *Two notable Sermons, made the third and fyfth Fridayes in Lent last past, Before the Quenes highnes, concerninge the reall presense of Christes body and bloude in the blessed Sacrament* (London, 1554), sigs. A3v, F8v-G4, quotes at sigs. G3v-G4; similarly see Stephen Gardiner's defence of the power of holy water over the Devil, Gardiner *Letters*, pp. 259-263, 486.

⁸⁹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 560-561.

⁹⁰ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 17-26.

⁹¹ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, p. 31.

⁹² Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, esp. pp. 15-18, and chapters 8 & 9.

unwinnable to all but God; and so Protestantism offered no means of victory, but instead concentrated on resistance.

Protection against Satan came not from candles, bells or holy water, but from the soteriological knowledge whereby temptation could be put into perspective. God allowed the Devil to tempt man in order to test his faith. 'It is a necessary thing to be tempted of the Devil', Hugh Latimer declared, 'for temptations minister to us the occasion to run to God and to beg his help'.⁹³ Satan would never be allowed to tempt a godly man beyond his endurance. Whilst Protestants tended to emphasise the desperate state of mankind, diabolic punishment and divine mercy were understood to exist in balance; as the homily on salvation noted, God 'hath so tempered his justice and mercy together, that he would neither by his justice condemn us unto the everlasting captivity of the devil and his prison of hell...nor by his mercy deliver us clearly without payment of a just ransom'.⁹⁴ The correct response to temptation was not to attempt to be rid of affliction through magical ceremonies, but patiently to bear it, and so demonstrate a faith that the Devil would ultimately be constrained by God. Thus sound religious knowledge and the ability to discern for oneself the reality of diabolic temptation was to replace blind faith in the mediating power of the Catholic clergy. The final exhortation of the reformed baptism demanded that the godparents ensure that the child be educated in the faith. This was not mere rhetoric; the child was to learn the creed, the Lord's Prayer, the decalogue and 'all other things which a Christian man ought to know and believe to his soul's health'. By these means he might be 'continually mortifying all...evil and corrupt affections'.⁹⁵ If spiritual blindness made the Devil's temptations so dangerous, the deficiency might be significantly made up with sound theological knowledge.

Even if diabolic affliction was to be expected, damage limitation demanded that the individual make it as difficult as possible for the Devil's influence to take hold. Stephen Gosson described ignorance of the flesh-pots as a 'bridle' by which the godly progression of the soul was kept from distraction. To remove the bridle was 'manifest treason to our souls, [delivering] them captive to the Devil'. Exposing the senses to the 'songs of devils', subverted their design as the means by which the soul gained access to God.⁹⁶ Such was the danger of those places where sin was practised openly, but diabolic affliction was often far less obvious.

⁹³ Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 435; Perkins, *A crowd of Faithful Witnesses, leading to the heavenly Canaan*, in *Works*, III, pp. 112-113.

⁹⁴ 'A sermon of the salvation of mankind', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ *The book of common prayer* (1549), fol. 139; *The Booke of common praier* (1552), sig. P6v; 'A sermon against Whoredom', *Certain sermons or homilies*, p. 139.

⁹⁶ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions*, sig. Fv; Symons, *The Lord Jesus his commission*, p. 39.

As Gosson warned in *The School of Abuse* (1579), 'the Devil stands at our elbow when we see him not, speaks when we hear him not, strikes when we feel not, and woundeth sore when he raiseth no skin nor rents the flesh'.⁹⁷ Since Satan would search out the sins to which each man was most addicted, the godly should also examine their consciences deeply and discern them first. 'When we have truly found out our owne estate', William Perkins exhorted, 'we must set strong watch and guard about our hearts in respect of our infirmities, and so shall we be better able to break the neck of Satan's temptations'.⁹⁸ Vigilance was honed by practice, subverted by the lack of it. Sin, wrote Lewis Bayly, must be suppressed at the first motion, 'lest the coustome of sinning take away the conscience of sin'.⁹⁹ Henry Lawrence expressed a century of consensus as to the limits on Satan's power when he noted in 1646 that, 'hee is a perfect iuggler, hee raignes not much when his tricks are discovered'.¹⁰⁰

If perception was the key to warding off diabolic intrusion, those inclined to godliness were at an advantage. In them temptation produced emotional symptoms which aided in its discernment. 'As Sathan conuaies euil suggestions into mens minds', Perkins observed, 'so the same are full of trouble, sorrow, and vexation, at least to the godly'.¹⁰¹ The godly man languishing under temptation experienced a profound internal conflict with the sinful thoughts which intruded upon his mind. As Perkins described with reference to one particular temptation, 'the deuill doth mightily assault some men by casting into their minds most fearefull motions of blasphemy against God', and these thoughts 'greatly astonish them and bring them to despaire', making 'a godly heart to tremble, and quake once to think upon'. But the experience should allow the victim to progress to an understanding of the nature of temptation and its consequences. At first the godly man is naturally appalled when his thoughts appear so alien to his inclinations, and taking them to be a symptom of his own corruption (a motion of the flesh), he struggles against them. But he must come to the realisation that he is experiencing a diabolic intrusion into his mind, and whilst blasphemous thoughts are 'heauie crosses indeed', they are 'the deuills sinnes wholly, and not ours'. Thus, if temptation was inevitable, Perkins' offered to make resisting the Devil an equally

⁹⁷ Gosson, *School of Abuse*, sig. C4; Bolton, *Instructions for a Right comforting afflicted consciences*, pp. 94-95; Schola Cordis, pp. 9-11; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 381; 'An homily against idleness', *Certain sermons or homiles*, pp. 554-555; Lawrence, *Communion and Warre*, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Bayly, *The Practice of Piety*, pp. 178, 183-4; Taylor, *Holy Living*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence, *Communion and Warre with Angels*, p. 1; Taylor, *Holy Living*, p. 86.

¹⁰¹ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, p. 376; Baxter, *The Christian Directory*, p. 83.

certain and tangible experience. All temptation might be terrible, but Satan was only truly dangerous when his intrusions went unrecognised.¹⁰²

This argument allowed theologians to pre-empt criticism from those whose experience did not conform to the picture. Such quibbles could be conveniently dismissed by declaring that a conscience free from trouble was a sure sign of reprobation. Hugh Latimer associated doubt over the accuracy of his picture of temptation with the blindness of corrupted man. It was the 'ignorant unlearned sort' who pestered preachers, demanding 'you speak much of temptations; I pray you tell us how shall we know when we are tempted'.¹⁰³ 'Most men', Perkins predicted, 'will say, that they neuer felt by experience in themselves the truth of this doctrine; for they haue not percieued any such combate in themselves, though they haue been baptised many years agoe'. This was because they had not received the inner baptism of the spirit and so remained Satan's servants. 'While men liue in sinne, & submit themselves to Satans spiritual bondage, he will suffer all things to be in peace with them', Perkins explained, but if they turn to God 'then he will by all his force pursue them, and meete them with armes of temptations'. Consequently peace was the most dangerous state a man could be in and rather than address criticism head-on Perkins could simply exhort those who never experienced 'spiritual conflict' to reform themselves immediately, when of course they would soon discover the validity of his description.¹⁰⁴

* * *

Having discerned affliction as diabolic, the single most important weapon in the Christian's armoury was prayer. 'When soeuer we be tempted', Thomas Cranmer advised, 'ther is no better remedy, then to cal for Gods helpe, and to say as Christ taught vs. Good Lord suffer vs not to be leade in to temptation'. 'It is the christian man's special weapon', agreed Latimer, 'wherewith to strike the devil, and vanquish his assaults'. 'If it chanceth that any man be bare, and not weaponed with prayer', noted Thomas Becon, 'then he is straightway plucked and tossed of the devils'. Prayer bred continual awareness, keeping the perception sharp against the dangers of spiritual blindness. 'What manner of sleeps doest thou look for', Becon asked, 'when thou dost not confirm, make strong, and defend thyself with prayers; but without any watch comest to sleep like a miser and wretch, ready to fall into the captivity and bondage of the most ungracious devils'. 'Satan

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 376; Thomas Frousell, *The Beloved Disciple. A Sermon preached at the Funerall of the Honourable Sir Robert Harley* (London, 1658), epistle dedicatory.

¹⁰³ Latimer, *Sermons*, p. 437.

¹⁰⁴ Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Divell displayed*, pp. 371-372; William Harrison & William Leygh, *Deaths advantage little regarded, and the soules solace against sorrow* (London, 1602), p. 72; Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 12, 84.

ceaseth not to assault our faith', declared Edwin Sandys in a sermon at Spital Fields, 'let not us therefore cease to cry unto God'.¹⁰⁵

But the Protestant rationale behind prayer was very different to that of the pre-Reformation church. Eamon Duffy has demonstrated how the prayers of the *Horae* answered a desire to cultivate an 'intense relationship of affectionate, penitential intimacy with Christ and his mother'. Those which provided protection against the Devil tended to read like litanies or invocations, often blurring the line between prayer and magic as they came closer to being spells or charms.¹⁰⁶ Devotion to the angels, especially the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, provided a focus for prayers requesting intercession. The prayer '*Deus propicius esto*' exhorted God to 'send to my aid Michael your Archangel, that he may keep, protect and defend me from all my enemies, visible and invisible'. Similarly the '*Crux Christi*':

Cross + of Christ...be ever over me, and before me, and behind me, because the ancient enemy flees wherever he sees you...Flee from me, a servant of God, o devil, by the sign of the holy Cross + behold the Cross of the Lord + begone you enemies, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered.¹⁰⁷

The words of these prayers, as with the paraphernalia and speeches of baptism, were assumed to hold inherent efficacy, offering protection and exorcism to challenge the Devil. They were integral to the quasi-magical practices that formed such an important part of lay devotion. Holy water sprinkled on the hearth fended off evil, candles blessed in the Candlemas ceremonies were lit during thunderstorms to drive away demons, and were brought near women in labour and the dying to ward off Satan in vulnerable moments. It is in this context, as Duffy argues, that the prayers/charms of the *Horae* must be read. The effect of the *Horae* prayers and the consecrated items was immediate, invested as they were with the very real power of God over the Devil. Most significantly they were intercessory, abrogating personal responsibility for defeating the Devil to higher power. As with the Sarum baptism, intercession encouraged passivity in the victim of diabolic assault.

By contrast, Protestant prayers expressed in their language a sense of abjection before pervasive sin that was supposed to drive men to seek God's protection through faith. Their emotive qualities came not from rhetorical and

¹⁰⁵ Cranmer, *Catechismus*, fol. 146v; Latimer, *Sermons*, pp. 438-439 507-510; *Remains*, p. 141, 149; Becon, *A Pathway to Prayer*, p. 172; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, chapters 7 & 8, *passim*.

¹⁰⁷ Both prayers are quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 269-270, 273.

imaginative flourishes, but from an attempt to impose *de facto* demonological awareness on the consciousness. Fear of Satan's agency was to be instilled by stripping it of all embellishment and presenting it as a statement of irrefutable fact. Thus it was the Devil in his guise as the roaring lion that provided the most common and most imposing image of the ever-present diabolic threat.¹⁰⁸ 'Our adversary the devil goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour', declared a prayer of the Elizabethan Primer, expressing man's weakness, 'he is busy and fierce, and breaketh in upon us, so that, if [God] help not, he will soon deceive us with his craft, overturn us with his might, and with his cruelty tear us in pieces'. 'I must always be at war and strife', observed one Elizabethan prayer, 'not with one sort of enemies, but with an infinite number, not only with flesh and blood, but with the devil which is the prince of darkness'. The exemplar of the temptation of Christ demonstrated the place of diabolic affliction within God's scheme. 'O Lord Jesus Christ...didst suffer thy self to be tempted of Sathan', declared another of the *Godly Prayers*, in order 'that thou mightest likewise overthrow Sathan in thy members, as thou hadst afore done in thine own person'.¹⁰⁹ In the 1578 compilation *A Book of Christian Prayers* 'A Prayer to be said at our first going abroad' rendered the threshold of the house the boundary with a perilous world made up entirely of the Devil's snares:

I must be fain to go abroad among the snares, which the devil, and his handservant the world, have laid for me: and I carry with me, besides, the stings of mine own flesh. Guide me therefore, O thou most sure guide: be thou my leader, thou God of my welfare. Defend me, O Captain, From the trains and stales that are laid for me: that whatsoever things I shall meet with, I may make no more account of them than they are worthy of, but keep on my way, with mine eyes so fast fixed and settled upon thee alone, as I may not deal with anything further forth than it hath respect unto thee. Lord, shew me thy ways, and lead me in thy paths, for thy sons sake. Amen.¹¹⁰

It is no accident that the language of these prayers reads like a rehearsal of the demonological expositions contained in the devotional writings of the reformers. For it was in an expression of demonological and spiritual truths that the efficacy of Protestant prayer was now understood to lie. By reciting the facts of demonic affliction and divine constraint the speaker demonstrated an understanding of the

¹⁰⁸ *The Primer, and Catchisme* (1552), sigs. T6v-T7.

¹⁰⁹ *Private Prayers, put forth during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. W. K. Clay (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1851), pp. 112-113; *The Primer set furth at large, with many godly and devoute Prayers* (1559), in *Liturgical Services*, pp. 248-249, 270; Sandys, *Sermons*, p. 263.

¹¹⁰ *A Book of Christian Prayers*, in *Private Prayers*, p. 443.

dynamic and place of temptation, and ultimately of his Christian duty to abandon himself to the will of God. In one sense, strength against the Devil came from a mixture of fatalism and informed hope. Final responsibility for defeating the Devil rested with God, but these prayers were not intercessionary. At the same time, awareness of the demonic threat was itself an encouraging sign that protection might be forthcoming; a belief that should inspire further resistance.

But the new role of prayer was not easily imposed on a laity used to the instant gratification of intercession. As with other areas of Protestant demonism striking a balance between demonology and providing comfort spawned some contradictions. One of the most striking is apparent in the 1553 Primer. A basic form of prayer against the Devil succinctly set out the progressive rehearsal of demonological and spiritual truths that were to define the individual's perception of diabolic assault. The prayer was intended to have a dual function, being employed in both general devotion and during specific periods of temptation. The first understanding the victim must come to is that current temptations are symptomatic of the Devil's wider agency, and so the specifics are subsumed within a description of the tempting triumvirate, highlighting the enveloping nature of demonic assault:

O Lord God, the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. The world persuadeth unto vanities that we forget thee our Lord God, and so for ever be damned. Thus we are miserably on every side besieged of cruel and unrestful enemies, and like at every moment to perish, if we be not defended with thy godly power against their tyranny.

The second part of the prayer moves to rehearsing the individual's weakness in the face of the Devil and acknowledging the corruption of sin. In asking for God's strength the individual recognises his abjection:

I therefore, poor and wretched sinner, despairing of my own strength, which is none, most heartily pray thee to endue me with strength from above, that I may be able to, through thy help, with strong faith resist Sathan, with fervant prayer mortify the raging lusts of the flesh, with continual meditation of thy holy law to avoid the foolish vanities and transitory pleasures of this wicked world, that I through thy grace being set at liberty from the power of mine enemies, may live and serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Amen.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ *The Primer: or Book of private Prayer* (1553), in *The Two Liturgies*, A. D. 1549 and A. D. 1552, p. 474; see also *The Primer, and Catchechisme* (1552), sigs, T6v-T7.

Thus this prayer exhibited the new emphases of Protestant demonism—the sense of envelopment by temptation, and the realisation of strength through abjection. But in its demonism the devotion the 1553 Primer was still in transition. The prayer against the Devil was followed by another which employed the angeology of more traditional devotions. The prayer ‘For the help of God’s holy Angels’ recalled the conflict between the ‘infinite’ multitude of evil angels and their unfallen brethren. ‘Against this exceeding great multitude of evil spirits’, it exhorted, ‘send thou me the blessed and heavenly Angels, which may pitch their tents round about me, and so deliver me from their tyranny’.¹¹²

The Protestant Ministry and the Mediation of Resistance

The role of prayer books in aiding resistance to the Devil was supplemented by the efforts of the Protestant clergy, who to an extent recovered their role as mediators between man and the divine which had been so undermined by the Reformation.¹¹³ In one sense Protestant demonological reform turned full circle, increasingly re-emphasising the importance of the—now Protestant—clergy in mediating the defeat of Satan. If knowledge and understanding were the most important weapons against the demonic, then educated ministers were most likely to possess them. In ideal at least they became repositories of the scriptural learning and insight which might arm individuals, and society more widely, against temptation. As a result of ‘the want of a sincere ministry’, George Gifford noted in 1582, ‘the Divell hath elbowe roome to spread abroad’.¹¹⁴ ‘You may see, what a spirit the deuill hath to hinder one sermon’, the Puritan, Henry Smith, noted in his sermon on Luke 8: 19-21, ‘Therefore...no maruell, though he stand against a learned ministry’.¹¹⁵ Nor was the ideal an empty one. The wealth of books by ministers given over to dealing with afflicted consciences testifies to the seriousness with which they took their role as mediators of the spiritual learning by which the laity might overcome doubt as to election.¹¹⁶ Similarly, ministers

¹¹² *The Primer* (1553), pp. 474-475.

¹¹³ Thomas *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 87-89; O’Day, ‘The reformation of the ministry, 1558-1642’, in R. O’Day & F. Heal (eds.), *Continuity and Change: Personnel and administration of the Church in England 1500-1642* (Leicester, 1976), pp. 55; Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England*, pp. 95-96.

¹¹⁴ Gifford, *A Briefe Discourse of Certain points of the Religion*, sigs. A3-A3v; Gosson, *Schoole of abuse*, sigs. B5v-B6.

¹¹⁵ Henry Smith, *Three Sermons made by Maister Henry Smith* (London, 1599), sig. E.

¹¹⁶ A handful of the more prominent examples of what was an enormous body of literature are, William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine* (1591); *The whole treatise of the cases of Conscience* (1606); Henry

claimed to see everywhere the devastating consequences of Satan's intrusion into men's souls. Thomas Becon was moved to pen *The Christen Knight* after perceiving that godly men were commonly 'so turmoiled and tossed with the raging and cruel waves of desperation, that scarcely there remained any hope of salvation in their breasts'. He believed that if he could arm them with the doctrine of salvation the Devil might be 'driven to utter confusion'. 'How this victory over Satan and his soldiers may be gotten', Becon promised, 'is declared in this dialogue following'.¹¹⁷

The Christen Knight was one of a number of books by ministers which aimed to provide a mirror of the experience of temptation by presenting it as a dialogue between the conscience and the Devil. John Bradford's *Godlie meditations*, first printed in 1562, included a short example. In ten questions the Devil accused the conscience of being reprobate, each point being answered with reference to Christ's gratuitous mercy. Another simple version was produced by William Perkins in his *Foure godly treatises* of 1587, in which the possible defences that could be used by 'a Christian', 'a strong Christian' and a 'weak Christian' were rehearsed.¹¹⁸ Thomas Becon's *The Governance of Virtue*, composed in 1543, and the undated *The Christen Knight* were longer and far more complex. The first was moderately successful and went through six editions between 1547 and 1607, but the second only saw a single printing. The dialogue with the Devil also found its way into the 'mainstream' of Protestant printed culture, for example appearing, in a rather diffuse form, in Lewis Bayly's hugely successful *The Practice of Piety*.

These dialogues were a form of inverted catechism. As the Devil was shown attempting to undermine the Christian's faith, it was to be apparent that he in fact offered him an opportunity to demonstrate his learning and godliness. Becon's *The Governance of Virtue* rehearsed the Devil's arguments as 'suggestions' and 'persuasions' appearing inside the mind. 'If Satan lay to thy charge that thou comest very late, and turnest unto God out of time', was one example of his sophistry; 'if Satan, or any of his, tempt thee to live at thy pleasure...', ran another. In each case pertinent quotes and examples from scripture were offered to make the Devil's deceit apparent and thus dispel his threat.¹¹⁹ Solid grounding in scripture was the key to bolstering assurance, and therefore the means of resisting

Scudder, *The Christians Daily Walke in Securitie and Peace* (1627); Robert Bolton, *Instructions for the Right comforting afflicted Consciences* (1631); Richard Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict with it selfe, and Victory over it self by Faith* (1635); Giles Firmin, *The Real Christian* (1670); Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (1673), .

¹¹⁷ Becon, *Christen Knight*, in *Early Works*, pp. 622-625.

¹¹⁸ Bradford, *Writings*, I, pp. 210-211; William Perkins, *Foure godly treatises; very necessary to be considered of all Christians* (London, 1587).

¹¹⁹ Becon, *The Governance of Virtue*, p. 478, 482.

Satan's suggestions. A similar model was employed in Bayly's *Practice of Piety*. Specifically aiming at those experiencing temptation on the death-bed, Bayly provided a run down of the arguments Satan would employ to encourage despair, countering each with detailed spiritual meditations intended to re-awaken assurance. A typical example ran; 'If Satan shall aggravate unto thee the greatness, the multitude, and the heinousness of thy Sinnes; meditate...' Then followed a discussion of the redemptive power of repentance, backed up by examples of Christ's healing of the sick and the possessed.¹²⁰

The inverted catechism was not merely a literary conceit. It was intended to reflect the real nature of temptation as a divinely sanctioned test of godliness. As with the prayers against the Devil, the scriptures and doctrinal truths to which ministers pointed their audiences were not intended to have an inherent efficacy in driving Satan away. Instead they were to encourage their readers to engage with the message of divine mercy being mediated to them, and so build up an informed resistance to what would be a regular experience. In this context the dialogues, and by implication the learning of the ministry that produced them, provided an exemplary demonstration of the confidence with which demonological knowledge could be wielded against Satan by those of strong faith. Having dedicated his preface to documenting the terrible vulnerability of man, Thomas Becon allowed the responses of the Christian Knight to Satan's words to be pervaded by the smugness that so often characterised the 'teacher' in other Protestant dialogues. 'In this behalf I can easily set myself at liberty, and dispatch thy argument', summed up his approach to Satan's attacks.¹²¹

Ministers' pastoral duties often required them to mediate demonological understanding more directly to troubled parishioners. The relationship could be especially intense between ministers and the zealous godly. Notably, ministers were often required to offset the temptations that sometimes intruded on the sick-or death-bed. In 1601, one Edward Aspinwall ministered to Katherine Brettergh as she was dying, and 'comforted her at all times with apt places of the scripture, meeting with her temptations, and so put the sword of the spirit into her hand'.¹²² But whilst death-bed struggles may have been especially intense, they were representative of a broader and more consistent ministerial involvement in bolstering parishioners against temptation. The Barrington chaplain, James Harrison, exhorted Lady Barrington to develop a constant spiritual vigilance that would guard her against Satan, by remembering the tempting triumvirate and

¹²⁰ Bayly, *Practice of Piety*, p. 443.

¹²¹ Becon, *The Christen Knight*, pp. 627.

¹²² Anon., *A brief discourse of the Christian life and death, of Mistris Katherin Brettergh* (London, 1602), pp. 16-17.

that God would always be 'heareing our prayers, [and] strengthening us against temptations'.¹²³ The wife of the Oxford divine Robert Harris experienced temptations 'so fierce, so horrid, and withall so subtle that they put the ablest men to their wits to answer'. Through his contacts Harris enlisted the aid of sundry ministers 'experienced' in addressing others' temptations, and he himself was described as having 'satisfied many others'.¹²⁴

Ministers were expected, and willing, to evaluate others' temptations in line with the Protestant soteriological scheme. In order to refute 'uncharitable speeches', William Harrison noted in his funeral sermon for Katherine Brettergh that, 'the Devil most assaulteth them which be most godly, thinking to hinder all religion if he may prevaile'. Brettergh's case was later used by Robert Bolton as an exemplar in his highly successful *Instructions for a Right comforting afflicted consciences* (1631).¹²⁵ The Puritan, Elizabeth Wilkinson, prepared a narrative of her spiritual experiences in order to be admitted to Robert Harris' public assembly at Oxford. Harris was particularly impressed by the way in which Wilkinson's life seemed to exemplify the temptation of the godly. 'In Satan, thou seest his most ordinary way and method in tempting', he commented when he passed the narrative to a friend, God 'permitteth these Hellish Scullions to scour his Plate, and to fit the Vessels of Honour for their masters use'. We may assume he told Wilkinson much the same thing. Edmund Staunton, preaching Elizabeth's funeral sermon in December 1654, noted that 'the furious assaults of Satan' were her labours from which she was now at rest.¹²⁶

Mediation of demonological knowledge was understood to be a two-way process. Whilst ministers were leaders in the struggle with Satan, successful resistance could occur only with the active engagement of the individual. Some accounts betray the irritation ministers could experience at stubborn refusals to accept their assurances that temptation did not indicate damnation. Robert Harris unable to provide his wife with any comfort eventually lost his patience, exclaiming 'what an idol do some make of comfort, as if their comfort were their Christ!'¹²⁷ Similarly, one of the plethora of ministers on hand to comfort the tormented divine, Thomas Peacock, inflamed by his refusal to speak Christ's

¹²³ *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. A. Searle, Camden Fourth Series, vol. 28 (1983), pp. 74-75.

¹²⁴ William Durham, *The Life and Death of that Judicious Divine, and Accomplish'd Preacher, Robert Harris* (London, 1660), pp. 46-48.

¹²⁵ Harrison & Leygh, *Deaths advantage little regarded*, pp. 81-82; Bolton, *Instructions for a Right comforting afflicted consciences*, pp. 86-87.

¹²⁶ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, pp. 424-425; Edmund Staunton, *A Sermon preached at Great Maldon in the County of Oxford...at the funerall of...Elizabeth Wilkinson* (Oxford, 1659), p. 5.

¹²⁷ Durham, *The Life and Death of...Robert Harris*, p. 47.

name, declared 'if I had your tongue in my hand, I would make you speak'.¹²⁸ The Lancashire minister Henry Newcome was involved with a number of colleagues in the successful exorcism of a local girl. When however their intervention could bring the girl no further out her melancholy and idle state, Newcome began to suspect her of being a Quaker.¹²⁹

The reformation of clerical mediation also sheds new light on the history of possession in England. The debate over exorcism was one of the most heated of the reformation, reaching boiling point around the highly publicised activities of the minister John Darrell in the 1580s and 1590s. The 'Protestantisation' of exorcism has been characterised as a compromise born out of the continuing demands for spiritual healing being placed on ministers by their parishioners, and out of the challenge presented in this context by the exorcisms performed by Catholic priests.¹³⁰ But the enthusiasm of many Protestants for exorcism by prayer and fasting was surely more complex. Such methods were quite congruous with reformed demonism, despite the controversy they stirred up. That temptation and possession should be closely linked in Protestant demonology might seem an obvious point, but in the light of historians' concentration on the bizarre physical behaviour of demoniacs, it bears emphasising.¹³¹ Possession was a spiritual phenomenon that produced grotesque physical symptoms; it *was* temptation, albeit in an extreme form.¹³² Whilst the behaviour of demoniacs fascinated observers, it was the state of their souls which most interested the Protestant clergy. Satan's intrusion into the body commonly effected a profound disruption

¹²⁸ Bolton, *The Last Conflicts and Death of Mr Thomas Peacock*, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁹ Henry Newcome, *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, ed. R. Parkinson, Chetham Society, Old Series, XXVI (1852), p. 107.

¹³⁰ Catholic priests carried out exorcisms in Buckinghamshire and Middlesex in 1585-6 (to the concern of the Privy Council), they may have been involved in the Lancashire witch scare of 1612, and certainly took a part in the 'Boy of Bilson' possession case of 1622; see Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, pp. 43-49; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 194-195; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 576-580, 582-584, 586-588; MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria*, pp. xix-xxvi; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 417-418.

¹³¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 569-570; MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria*, pp. vii-lv, especially pp. xxxiv-xxxix; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 195-210. Whilst they have been justifiably reticent as to suggestions about what 'really' happened in possession cases, historians have tended to be interested in how its physical symptoms, such as swellings and convulsions, might be explained, and in the cultural and sociological meaning of possession as a phenomenon that disrupted household and community. As a result relatively little attention has been given to the spiritual meaning of possession as an example of the Devil's agency. J. A. Sharpe, calling for a dedicated book on possession, notes himself that future research will need to examine how the phenomenon connected with the theological concerns of Protestant intellectuals and the Church of England, see *ibid.*, p. 209.

¹³² Bishop Parkurst to Henrich Bullinger, 29 June, 1574, *Zurich Letters*, p. 303; Anon., *A Relation of a Young Woman posset with the Devill* (London, 1646), p. 2; Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 181.

of the victim's spiritual equilibrium, distracting him from religious observance and encouraging the conviction of damnation. Clerical commentators were unequivocal in their belief that these were the most dangerous consequences of possession. In 1574 the Bishop of Norwich, John Parkhurst described a local case of possession to Heinrich Bullinger, noting with relief of the victim that 'in all her temptations, however, and dilacerations, she continued steadfast in the faith, and withstood the adversary with more than manly fortitude'.¹³³

In this context, exorcism by prayer and fasting was an extension of the prescribed methods of resisting Satan. John Darrell denied that he was an exorcist at all, claiming 'he tooke uppon him no greater power...then was incident to any godlie minister...which only was to intreat the Lord...to dispossess the wicked spirit'.¹³⁴ Whilst his distinction was contentious, and became associated with Puritanism in the minds of men like Whitgift and Bancroft, it was congruous with a Protestant understanding which seems to have been widely held among both clergy and laity. The earliest pamphlet account of a possession case, Edward Nyndge's *A booke declaringe the fearefull vexasion of one Alexander Nyndge* (1573), described how Edward and a local curate led the prayers of a group of over twenty that delivered Alexander.¹³⁵ A particularly full account of the use of prayer and fasting was given by John Swan in his pamphlet on the Mary Glover case of 1602. On 16 December a group of 24 godly, led by six ministers, successfully exorcised Glover through fasting and prayer.¹³⁶ In Swan's narrative the exorcism was a textbook example of clerical mediation, in which the ministers provided the example of resistance, inspiring Glover to follow their lead. The exercise began at eight in the morning, and the ministers took turns to lead the proceedings with prayers and sermons until seven in the evening. Glover was given a Bible that she might look up the scriptures they referred to, and a woman was on hand to help her if her concentration lapsed. The texts selected advocated an utter reliance on God for deliverance; for instance Mr. Lewis preached on Psalm 50: 15 ('call upon me in the day of trouble, so will I deliver thee') followed by Mr Evans on Matthew 11: 28 ('come unto me all yee that are weary and laden, and I will ease you').¹³⁷ After several hours Glover began herself to pray, her voice becoming

¹³³ *Zurich Letters*, p. 303.

¹³⁴ *A Breife Narration of the possession, dispossession, and, repossession of William Somers* (? Amsterdam, 1598), p. 7.

¹³⁵ Edward Nyndge, *A Trve and fearefull vexation of one Alexander Nyndge* (London, 1616, 1st ed. 1573), sigs A3-B3, esp. sig. A4v; similarly a counterfeited case of possession in London in 1574 was exorcised by prayer and fasting, see *The Disclosing of a late counterfeyted possession by the devyl in two maydens within the Cittie of London* (London, 1574), sigs. A5, A5v.

¹³⁶ John Swan, *A Trve and Breife Report, of Mary Glovers Vexation, and of her deliuerance by the meanes of fasting and prayer* (London, 1603), p. 8 ff.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

progressively louder until she spoke over the minister. This was taken to be the decisive moment in the proceedings, when Glover took upon herself the responsibility for procuring her own deliverance.¹³⁸ Her prayers asked God to strengthen her and expressed trust in His mercy. Satan's discomfort was manifested by her falling into a fit after her prayers. The cycle was repeated twice until she was delivered after a final hour of frantic conflict between the ministers and Devil.¹³⁹

Thus when its spiritual aspects were highlighted, the scenario of possession and dispossession afforded the Protestant scheme of temptation and resistance a remarkable tangibility. Ministers and demoniacs who faced down the Devil provided dynamic examples of the courageous faith which could be produced by an intense internalisation of godly rhetoric. In this way anti-demonic activity contributed to the rebuilding of the kudos of the ministry on Protestantism's own terms, rather than simply as a reaction to the challenge of Catholic exorcism. Darrell's ministerial reputation, which earned him a position as preacher in Nottingham, was based upon his success with demoniacs, and, according to his supporters, his services were sought precisely because he used prayer and fasting in cases of possession.¹⁴⁰ In an atmosphere of enormous controversy in the wake of contested diagnoses presented at the witch-trial of Elizabeth Jackson, the family of Mary Glover seemingly specifically requested ministers to organise a day of fast in order to pray for her deliverance.¹⁴¹ Swan and his colleagues feared greatly for their careers if their identities became known but Bancroft's concern to tar these Puritans with the brush of popery surely reflected a fear of the Protestant support they might be expected to attract.¹⁴²

The ideal of interaction between minister and victim was consistently paralleled by a personal struggle between the clergy and Devil. Possession narratives often included elaborate debates between the minister and Devil which dramatised the inverted catechism presented in devotional works such as Becon's *Christen Knight*. Edward Nyndge, not a minister but an M. A., debated with Satan over the possibilities of salvation through repentance, and a similar debate

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 22-23; similarly see Nyndge *A True and fearfull vexation*, sigs. Bv-B2v.

¹³⁹ Swan, *A True and Breife Report*, pp. 28-47.

¹⁴⁰ *A Breife Narration of the possession...of William Somers*, p. 7.

¹⁴¹ The trial was extraordinary in its use, and rejection of the medical evidence of Edward Jorden and John Argent, who argued that Glover's symptoms had a natural origin, see MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria*, pp. xiv-xviii.

¹⁴² According to Swan the assembled ministers entered into an agreement to protect the identities of each other should any be examined, *A True and Breife Report, of Mary Glovers Vexation*, p. 53, 56; on Bancroft's campaign see MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria*, pp. xxii-xxvi

attended the exorcism of a law student by John Foxe in 1574.¹⁴³ One such story, included in Samuel Clarke's 'Godly Lives', concerned the minister Robert Balsom (d. 1647), who, during the Civil War, encountered a steward in Berwick who was 'very much weakened and worn out by the violence of temptation'.¹⁴⁴ Balsom diagnosed possession when his usual ministrations were unable to provide any comfort, and presently the Devil's voice sounded out of the steward's neck, challenging the minister's attempt to offer assurance. 'What dost thou talking to him of Promises, and free Grace?', Satan demanded, 'he is mine'. The two then debated the possibility of salvation for 'a notorious wicked wretch' like the steward, concentrating on whether sin in life could be taken as an indication of reprobation. Balsom never denied the possibility that the steward was damned, but since God's mercy might spare the greatest sinners, it was presumptuous of the Devil to lay claim to his soul. The didacticism of the confrontation for the observers (and readers) became more focused over the question of God's constraint of the Devil:

Satan. If God would let me loose upon you, I should find enough in the best of you, to make you all mine.

Balsom. But thou art bound Satan. And so turning himself to the people, with a smiling countenance, he said, what a gracious God have we, that suffers not Satan to have his will upon us?

Thus a learned minister might coax the Devil into admitting his fundamental impotency, providing a striking example to observers and readers of the veracity of the Protestant demonological scheme.¹⁴⁵

Whilst this anti-demonic role, unsurprisingly, found its most vocal support among Puritans and the zealous godly, there is evidence of its wider cultural influence. For instance, in 1621 the water-poet, John Taylor's pamphlet *The Vnnaturall Father* described the diabolically inspired murder of three children by their father, a fishmonger named John Rous. The Devil, so Taylor argued, was able to take control of Rous because of a lack of ministerial protection. Rous lived in the market town of Ewell, which, despite being only ten miles from London, and financially able to maintain a minister, 'hath no preacher nor pastor', but only a reader 'that is half blind, and by reason of his age can scarcely read'. 'And as the wolf is most bold with the sheep when there is either no shepherd or an impotent,

¹⁴³ Nyndge, *A true and Fearefull vexation*, sigs. A4-A4v; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 574-575.

¹⁴⁴ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 181.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

insufficient one', ran Taylor's verdict, 'the devil perhaps took his advantage of this wretched man, seeing he was so badly guarded and so weakly guided to withstand his force and malice, for where God is least known and called upon, there Satan hath most power and dominion'.¹⁴⁶ During the Civil War and the Interregnum these concerns became focused on the threat posed by the emergence of religious radicalism and lay preaching. Thomas Edwards, writing his famous *Gangræna* in 1646, identified a role for the ministry as a bulwark against the diabolic libertinism that had mushroomed during the conflict between King and parliament. 'Ministers...must not only build up, but also defend', he wrote, 'in time of Peace they must teach, and in the time of War they must fight with, and resist Satan and Hereticks'.¹⁴⁷ One of Edwards' correspondents, an 'S. F.', criticised an overly harsh ministerial attitude which, he claimed, sometimes left 'weak Christians' vulnerable to satanic influence through easy acceptance into the sects.¹⁴⁸ Quakers in particular attacked the ministry, a strategy which was commonly interpreted to be a deliberate effort to remove the community's defence against the Devil. An inability to tolerate godly books or preaching was often described as a symptom of Quaker witchcraft. John Gilpen, who described his bewitchment into Quakerism in *The Quakers Shaken: or, A Fire-brand snatch'd out of the Fire* (1653), commented that he was made 'afraid to reade any good Books, or heare any Preaching Minister'.¹⁴⁹ According to the heresiographer, Richard Blome, in 1654 a minister from Benefield near Durham was bewitched when he accompanied some friends to a Quaker meeting. When he rose to pray, the minister found he could not stand for trembling. In September 1659, Quakers in Sherborne in Dorset supposedly went even further. They bewitched to death the local minister, a Mr Lyford, and tormented his successor until they drove him out of the town.¹⁵⁰ These concerns appear to have been as much part of popular as the elite reaction to the emergence of the sect. A pamphlet of 1655, *Quakers are Inchanters and Dangerous Seducers*, reprinted three depositions given in Norfolk concerning the bewitching of one Mary White. As the evidence emerged a narrative was progressively consolidated in which White's horrified disruption of

¹⁴⁶ John Taylor, *The Vnnaturall Father: Or the cruell Murther committed by one Iohn Rowse of the Towne of Ewell* (London, 1621), sigs. B3v-B4.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Edwards, *Gangræna: or a catalogue...of the many Errours...and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries* (London, 1646), p. 154.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁹ John Gilpen, *The Quakers Shaken: or, a Fire-brand snatch'd out of the Fire* (Gateshead, 1653), p. 4-6, quote at p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ Richard Blome, *The Fanatick History, or An Exact Relation of the Old Anabaptists and New Quakers* (London, 1659), pp. 109, 118.



Quaker meetings she attended moved their leadership to take decisive action to silence her.¹⁵¹

By the time Samuel Clarke collected his *Godly Lives*, resistance to the Devil had become an important part of the image of a heroic Puritan ministry, proactively engaged in forcing Satan from the darkest corners of the land. One such figure included in Clarke's 'hagiography' was the Lancashire minister Richard Rothwell, who, like Balsom, debated the finer points of salvation with the Devil hidden in the body of a demoniac.¹⁵² A more edifying Puritan hero it seems it would have been hard to find. When Rothwell became minister at Barnard Castle, Lady Bowes expressed a fear that he might be troubled by the locals, who were of a 'fierce disposition...having never heard the gospell'. Rothwell was unfazed, replying, 'madam, if I thought I should never meet the Devil there, I would never come there; he and I have been at odds in other places, and I hope we shall not agree there'.¹⁵³

Conclusion

Protestant demonism emerged out of a subtle re-aligning of emphasis, rather than an overt process of reform. Their experiential sense of the Devil's power told Protestants that satanic agency was a constant of a Christian life, and they understood man's relationship with Satan to be defined by the fall of Adam. Hence considerations of soteriology were inherent in the Protestant understanding of demonism, which in turn conceived the Devil's agency as an attempt to subvert man's attempts to achieve a communion with God. It was not in storm-raising or physical appearances that this agency was most keenly felt, but in the apparent intrusion into the conscience of thoughts which contradicted the will to godliness. Hence temptation, which had long been enshrined as part of the Devil's remit, was elevated by Protestant theologians to the single most important aspect of his agency. Whilst they did not deny the Devil's power to manifest physically, it is striking that they virtually ignored the possibility in their theological and devotional works. Moreover they denounced the Catholic church's emphasis on conflicts with the Devil through artefacts and intercession as a distraction which drew attention from the real internal site of diabolic conflict. Protestant demonism aimed at a rigorous introspective engagement with the Devil in which his intrusions would be managed, through prayer and a sound soteriological

¹⁵¹ Anon., *Quakers are Inchanters and Dangerous Seducers* (London, 1655), passim.

¹⁵² Clarke, *Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 70; apart from the dates of Rothwell's life (1563-1627), Clarke gives no dates for the events he describes.

understanding, as a defining experience of a Christian life. This rationale lay behind the reform of the demonological aspects of the liturgy, and it offered the emerging professionalised ministry the opportunity to redefine a role for themselves as the mediators of resistance to Satan. This, at least, was the theory. We must now examine the influence of the reform of demonism within the religious, social and political culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

Part Two

The Experience of Temptation

Satan and the Godly in Early Modern England

How influential was this Protestant reworking of demonism? Did it effectively transcend the boundaries of academic theology to more broadly affect conceptions of the Devil and his agency? The following two chapters examine areas of culture which provide insights into the common experience of satanic agency in England after the Reformation. This chapter examines the place of the Devil in the lives of the self-conscious godly in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries.

It was Protestantism's aspiring godly who left the most detailed first-hand accounts of diabolic experience, and it was the Puritan sub-culture of introspection and spiritual autobiography that proved the most fertile ground for the distinctive emphasis on internal temptation. Records of the experience of temptation amongst the godly are relatively plentiful because sin and despair occupied such a central place in the discourse of spiritual autobiography.¹ The enormity of early sins served to contrast with post-conversion piety and to emphasise the escape from damnation provided by God's calling.² But this does not mean that narratives of temptation are stereotyped and cannot be read as 'real' accounts of diabolic affliction. Whilst the demands of spiritual autobiography shaped many accounts, individual voices emerge within the framework provided by the language of conduct literature. For the godly were not merely, as John Stachniewski implies, the unreflective recipients of someone else's demonism, prone to become victims to 'the darkness of Puritanism' when they were unable to measure up to the exaggerated demands of Calvinist devotion.³ Whilst reading and sermon-gadding provided them with the language to express their demonological beliefs, individual experience provided the emotional engagement which shaped their views of diabolic agency.

¹ Owen Watkins, *The Puritan Experience* (London, 1972), passim, esp. pp. 12-14; Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 27-84; Paul Delany, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1969), pp. 58-63, 89-93.

² John Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), passim; Sarah Davy, *Heaven Realiz'd* (1670); Hannah Allen, *Satan his Methods and malice Baffled* (1683).

³ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 44-45.

This chapter will examine the place of the Devil in the experiences of the godly, both in the private meditations, and in public, where shared experiences and clerical mediation contributed to the accommodation and interpretation of demonic activity within daily life. It will examine in detail a number of representative case studies of demonological experience provided in both the printed and unprinted writings of the godly. This experience of the Devil was far more widely differentiated than the historical emphasis on the darker psychological implications of predestinarian theology suggests. It might as readily provoke a determination to conquer Satan, or a resignation to patiently bear his assaults, as a suicidal despair. Whilst zealous Protestantism was a minority culture, it is our best illustration of the ways in which the Devil might find a place in people's everyday lives.

The Context of Demonism and Models of Temptation

The Devil was part of the everyday culture of the godly (broadly defined). Through reading and attending sermons they assimilated the language of diabolic affliction and of temptation. Both the sources from which they gained demonological knowledge, and the way in which they assimilated it, varied widely. Interest in the Devil was not symptomatic of obsession or mental instability, and one man's Devil was not the same as another man's. Sermons naturally provided much information. A surviving notebook kept between January 1601/2 and April 1603, by the Middle Temple law student, John Manningham, testifies to the regularity with which sermon-gadders could expect to be instructed with some form of demonological exposition.⁴ Religious books could also have a profound influence on individuals. The Puritan gentlewoman, Brilliana Harley, derived her knowledge of the Devil from John Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion*, and from William Perkins' *Cases of Conscience*.⁵ Another Puritan, Elizabeth Wilkinson, recorded a spiritual progression that was punctuated by the discovery of individual books which profoundly shaped her conception of herself. In her childhood she was thrown into a terrible fear of the Devil after reading Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Piety*, but she developed a more

⁴ John Manningham, *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple 1602-1603*, ed. R. P. Sorlien (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976).

⁵ Brilliana Harley, 'Commonplace book of Brilliana Conway, 1622', Nottingham University Library, Portand Mss., London Collection, fol. 170r, I should like to thank Jackie Eales for providing me with a copy of this manuscript. See also John Bunyan's encounter with Dent's *Plaine mans Pathway*, and Bayly's *Practice of Piety*, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 8.

sophisticated understanding of her relationship to Satan through encountering Calvin's *Institutes* and Henry Scudder's *The Christians Daily Walke in Securitie and Peace*.⁶ We have seen the role ministers adopted in mediating demonological knowledge to their parishioners. For many of the godly this became a vital point of contact for the interpretation of their demonological experiences. If Robert Harris' comments after Wilkinson's death reflect the nature of their relationship, it was primarily concerned with her experience of temptation and despair, and his ability to help her assimilate her troubles within a framework of election.⁷

Godly writings give evidence of an in-depth knowledge of the conventions of Protestant demonism, particularly the defining nature of man's corruption through the fall of Adam for his constant persecution by the Devil, and his reliance on God for protection. 'Sin and corruption conceived in the heart of man is the spawn of the devil', the Elizabethan gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, recorded in her meditations, noting that there was 'a seed of Satan by his suggestions unto man in all opportunities as wherin he findeth his weakness, he doth most willingly and diligently apply the same'.⁸ 'God by his Wisedome, / and all seeing Pow'r / ordained Man vnto Eternitie', wrote Alice Sutcliffe, the wife of an attendant to James I, 'Sathan through malice / turnes that sweet to sowre'.⁹ The gentlewoman, Anne Wheathill, wrote her own book of prayers in which she included those to be said during temptation. Their language was reminiscent of that which filled the reformed primers. 'O Lord preserue me, that I fall not into temptation', one example read, 'neither let me be as one of them that conteme thy word, falling from thee; but arme me with an inuincible strength and constancie'.¹⁰ The godly also assimilated the Devil's nomenclature of power and understood its significance. 'He is termed the Prince of the Are [air], and God of this world', Brilliana Harley noted in her commonplace book (1622), 'his power reacheth even to the spirit and soule of man, whereby he worketh in the children of disobedience'.¹¹ The Warwickshire Puritan, Katherine Clark described Satan thus: 'The Adversary who always stands at watch to insinuate and frame his

⁶ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, pp. 420-421.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

⁸ Grace Mildmay, 'Lady Mildmay's meditations' in *With faith and Physic: The life of a Tudor Gentlewoman*, ed. L. Pollock (London, 1993), p. 81; Mary Sidney Herbert, *A Discourse of Life and Death. Written in French by Ph. Mornay* (London, 1592), sigs. B-Bv, Cv; Alice Sutcliffe, *Meditations of Mans Mortalitie. Or, a way to true blessednesse* (London, 1634), pp. 161-163.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁰ Anne Wheathill, *A handfull of wholesome (though homelie) hearbs, gathered out of the goodlie garden of Gods most holie word* (London, 1584), fols. 9v-10, 13v-14; Pollock, *With faith and Physic*, p. 83; Richard Kilby, *The Borthen of a loaded conscience: or the miserie of sinne: Set forth by the confession of a miserable sinner* (Cambridge, 1608), pp. 23-25, 53-54.

¹¹ Brilliana Harley, *Commonplace book*, fol. 170r.

Temptations answerable to our Conditions, and like a Roaring Lyon walks about continually, seeking to devour poor, yet precious Souls'.¹²

But individual demonological knowledge and experience was also shaped by the interaction of personal spiritual imperatives and the context in which demonism was encountered or used. Whilst the godly accepted the role of the clergy and devotional works as mediators of demonological knowledge, they shaped what they heard and read in line with their own concerns. Thus there was enormous variation in the way in which the Devil found a significant place in individuals' contemplation, and in what shape he took within it. It is undeniable that, as the history of religious despair has shown, some of the godly could become obsessed with 'the dark side of Puritanism', and felt a paralysing fear of the Devil. But there was no inextricable link between the experience of temptation and such obsession. Many who felt Satan's presence profoundly assimilated the experience within the sense of themselves as (potential) members of the elect. They understood the role of sound soteriological knowledge in warding off temptation, and they found it as appropriate and powerful a weapon as those of the pre-reformed faith had found the intercession of the saints and angels. Their diaries and autobiographies attest to the desire to find edification in temptation, and we should not doubt that this was possible, or assume that Protestant demonism did not answer to a very real and meaningful experience of the godly. Without diminishing the distress caused by temptation, many were prepared to recognise a value in the experience, and accepted that it afforded them some measure of spiritual insight, into their own condition and God's intentions for humanity. Moreover, differentiation in the experience of temptation cannot simply be functionalised, as it is in Richard Godbeer's interpretation, as a barometer of godly self-confidence, with those of the strongest assurance least likely to abrogate the responsibility for sin onto the Devil.¹³ For the experience of temptation differed qualitatively as well as in intensity. As the godly measured their own experiences against the descriptions of temptation they read in devotional works, they found their own emphases, which enabled them to see the Devil, not as an inchoate generalisation onto which to project their sins, but as a tangible force which they had really encountered.

Protestant demonism bred the expectation of temptation, and consequently temptation came to dominate the demonological understanding of the godly, but within the scheme there was scope for a wide fluidity of expression and an eclectic personal demonism. Examples of this eclecticism are provided by two diaries

¹² Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, p. 161.

¹³ Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion*, pp. 93-106.

written by Middle Temple law students in the early decades of the seventeenth-century—Manningham's notebook of 1602-3, and the diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes the future member of the Long Parliament. Manningham recorded conversations and anecdotes, reports of contemporary events, his reading and his impressions of people he met, and described in detail the sermons he heard. On numerous occasions he made copious notes when a preacher gave a detailed exposition on some subject related to the Devil. Sometimes he was interested in a detailed demonological exposition¹⁴, but it was the moral aphorisms with which many preachers sought to enliven their sermons that seem to have particularly appealed to him. In early 1602 he recorded from Thomas Mountford, the prebend of Westminster, 'libellers are the Divels herauldes' and 'drunkennes is the divells birding synne; the drunkard like the stale that allures other to be taken like it selfe'. The same folio includes 'the love of the world is the Divels eldest sonne', a phrase heard from the Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, Andrew Downs.¹⁵ A reference to the Devil might also catch his eye in any number of books or ballads. In August 1602 he copied, with no attempt to retain the sense of the original, a number of statements from 'a letter written by way of dedication of Charles the 5th his instructions to his sonne Phillip'. They included a description of the deceitfulness of Satan—'the divel, like those painteres which are skilfull in the art of perspective, taketh pleasure, by false colours and decietful shadowes, to make those things seeme farthest of which are nerest hand (as death), and to abuse our nature with vayne hopes'.¹⁶ In part Manningham's interest was clearly literary. He was acquainted with the London literati and he knew well their culture of wit and repartee. Like others in his age, he enjoyed clever anecdotes and Rabelaisian humour, and his notes are full of stories and quips found in books and ballads, and in conversation. The Devil was one source of such entertainment, as in October 1602 when Manningham enjoyed the description in a ballad called *It is merry when Gossips meete* of 'the devils picture on your husbands browes'.¹⁷ Some jokes were far more pointed, and at the height of the controversy over the Puritan dispossession of Mary Glover he recorded a jest which ridiculed the pretensions of those spectators who hankered after combat with the Devil. A gentlewoman lost her purse whilst she joined the assembled in prayer. 'Not unlikely', observed another of the onlookers, 'for you forgott halfe your lesson:

¹⁴ As for instance at Paul's Cross in October 1602, when a Dr King, preacher at St Andrews in Holborn, repudiated Origen's opinion that Satan might eventually be saved, Manningham, *Diary*, pp. 103-4

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99; see also p. 122.

Christ bad you watch and pray, and you prayed onely; but if you had watched as you prayed, you might have kept your purse still'.¹⁸

But for all their pith and wit these aphorisms seem to have provided Manningham with a satisfyingly succinct expression of a Protestant morality to which he subscribed, and indeed consolidated a sense of the possibilities of temptation. At a sermon by an unnamed minister he heard, 'the divel puts synn in our thoughts as a theife thrustes a boy in at a windowe, to open the dore for the great ones', and from Dr Thomas Holland, Regious professor of Divinity at Oxford, he had this image, 'covetousnes is an Hydra with 7 heads; i.[e.], the Divel is the author of it; he tempted Christ with riches, when he shewed him...the glory of the world. The divel could make shewes; he is a cunning Juggler'.¹⁹ Whilst Manningham recorded no personal experience of diabolic affliction during his time at the Middle Temple, he was constantly aware of its potential, and found an appetite for demonological discussion well satisfied by his sermon-gadding and reading. London around 1602-3 may have encouraged a particularly fluid attitude to demonic power, for Manningham recorded, presumably with approval, both descriptions of the Devil's power of temptation, and sermons which disputed the reality of possession and exorcism by prayer in the wake of the Glover case.²⁰

An eclectic demonism is also evident in Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Middle Temple diary, kept in the early 1620s. The diary, which records both political events and his experiences as a student, contains four references to the Devil, each of a completely different nature. The first reference, dated 7 January 1621, is seemingly trivial, recording news of social events at court, related to D'Ewes by a friend. Surrounded by a group of courtiers including his son, Rutland, and Buckingham, James I had apparently observed that 'the divell on me if I know which I love best'. D'Ewes seems to have enjoyed the insight into court and saw nothing remarkable or threatening in his monarch swearing by the Devil, a sin which providential ballads and pamphlets would have their readers believe was likely to see the perpetrator torn apart by Satan himself.²¹ In September of the same year, however, D'Ewes recorded just such a providential appearance. A story was seemingly circulating to explain the storms that had wrecked most of the ships then docked at Plymouth. When a sailor had not been allowed to leave his ship he had threatened the crew that they would suffer for it, 'crying out

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 198, see also pp. 40, 66, 68.

²⁰ See the sermons of Henoeh Clapham, Thomas Holland and Giles Thompson, dean of Windsor, Ibid., pp. 185, 198, 211; on the organization of this sermonizing program see MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London*, p. xxiii.

²¹ D'Ewes, *Diary 1622-1624*, p. 57.

“looke see you not the divell where he standeth?“. After being tied up below decks he suddenly reappeared, and, telling them they would have been better to let him go, jumped overboard. He was followed by the Devil in his common guise as a black dog. Immediately the storm blew up which destroyed the ships and killed the best part of their crews. Again D'Ewes recorded the story without comment.²²

But again interest in wider demonological experience was balanced with a personal awareness, and experience of temptation. As with many of the godly D'Ewes engaged in self-examination as a preparation to receive the sacrament, sometimes extending the process over a period of days. In May 1623 his conscience was troubled by thoughts he attributed to the Devil. His earliest exercise on the morning of the 11th was to examine his conscience, but ‘alas, such was my weaknes and soe powerfull my roving thoughts, through Sathans suggestion that I could not receave the due comferte I hoped for’. The experience does not seem to have troubled him overmuch (in the end he could only hope that God would accept his good intentions) and, significantly, no indication is given that he considered this invasion of the Devil unusual.²³

* * *

In some cases the demonological knowledge derived from sermons and devotional literature, mixed with the experience, or the expectation of temptation, allowed the godly to draw up a personal blueprint of diabolic operation and how it might be countered. The writings of three women demonstrate the ways in which the demonological content of sermons, books and conversations could be assimilated into an individual picture of diabolic activity. Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Joscelyn both wrote godly instructions to be passed on to their children, and Brilliana Harley kept a commonplace book before she was married in which she described theoretically the Devil's assaults. All three were writing around the same time (c.1616-1622), and each considered herself a representative member of the godly. But each produced a subtly different picture of Satan's agency.

In 1616 Dorothy Leigh penned *The Mothers Blessing*, spiritual advice, gleaned from experience, left for the edification of her children. For Leigh the Devil was a profoundly powerful agent, who enveloped men in a web of temptation. But her writing also expressed a deep sense of the power offered by the experience, if it could be turned against the Devil. In her scheme, introspection was not a symptom of masochistic self-accusation, but a pragmatic response to a known threat. She had internalised the assumption that, whilst all men were vulnerable

²² Ibid., pp. 95-96.

²³ Ibid., p. 135.

to all sins, Satan honed his temptations to the particular corruption of the individual. Thus she employed the familiar image of the soul besieged by a tempting army. To each individual one sin was the 'Captain' which, if admitted 'will let in a great number of enemies'.²⁴ By extension the defeat of the 'captain' would leave the tempting army impotent. Every individual then must fathom out his own chief sin, and focus his resistance to temptation upon it. Once this spiritual watershed had been passed 'the Devil will have no cause to laugh in his face'.²⁵

This pragmatism coloured her whole demonological outlook, providing a qualification to both easy assurance and despair. She attempted to instil in her children a cautious distrust of spiritual peace, since it was preferable to be beset by great temptations than to be led 'quietly to hell'. At the same time her pragmatism sought to ensure that the sense of the Devil's power was not overwhelming. Inherent in temptation was the opportunity to vanquish the Devil, which only the godly were in a position to exploit.²⁶ 'The Devil is a cunning Fowler', she noted, 'he will never lay a great bait, where he knows a little one will serue the turn', and so long as a man's attention is distracted from God, he will leave them in relative peace.²⁷ But far stronger means were needed to overcome the godly, and soteriological knowledge showed up the paradox in the Devil's strategy. By focusing great temptations on individuals he allowed them an implicit acknowledgement of their election. Furthermore, by accentuating the experience of temptation, he made individual chief sins more readily discernible, and so gave the people most able to resist his power the means by which they might do so. Thus, for Leigh, temptation offered the godly a means by which they might forge their own discernible spiritual progression, but only if they engaged fully with the experience.

Elizabeth Joscelyn, who died in childbirth in 1622, left behind a similar set of instructions for her child, which were published two years later. *The Mother's Legacy to her vnborn Childe* predicted that conflict with Satan would form an integral part of the child's life. Elizabeth knew how enormously powerful the Devil was, and that temptation might constantly beset the most godly.²⁸ As with Leigh, Joscelyn saw soteriological awareness as the means to resistance, but in

²⁴ Dorothy Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing. Or, the...Counsell of a Gentlewoman,...left behind for her children* (London, 1663, 1st ed., 1616), p. 135.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-140; this was of course a conventional understanding of the relationship between the Devil and the godly.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-140.

²⁸ Elizabeth Joscelyn, *A Mothers Legacie To her vnborne Childe* (London, 1622), pp. 16-20, 61-62, 83-86.

contrast her scheme allowed for no watershed victory over Satan, instead she sought to instil an introspective discipline that might make his assaults manageable.

Elizabeth wished to ensure that her child's life was characterised by a confidence in the mercy of God, and this relied on an assimilation of a sense of human weakness into a meditative cycle which allowed the experience of temptation to be interpreted. The first thoughts of the godly every day should concern the malice of the Devil and 'thine owne weakness'. But, unusually, Elizabeth defined weakness very specifically as the inability to constantly maintain the vigilance necessary to guard against Satan, not the spiritual corruption brought about by the fall. 'Thine owne weaknesse is apparent to thee', she told her child, for when he was asleep 'thine eies were closed, thou couldst not see to defend thy selfe, thy strength was gone'.²⁹ Insensibility, therefore, equalled weakness, and the sleeping man was unable to resist an attack by the smallest insect. The mind that was not turned to God left itself open to the influence of the Devil, unavoidable in sleep, but not to be endured whilst awake. 'Be assured', Elizabeth warned, 'if thou once yeeld to neglect praying to God, but one halfe houre, when [temptation] comes thou shalt be far more vnapt, and thy heart more dull to pray than before'.³⁰

When the mind was thus vulnerable the Devil would introduce sinful thoughts and temptations, most commonly attempting to accentuate weakness by enticing men to abandon their observances. 'The deuils malice is easily percieued', Elizabeth noted, 'for euen now he lies lurking ready to catch euery good motion from thy heart, suggesting things more delightful to thy fancy, and perswading thee to deferre thy seruice of God though but for a little while'.³¹ So dangerous was this vulnerability to the well-being of the soul, that the first task of the godly upon waking should be to examine their minds and flush out any thoughts that the Devil had placed there whilst they slept. This assault of the Devil upon the insensible mind was to teach a vital lesson, for it should be clear that the individual emerged unscathed against the odds. 'How do you thinke you were preserued from his snares while you slept?', Elizabeth asked, 'or doe you thinke that he onely besets you when you are awake?' Satan was not 'so faire an enemy', and would take advantage of sleep to 'teare your body and drag your soul to hell' if he could. Only the power of God constrained him, and it was vital

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³¹ Ibid., p. 17.

that the individual acknowledged this fact. 'Now you must needs confesse who it is that is only able to preserue you', Elizabeth instructed her child, 'that it is God'.³²

By the time she had finished describing the diabolic assault on the mind, Elizabeth had effectively sidelined the emphasis on weakness that had been central to her argument. In spite of his weakness, every morning her child awoke free of temptation was a testament to the care of God, and he could not help but understand that, as long as he maintained his faith, the odds were stacked in his favour. Elizabeth hoped that this understanding would instil in her child the gratitude that would inspire his godliness. Recognising how much he owed to God, he should 'gather to yourselfe a strong resolution with all your force to serue him all the day, and to resist all the tentations of the deuill'.³³

The personal aspects of these demonological models are apparent and significant. For if both Leigh and Joscelyn believed that preparing their children for the experience of temptation was fundamental to their upbringing, neither accepted the stark disciplinarian conventions of the Puritan household manual. In Puritan families soteriological concerns were supposed to shape much of the severe code of household discipline, which sought to overcome the handicap presented by the fact that children were conceived in sin. Household manuals stressed the evil wilfulness inherent in children and the importance of rigorous parental discipline in, literally, exorcising it.³⁴ John Stachniewski has highlighted the way in which such codes might encourage the brutalisation of children, who were subjected to beatings in order to drive out Satan.³⁵ But Elizabeth Joscelyn clearly found the notion that her new-born infant might be infused with sin difficult to countenance, however closely the well-being of his soul might bear watching in future. Children, she accepted, were as likely as adults to become the servants of the Devil, but this was not because they were inherently corrupt, but because they were vessels waiting to be filled, either with godliness or diabolism. Thus Elizabeth saw the early years of life not as an attempt to reign in the sinful nature with which the child was born, but as a race between godliness and the Devil to occupy the central place in the child's development. So she advised her unborn child to 'beginnest to remember to serue God when thou art young, before the world, the flesh, and the deuill take hold on thee'.³⁶ Whilst Leigh was more prepared to accept the notion of natural corruption and pervasive sin, she

³² Ibid., p. 19-20.

³³ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁴ John Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 144-145.

³⁵ See Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 96-99; and above pp. 18.

³⁶ Joscelyn, *A Mothers Legacie*, pp. 12-13. It seems reasonable to suspect also, that in allowing a natural sentimentality to overturn the stark moral rhetoric of the household manuals, Joscelyn may have been far from unique.

implicitly rejected the logic of Puritan disciplinarianism. Sin must be defeated, and progress could only take place by encountering temptation, engaging with it and understanding it. Her's was not an indulgent attitude to childhood temptation, but it challenged the validity of using harsh punishments to simply stifle the Devil's influence. Thus the godly were able to shape their demonism in line with a personal agenda. Both Leigh and Joscelin were highly conversant with Protestant demonism, but they drew their models from their own experience and from their individual sense of their parental role.

Other models were produced, not from the experience of temptation, but from the expectation of it. The commonplace book (1622) kept by the gentlewoman Lady Brilliana Harley before she was married revolved almost entirely around the question of predestination and how the elect might discern the symptoms of their grace. In line with this agenda she drew up a blueprint of temptation, heavily influenced by William Perkins' *Cases of Conscience*, that would allow her to judge whether her reaction to demonic assault was consistent with election. Her commonplace book was put together as a reference work, with subject headings organising the transcriptions and observations for easy access, and amongst 'of the knowledge of God', 'of the decrees of God', 'of the soul' and 'of repentance' are pages dedicated to 'of the power of Satan' and 'of affliction'.³⁷ Here she collected extracts and observations that would help her discern the symptoms of temptation and the godliness of her response.

As we have seen, Brilliana employed the standard Protestant rhetorical device of the Devil's nomenclature of power to emphasise his strength. But this was of more personal than cosmic significance to the godly, who were incredibly weak in the face of a being whose 'power is above the might of any Man or creature that is not of an evengellicall natur as himself'.³⁸ This understanding should define the godly response to temptation. Mankind had no 'warrant' to attempt to overcome the Devil, since unaided 'no defense or strength of man is abel to withstand him'. It was arrogant folly to put oneself in 'needless danger', believing one's faith to be 'so strong the diuell can not touch [you]'.³⁹ 'Wher houses is anoyed with Evill Spirits', Brilliana quoted from Perkins, 'man must not consort together and abide there, where it is certainly known that the Lord has giuen the diuell Power and Liberty'.⁴⁰

³⁷ Brilliana Harley, *Commonplace book*, fols. 1r-2r, 6r, 94v, 150r, 170r, 157r; on Brilliana's use of her commonplace book to put together a guide to the signs of election see Jackie Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: the Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil war* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 49-52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 170r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, fols. 170r, 157r.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 170r; Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*, in *Works*, II, pp. 38-39.

For Brilliana, the godly response to temptation was characterised by understanding the subtle balance in which diabolic power was held. Despite his power, God would never allow the Devil 'inlarged to the destruction of his children'. Those who sought conflict with Satan demonstrated a recklessness with their souls and a faithlessness in God. The correct response to affliction was to 'flee', but flight in this context is metaphorical. The afflicted must 'fly to God by prayer'—again from Perkins—abdicating their responsibility for overcoming Satan to God, who will either deliver them from temptation or give them the patience to bear it.⁴¹ Thus Brilliana's emphasis advocated passivity in response to temptation, there was none of the talk of 'struggling' with the Devil that filled so many accounts of affliction. But this did not mean that she saw the godly as fundamentally passive. Passivity in the face of the Devil is not a last resort, a final reliance on blind hope. Rather it was an indication that the individual had assimilated and correctly interpreted the realities of the position of man in relation to God and the Devil. For Brilliana the godly reaction to the Devil was the *informed* reaction to the Devil, and such a grasp of the finer points of faith was likely to be an indication of election.

The writings of these women share two important features. Firstly although their demonism does not step outside the conventions of Protestant theology and rhetoric, it is obvious that it was the result of reading and deliberation. None accepted the entirety of the conduct literature's picture of Satan, instead they were selective, choosing to highlight aspects that they found especially relevant or plausible. Each assigned the Devil a significant and discrete role in their lives, rather than simply assimilating the concept into a generalised piety. Brilliana Harley expected to be tempted, and more important than the need to overcome temptation was that her response to it should be consistent with election. For Elizabeth Joscelyn temptation was a constant presence, which she felt invigorated her piety by ensuring that it did not become staid and complacent. Dorothy Leigh saw temptation as a means to a discernible spiritual progression by which weakness might be overcome by self-knowledge. Secondly it is notable that, for all the power they ascribed to Satan, none expected to be overwhelmed by him. All would have accepted that in theory this was possible, but their writings were entirely lacking in any sense that temptation constituted a final battle in which the fate of their souls would be decided. Correspondingly they did not expect to gain an outright victory, and so their concern was to make temptation manageable.

⁴¹ Harley, *Commonplace book*, fol. 170r; Perkins, *Cases of Conscience*, p. 39.

Cyclical Affliction and Spiritual Progression: the Experience and Rationalisation of Temptation

If this was the context in which the godly developed their understanding of temptation, what do their writings tell us about the experience itself? Temptation could potentially strike at any age, but some of the godly claimed that their first encounters with the Devil had come in childhood. Richard Kilby noted that through his child's ignorance of the faith 'the Devill had leisure to take full possession of my heart'. He 'deepely seasoned me with sinne, that I have continued sinnefull ever since'.⁴² The Puritan Elizabeth Wilkinson was tormented by a diabolic temptation to doubt her election when, at the age of twelve, she read Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety*.⁴³ The Baptist, Sarah Davy, was around the same age when she was tempted by the Devil, first into security and then to doubt her election.⁴⁴ John Bunyan was even younger when he had a similar experience. His earliest memories were of a life characterised by a struggle between an inherently sinful nature and a profound fear of damnation, and this pattern was well established before he had reached his tenth year.⁴⁵ How far children understood the theological niceties of temptation is difficult to assess. Some may have been genuinely precocious, aware of the spiritual test provided by the Devil's agency, or at least able to convince adults that they were. The minister's daughter Mary Walker, apparently 'told one of the Maids that the Devil tempted her to Play at Prayers; but she had pray'd against him, and that he did not trouble her so much since'.⁴⁶ But if it was more common for the Devil's influence to be identified later through hindsight, the experience of conflict with spiritual demands made on children, and perhaps also made by the children on themselves, was genuine.

It was more typical for significant periods of temptation to take hold in later adolescence or early adulthood. The Puritan Katherine Clark, whose life provided an exemplar in Samuel Clarke's *Godly Lives*, encountered the Devil at fifteen, who 'assaulted her with many, and various temptations'. Another of Clarke's subjects, Mary Gunter, was in 'her young and tender years' when she was tempted by Satan to commit suicide.⁴⁷ Nehemiah Wallington was twenty when he began a protracted period of despair, in which, he later remembered, he was

⁴² Kilby, *The Burthen of a Loaded Conscience*, p. 1.

⁴³ Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 420.

⁴⁴ Sarah Davy, *Heaven realiz'd, or The Holy pleasure of daily intimate Communion with God, Exemplified In a blessed Soul, now in Heave, Mrs. Sarah Davy* (London, 1670), pp. 8-11.

⁴⁵ Bunyan, *Grace abounding*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720* (London, 1996), p. 76.

⁴⁷ Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent persons*, pp. 136.

assaulted with 'eleven sore temptations of Satan'.⁴⁸ The future Quaker leader, George Fox, was the same age when, in 1644, he was first tempted to despair, and 'when Satan could not effect his design upon me that way, then he laid some snares for me and baits to draw me to commit some sin'.⁴⁹ It is, of course, unsurprising that many of the godly should have experienced their first temptations at the point at which they presumably became aware of the attractions of sex, drink or dancing—those activities so often damned from the pulpit as the embodiment of youthful sin and reprobation.⁵⁰ Certainly Wallington's experience of despair was particularly intense when he considered how far he was given over to lust.⁵¹ But adolescent temptation was accentuated by a tendency to become obsessed with the absolutes of Protestant soteriology. Reading the promises to the elect, and convincing themselves they were not among them, many of the aspiring godly felt a profound sense of exclusion when they considered the blessings that were given to other members of their communities, but not to them. So the Devil did not merely appear to tempt them into sin. He found his most powerful characterisation as a jeering tormentor, who constantly reminded them of their reprobation and undermined by his sophistry any assurance they might find.

The long term continuance of affliction is highly significant and has not been addressed by historians, who have generally been interested in pre-conversion despair.⁵² Adulthood tended to see the continuance of temptations which began much earlier. Again Nehemiah Wallington, whose afflictions extended well into his forties, provides a good example.⁵³ Hannah Allen remembered in 1683 that she had been tempted in her childhood, but her greatest troubles came when she became melancholy at the long absence, and eventually the death, of her husband, when 'the Devil had the more advantage' of her condition.⁵⁴ As we have already seen, even those who had gained assurance expected to be consistently tested by post-conversion temptation. The blueprints left by Brilliana Harley, Elizabeth Joscelyn and Dorothy Leigh, provide an insight into a regular diabolic assault that, once assimilated into a regime of godly observance, somewhat fell from view in the conversion narratives and 'godly lives'.

* * *

What was the subjective experience of temptation? In the twentieth-century we have come to understand it as a short, sharp desire for something forbidden. The

⁴⁸ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. J. L. Nickalls (Cambridge, 1952), p. 4.

⁵⁰ Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, pp. 224-226.

⁵¹ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 21, 23, 25-26.

⁵² Watkins, *The Puritan Experience*, pp. 9-15.

⁵³ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Hannah Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled*, pp. 7-8.

early modern godly recognised that experience too, but they understood it to be a symptom of a fundamental, long-term condition of life. For them, temptation's defining characteristic was a lack of control over mind and will. Thus rather than desire *per se* it was the impulse to any attitude or action which was spiritually damaging. Convictions of damnation and salvation might equally be temptations of the Devil, and in godly accounts they were perhaps more prevalent than desire. For many temptation was a chronic condition, lasting months or even years. A childhood infraction apparently plunged Sarah Wight into despair for four years.⁵⁵ If at certain moments the godly found themselves tempted to specific sins, these were peaks in a more generalised temptation, rather than discrete experiences in themselves.

Forces beyond the individual's control might sometimes manifest themselves externally. In 1579 the Windsor gentleman, Richard Galis described his sufferings under 'diabolicall tyranny' at the hands of a local coven of witches.⁵⁶ Whilst not recognisable as spiritual autobiography, Galis' narrative subsumed its details of witchcraft within a Protestant framework which made his personal conflict with the Devil its overriding concern. Wracked with illness, and believing the Devil had visited him in the night disguised as a cat, Galis resorted to his prayer book and bible in the first of his many attempts to take control of his situation. His sense of identity as a member of the beleaguered godly provided a rationale for his suffering and a focus for his resistance, as in prayer he found himself 'utterly from the bottome of my hart detesting and hauing in defiaunce all the crue of deuilish Enchaunters, whereof England at thus day dooth abounde'.⁵⁷ Yet having established an immunity from bewitchment by a sheer act of pious will, Galis found that the Devil and his witches 'stirred up others to be their cruel ministers'. His efforts to apprehend the witches were frustrated rather than supported by the Mayor and magistracy, and he was at one point chained in prison.⁵⁸ Whilst he

⁵⁵ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 99.

⁵⁶ Richard Galis, *A Brief Treatise conteyning the most strange and horrible crueltye of Elizabeth Stile alias Bockingham and hir confederates executed at Abingdon upon Richard Galis* (London, 1579), sig. A3. I would like to thank Marion Gibson for bringing the survival of this unusual pamphlet to my attention (it is commonly recorded as lost in bibliographies of witch texts), and for numerous discussions of it. The pamphlet was a response to the publication of *A Rehearsall both straung and true, of hainus and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham...* (1579).

⁵⁷ Galis, *A Brief Treatise*, sig. A4-B.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, sigs. B3-B3v. The reasons for Galis' imprisonment are not clear, but this and other episodes suggest that his mental state was considered dangerous, and with justification. In the wake of magisterial intransigence, he decided to burn one of the witches, Mother Dutton, alive in her house. When the house would not catch fire, Galis hit upon a cunning plan in which he attempted to set fire to the house next door in the hope it would spread. Whilst Galis' mental state might be suspect, it, like that of Nehemiah Wallington, does not automatically cast doubt on the veracity of his assimilation of his conflicts with Satan with his self-identification as a zealous Protestant. See *ibid.*, sig. D.

maintained a conceptual framework of providence and Job-like endurance, his efforts to assert control grew increasingly violent, culminating in the attempted murder of one witch, and a physical confrontation with Satan in which he 'let flye with my sword, saying auoide Sathan auoyde'.⁵⁹ The notion of envelopment by affliction found a focus in Protestant conceptions of the antithesis between ministry and satanic obstruction, especially in disputes over conformity. Thomas Gataker noted of William Bradshaw that in the 1590s Satan had moved jealous ministers to denounce him to the bishop of Rochester as a nonconformist.⁶⁰ Similarly it was remembered of Herbert Palmer, lecturer at Canterbury from 1626-1629, that he considered his failure to attain a prebendary at the Cathedral a deliverance from the 'many temptations and dangers' that would envelope the post in its subsequent responsibility for seeing through Archbishop Laud's innovations.⁶¹ Samuel Clarke, who collected a number of these stories, was keenly aware of Satan's attempts to undermine his own ministry. From his earliest preaching, as assistant to the parson of Thornton in Cheshire in the early 1620s, his Puritanism caused him to be denounced to one authority after another. This he interpreted as being 'dogg'd by Sathan', who 'raised up instruments' throughout his career to obstruct him, and kept other godly ministers silent to complete his isolation.⁶²

Whilst external affliction fed, and was fed by the godly's sense of persecution, temptation as a lack of control was most commonly recognised as an internal experience. In 1584, the Protestant Gentlewoman, Anne Wheathill, published a collection of forty-nine prayers, entitled *A handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs*. The emphasis on internal affliction was paramount, as she asked that she 'fall not into temptation' and be given 'faith to fight against the diuell, and all his false suggestions'.⁶³ But it is the relative lack of direct references to Satan that reveal what the experience of temptation was for Wheathill. For she preferred to focus on the consequences of temptation for her relationship with God, experiencing the Devil as an inchoate, but very real barrier to spiritual communion. 'My heart is...variable, and separated from thee', she prayed against Satan, 'joine my soule and bodie to thee O God'.⁶⁴ In her autobiography sent to Robert Harris at Oxford, Elizabeth Wilkinson described the experience of temptation as the sheer uncontrollability of thoughts introduced into her mind. 'I

⁵⁹ Ibid., sig. C4v.

⁶⁰ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines*, p. 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁶² Clarke, *The Lives Of sundry Eminent Persons*, pp. 3-4, 5, 6, 7

⁶³ Anne Wheathill, *A handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs*, fols. 9v-10, 12v-13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., fols. 10v-11; Kilby, *The Burthen of a loaded conscience*, pp. 17-23.

was sensible that it was a fearefull sinn to have any such thoughts to lodge in my brest', she noted, 'I desired my soul to be freed from them, and had continual reasonings within me against them, and yet still for a long time I was troubled'.⁶⁵ As one 'J. M.' described in a collection of godly experiences published by Samuel Petto (1654),

I would have beleaved but could not; I would have put away thoughts of temptation but could not: the temptation grew stronger and stronger, my heart was broken by reason of sorrow; yet for a time, marvellously kept up to strive; I saw I could not hold out, and was ready to yeeld, and give over the combat.⁶⁶

'Satan', wrote the Warwickshire Puritan, Katherine Clark, 'took his advantage (through my Ignorance of his devices) to raise up fears, doubts, and terrors of Conscience in me..., and by reason herof I hand no Peace, nor rest in my Soul, Night nor Day'.⁶⁷ John Bunyan described carnal temptation as a voice inside him which coaxed him to 'Sell Christ for this, or sell Christ for that'.⁶⁸ He could not 'look on this or that', but the diabolic words would run through his thoughts 'not so little as hundred times together' and 'as fast as a man could speak'.⁶⁹ The sheer effort of holding back this wave of sinful thoughts could be overwhelming. 'For whole hours together I have been forced to stand as continually leaning and forcing my spirit against it', Bunyan recorded, 'that by the very force of my mind in labouring to gainsay and resist this wickedness my very Body also would be put into action or motion, by way of pushing or thrusting with my hands or elbows, still answering, as fast as the destroyer said, Sell him; I will not, I will not, I will not'.⁷⁰ With so much at stake and so little time, Satan's barrier to communion could intrude most viciously on the death-bed. Dying in 1601, Katherine Brettergh was thrown into panic by the Devil's interruption of her devotions. She believed Satan's intrusion had produced a dislocation in her mind between what she might objectively desire and what she could subjectively believe. When asked if she believed the promises of God she replied, 'O that I could, I would willingly, but he will not let me'.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 421.

⁶⁶ 'Experiences of J. M.', in Samuel Petto, *Roses from Sharon. Or sweet experiences gathered up by some precious hearts* (1654), quoted in Watkins, *Puritan Experience*, p. 14.

⁶⁷ Clarke, *The Lives Of Sundry Eminent Persons*, p. 153.

⁶⁸ Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁷¹ *A Briefe discovrse of the Christian life and death, or Mistris Katherin Brettergh*, pp. 13-15.

Whilst the godly were prone to temptations to carnal sin⁷², it was intrusive thoughts concerning their spiritual estate which most exercised their introspection. The Protestant introspective scheme surely did encourage what Dr Stachniewski has described as masochistic 'one-downsmanship', in which the godly vied with each other to be the most damned.⁷³ Yet this, and less indulgent self-criticism, was born out of a very real experience which gave temptation an especial tangibility. Despite the time and energy devoted to discovering the signs of grace, discerning whether they were present, and regulating all behaviour to be consistent with election, doubts still commonly intruded on the minds of those who genuinely felt an affinity with the word of God. The sheer perversity of the experience lent force to the contention that the conscience was being subverted from the inside. Whilst many came to recognise their temptations as diabolic in retrospect, we should not doubt the reality of the experience of dislocation between pious desire and accusing conscience, and that its effect could be profound.⁷⁴

Thus the convert, Mary Gunter, found her early Protestant aspirations undermined by an inescapable belief that in her Catholicism she had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and 'so incessantly, and violently did [Satan] pursue her in this Temptation, that she was brought to believe that it was impossible that this sin should, or could be pardoned.'⁷⁵ Satan persuaded Katherine Clark that 'all the threatenings contained in the Book of God against the Wicked and ungodly men did belong unto me...Insomuch as when I took up the Bible to read therein, it was accompanied with much fear and trembling; Yet being convinced that it was my Duty frequently to read Gods Word, I durst not omit, or neglect it'.⁷⁶ Even those most prepared to meet the Devil's assaults could be thrown aback by the inescapability of convictions of reprobation. Robert Bolton reported of the suffering divine Thomas Peacock that, 'his tender conscience was goared with the fiery darts of the Deuil'. 'As through a false glasse', he noted, 'the dazled eye of his astonished and amazed soul, could see nothing but hideously appearing sinne, and the terrible image of death and damnation'.⁷⁷ Richard Baxter expressed the imposing sense of perversity inherent in the experience of doubt/temptation,

⁷² For example see Lady Grace Mildmay's meditations in Pollock, *With Faith and Physic*, p. 81; Kilby, *The Burthen of a loaded conscience*, pp. 31, 35, 61, 74; Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p. 7; Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, A Seventeenth-Century Clergyman* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 178.

⁷³ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 40-41.

⁷⁴ Robert Bolton, *Instructions for a Right comforting afflicted consciences*, pp. 81-83.

⁷⁵ Clarke, *The Lives Of sundry Eminent Persons*, p. 136.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁷⁷ Robert Bolton, *The last conflicts and death of Mr Thomas Peacock*, pp. 7-9, quote at p. 8.

in the storm of...Temptation, I questioned a while whether I were indeed a Christian or an Infidel, and whether faith could consist such doubts as I was conscious of: For I had read in many Papists and Protestants, that Faith had Certainty, and was more than an opinion...⁷⁸

Worse thoughts still might intrude on the conscience, perhaps the most disturbing of all being thoughts of atheism. The Devil attempted to confound Mary Gunter by 'injecting multitudes of blasphemous thoughts into her head. For now she must believe that there is no God: That the sacred Scriptures are not the Word of God, but a humane policy to keep men in order'.⁷⁹ It was a source of 'terror' to Elizabeth Wilkinson that she found herself entertaining atheism. Preaching her funeral sermon, Edmund Staunton encouraged the congregation to take comfort in the fact that she would no longer suffer the '*injection of Atheisticall, or Blasphemous thoughts*'.⁸⁰ The clergy themselves were perhaps the most vulnerable, since their learning provided a more insidious cover for Satan's perversity. The ministry held new dangers for Richard Baxter as he was 'now assaulted with more pernicious temptations; especially to question the certain truth of the sacred scriptures; and also the life to come, and the Immortality of the Soul.' Their most frightening aspect, however, was that they did not assault him 'with horrid vexing Importunity; but by Pretence of sober Reason'.⁸¹

Experience of the physical Devil, or the fear of his appearance, was widespread amongst sufferers of temptation. But it was invariably a symptom of temptation *in extremis*. Nehemiah Wallington's belief that Satan had disguised himself as his father's maid was a rare example of the physical Devil being conceived of as a tempter. Sometimes temptation could be so forceful that it was a near-physical experience. The mathematician and geographer, Richard Norwood, described Satan's assaults thus:

sometimes he seemed to lean on my back or arms or shoulder, sometimes hanging on my cloak or gown. Sometimes it seemed in my feeling as if he had stricked me in sundry places, sometimes as it were handling my heart and working withal a winderful hardness therein...Also in bed somtimes pressing, sometimes creeping to and fro, sometimes ready

⁷⁸ Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Clarke, *The Lives Of sundry Eminent Persons*, pp. 136-137.

⁸⁰ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines*, p. 421; Edmund Staunton, *A sermon preached at Great Milton* (1659), p. 5, my emphasis.

⁸¹ Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, p. 21.

to take away my breath, sometimes lifting up the bed, sometimes the pillow, sometimes pulling the clothes or striking on the bed or on the pillow.⁸²

'In prayer', John Bunyan wrote in *Grace Abounding*, 'I have thought I should see the Devil, nay, thought I have felt him behind me pull my cloaths'.⁸³ But for the most part it was the fear of his appearance as God's hangman that dominated the Protestant sense of his physicality. 'M. K.', contributing to the 1652 collection *Spirituell Experiences of Sundry Beleevers*, described how she believed Satan had come to take her when her dog startled her by jumping on her bed.⁸⁴ On several occasions Hannah Allen believed she had encountered God's hangman, who taunted her with her reprobation. 'I heard like the voice of two young men singing in the yard, over against my chamber', she remembered of one encounter, 'which I said were devils in the likeness of men, singing for joy that they had overcome me.'⁸⁵ Thus fear of the physical Devil was bred by the supposed certainty of reprobation.⁸⁶ But it is striking that, as these reminiscences were assimilated into a progressive narrative for spiritual autobiography, the reality of Satan's physical manifestation was often challenged implicitly. Whilst the reality of his intrusion into the mind was accepted absolutely, the perception of his physical presence was taken to be a symptom of the effect of his persuasions on the conscience. His sophistry had convinced his victims of their impending damnation and so they waited for him to carry them to hell. But the end of spiritual autobiography was assurance of election, a position that made any appearance of God's hangman impossible, and which in turn may have cast doubt over the likelihood of his appearance as a physical tempter. Thus Bunyan described how in his distraction he 'thought' he felt the Devil. 'M. K.' screamed in terror, but then 'perceived it was a dog and not the Devill'. Similarly, all of Hannah Allen's encounters were cases of mistaken identity, being men talking in the street or the lights of a neighbour's house. Thus the logic of Protestant soteriology supported the perception of the internal temptation, but tended to undermine sufferers' confidence in the reality of his physical manifestations.

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Whilst experiences of temptation could be profound, we should be wary of automatically interpreting them as a symptom of the lonely obsession that

⁸² Quoted in Delany, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 61.

⁸³ Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 34.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Watkins, *Puritan Experience*, p. 45.

⁸⁵ Allan, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ Laurence Clarkson, *The Lost Sheep Found: or, The Prodigal returned to his Fathers house* (London, 1660), pp. 6-7.

characterised the lives of sufferers like Nehemiah Wallington. Temptation was cyclical, oscillating in strength and threat, and assimilated as one discernible, discrete experience in the canvas of a godly life. The diary of Lady Margaret Hoby demonstrates how routine temptation could be. Margaret wished to set down her adherence to a personal godly regime, and her diary is an uncluttered record of her daily observances. As she attended church or examined her conscience, so sometimes she found herself afflicted by diabolic temptations, as her entries for the early summer of 1602 reveal. On 6 May she recorded that she was thankful that God kept her in good health but that he had ‘suffered satan to afflictie my mind’. The Devil did not find her unprepared, since she knew God offered her an opportunity to demonstrate her faith by placing all her hopes of deliverance in Him. Her next entry on the 20th summarised events since the 6th, and seemingly God had provided ‘comfort euerie way’ and Satan was not mentioned. Only three entries were made for June, and in the final entry, dated Sunday 27th, she summarised the past week. Satan had ‘not ceased to cast his malice’ upon her health, although she was well. But the Devil had also afflicted her mind. ‘Temptations hath exercised me’, she recorded, ‘and it hath pleased my god to deliuer me from all’. An obscure entry of two weeks later—‘this day...I was provoked to be disquiated’—hinted at some form of temptation, and in her next entry, after a further week, Satan was uppermost in her thoughts. Notably, whilst at church, Margaret suspected that she felt the early signs of a coming diabolic assault, and her diary offered her an opportunity to prepare for it. ‘This day I hard the exercises and now, as though Satan would returne, I felte his buffets: but I know God will make them profitable to me’. By the end of the month temptation had certainly come upon her and she recorded on Sunday 1 August that she had to ‘suffer satans buffetts so that I hard not the morninge exercise so frutfully as I ought’.⁸⁷

Often Lady Hoby made a conscious effort to point out the routine nature of these temptations. On the 26 August 1599 she felt Satan attempting to distract her in church, but, although the experience merited attention, it reflected only how constantly she was in the Devil’s sights. She noted, ‘this day, *as euer*, the diuell laboreth to hinder the profittable hearing of the word and callinge vpon god’.⁸⁸ She also felt her experience of temptation was sufficiently wide that she might know it at a moment, as when, in a seemingly commonplace occurrence, she recognised Satan tempting her to anger—‘after priuat prairs I went about, and had

⁸⁷ Margaret Hoby, *The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605*, ed. D. M. Meads (London, 1930), pp. 197-199.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66, my emphasis.

occasion to chide, which I ever take to be a buffitt of satans Malice'.⁸⁹ When discussing her experiences she was characteristically taciturn, only occasionally revealing what form these temptations might have taken. Even in these instances, the nature of the temptation was of less significance than the fact that, by God's help, it was overcome. A representative example is recorded in the margin next to the entry for the 19 February 1601. She wrote, 'this day the diuell would have brought me in to question the truth of gods word which by the certefecate of godes spiritt in my hart wch had heretofore wrought in the same was soon vanquished'. The entries dealing with the temptations of the summer of 1602 were not so much records of the onset of temptation, but records of the fact of deliverance. Margaret made an entry when she was able to thank God for having delivered her, and only once did she write in the midst of a temptation. After August the Devil fell from view and Margaret did not mention temptation again. But having been released from a period of intermittent temptation of at least three months, there is no indication that she viewed the period as a watershed, or felt she had received any extraordinary assurance or insight as a result of having overcome the Devil. It was simply part of the experience of godliness, useful in providing a chance to experience God's benign providence, but no more than that.

* * *

When writing their books on afflicted consciences, Protestant divines like Thomas Becon, William Perkins and Lewis Bayly had recognised the experience of competing thoughts, and characterised it as a dialogue with Satan within the soul. The godly assimilated the notion, not simply because it was part of Protestant rhetoric, but because it accorded with their real experience. Thus many perceived very forcefully a dialogue within their conscience as they attempted to stifle unwelcome thoughts. Understanding the origins of the thoughts that appeared in their consciences allowed the godly to identify Satan's voice 'tangibly' within them. The Baptist, Sarah Davy, described temptation thus: 'the Devil would be ready to tell me that it was not my part, I was too apt to catch at children's bread and think that my own [salvation] which did not belong to me', and 'he would often persuade me I was a hypocrite, and that I was fallen from grace'.⁹⁰ Similarly, Hannah Allen described Satan's intrusions to her aunt, noting, 'I am just as if two were fighting within me'.⁹¹ The Kendal man, John Gilpin, produced a remarkable description of his experience of the Devil speaking within him in an account of his

⁸⁹ Ibid., 27 October, 1601, p. 190.

⁹⁰ Davy, *Heaven Realiz'd*, pp. 8, 9.

⁹¹ Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled*, p. 8.

bewitchment into Quakerism in 1653.⁹² Satanic intrusion provided an explanation of the 'light within' which Quakers claimed to experience. Gilpin described how, after falling in with a group of Quakers, he heard 'a voyce within me saying, *It is day*; whereupon looking up, and perceiving it to be day, I answered, *Yes*; the Voyce replied twice over to me, and said, *As certain as it is light, so certainly shall Christ give thee light*'.⁹³ This voice continued to persuade Gilpin that he was elect, but he was constantly beset with doubts as to 'whether it was really good, or I were under Satans delusions'. Each time he became convinced the voice belonged to the Devil, another replaced it telling him '*it was Satan that had possest and led me heretofore, but now Christ was come*'.⁹⁴ Gilpin experienced a variety of temptations to antinomianism, suicide and despair at the instigation of the voice until he was finally delivered by true repentance.⁹⁵

The identification of the satanic voice allowed the experience of temptation to be interpreted and rationalised into a dialogue, and offered the possibility of dispelling the confusion wrought on the conscience by intrusive thoughts. Sarah Davy characterised the Devil as an evil guardian angel, who constantly pestered her with questions to undermine her assurance. His suggestions made her 'soul walk heavily under much dispute a long time', and he was always on hand to 'rob' her of the benefit of 'many a sermon'.⁹⁶ Similarly, Hannah Allen perceived her temptations as a contest over the bible, in which Satan laboured to destroy any comfort she might gain from scripture. In response she kept a record of her afflictions, allowing her dialogue with Satan to take place on paper. On the 12 May 1664 she wrote, 'the Devil tempts me woefully to hard and strange thoughts of my dear Lord which, through his mercy, I dread and abhor the assenting to', and she composed an 'earnest prayer' imploring God to strengthen her. 'This I write to see what God will do with me', she concluded.⁹⁷ When her writings became the focal point of her temptations, the Devil attempted to undermine them. 'I never intended any eye should see them', she explained when she showed them to her aunt, 'but the Devil suggesteth dreadful things to me against God, and that I am a hypocrite'.⁹⁸ On occasion Hannah and her relatives played out the dialogue themselves, with Hannah, unsurprisingly, taking the Devil's part.

⁹² John Gilpin, *The Quakers Shaken: or, A Fire-brand snatch'd out of the Fire* (1653). Although part of the polemical campaign against the Quaker sect, Gilpin's pamphlet is a work of spiritual autobiography, which devotes the majority of its account to his spiritual experiences rather than to the activities of the Quakers.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6, original italics.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12, 14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹⁶ Davy, *Heaven realiz'd*, p. 8.

⁹⁷ Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled*, pp. 17-18.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Her aunt challenged her identification of the 'devils' singing outside her room, explaining that God never sent a miracle to show damnation. Allen simply appropriated a favoured argument of the Devil and declared that her reprobation was unparalleled.⁹⁹

But in contrast to the picture of victimisation offered by the historians of afflicted conscience, the sense of the dialogue with the Devil might also be a source of strength for the tempted and those who watched over them. For it could dispel the tyranny intrusive thoughts exercised over the conscience by identifying lines of defence and counter argument. Thrown into a panic by the demonic obstruction of her death-bed devotions, Katherine Brettergh's sense of dialogue provided her with something to cling to since it allowed her to exercise some control over her thoughts by *publicly* withdrawing from the conflict. It was remembered 'she said: Satan reason not with me, I am but a weake woman, if thou haue anything to say, say it to my Christ, he is my aduocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall pleade for mee'.¹⁰⁰ Hannah Allen's mother was far less sympathetic to her troubles than her aunt, but even she found it politic to enter into the logic of her spiritual debate. Once, when Hannah was 'wearying' her mother with claims that she was dying, the two made an agreement that if she died during the night her mother would believe that she had been damned. As they watched through the early hours they heard a loud knock on the chamber door, which Hannah took to be the arrival of Satan, saying, 'You see, mother, though I died not tonight, the Devil came to let you know that I am damned'. But her mother beat her at her own game, replying, 'but you see he had no power to come into the chamber'.¹⁰¹

Philip Stubbes' account of his wife Katherine's dying combat with the Devil is suggestive of the theatre which could surround such public expressions of the dialogue. The Devil was on hand to obstruct her final devotions, and the onlookers knew of his approach by the change on Katherine's face. Suddenly she 'bent the browes, shee frowned, and looking (as it were) with an angry, sterne, and fierce countenance, as though she sawe some filthy, uggesome and displeasent thing'. She then burst into a lengthy tirade in which she tormented the Devil, turning the dialogue on its head. She repeated the temptations he offered, for the benefit of those watching, prefacing them with 'how now Satan?' and 'what sayest thou more, Satan?', before demolishing them by claiming her assurance of election had made her 'bold' enough to treat him with disdain. Understanding

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁰ *A brief discourse of the Christian life and death, of Mistris Katherine Brettergh*, pp. 13-15.

¹⁰¹ Allen, *Satan his Method and Malice Baffled*, pp. 29-30.

that sin was a trial that beset the godly only in the world, she pursued the logic and took the unusual step of bequeathing to Satan the sins which she no longer needed since her dissolution was near. Since it was Satan who had first provided her with sin, its return was to effect a dramatic public severance of any relationship with the Devil, who was left with no alternative but to 'runne away like a beaten cocke', as she told the onlookers.¹⁰²

In spiritual autobiographies, temptation, and victories over it, demarcated discrete stages in the subject's progression towards assurance. The dialogue with the Devil served to rehearse the arguments for salvation, and with each temptation overcome Satan had to employ more complex sophistries to meet his victim's growing soteriological sophistication. Thus Elizabeth Wilkinson characterised her afflictions as a progressive battle between intrusive thoughts of reprobation and a progressive discovery of comforting scriptures. Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* produced in twelve-year-old Wilkinson an intense fear of damnation, unsurprising given that it opens with a vivid description of the 'fullnesse of cursednesse' experienced by the reprobate after death.¹⁰³ Her fear of hell defined her entire early response to religion, which she characterised as a simplistic desire for safety intruding on her mind to tempt her selfishness.¹⁰⁴ At the height of these troubles Wilkinson encountered Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion*, or rather, as she later interpreted it, she was providentially guided to the book by God. His reassurance that even fallen man retained enough of God's image to redress his more general corruption provided 'such satisfaction' to Wilkinson, that her original temptations never returned.¹⁰⁵ But now she began to believe that in originally discounting God's mercy she had committed the one sin of faithlessness that would guarantee her damnation. Again the source of this ironic self-sabotage was located in an internal intrusion, and again providence provided a book in which she might find assurance, this time Henry Scudder's *The Christian's Daily Walke in Holy Securitie and Peace*. In the book she found a systematic description of atheism and was able to satisfy her mind that she exhibited none of 'the marks of that sin'.¹⁰⁶ Although she experienced no final

¹⁰² Philip Stubbes, *A Christal Glasse for Christian Women* (London, 1592), sigs. C2v-C3v.

¹⁰³ Damnation was to be spent as an eternity in 'the bottomlesse lake of utter darknesse' in which the condemned would 'always weepe for the paine of the fire, and yet gnash [their] teeth for the extremity of the cold', Bayly, *The Practice of Piety*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁰⁴ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, pp. 420-421; similarly see Laurence Clarkson's exposure to *The Practise of Piety*, in *The Lost Sheep Found*, p. 5; and John Bunyan's early wish that he could be a devil so that he 'might be rather a tormentor, then tormented', *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 421.

¹⁰⁶ Stachniewski describes Scudder's *The Christians Daily Walke in Securitie and Peace* as 'deceptively titled', noting that Michael Wigglesworth recorded in his diary that by reading the

assurance, this progressive cycle of despair and assurance continued throughout Wilkinson's life.

Similarly Sarah Davy's spiritual progression was embodied in the changing nature of her temptations, and her responses to them. She overcame her initial troubles by familiarising herself with the promises of scripture, and the assurances of afflicted conscience literature, finding convincing retorts to all the Devil's arguments that she must be damned. In doing so she ceased to be a bewildered novice, and was now armed against Satan with the insight of her reading. Immediately Satan altered his tactics and tried to deceive her into complacency. 'How had the Devil changed his note', she recollected, 'and told my proud heart my state was now good and my graces were much increased, for which I ought to be much esteemed'. So for a while Davy was content only to exhibit the outward signs of election, anything that would win her the praise of the godly. The change in the Devil's tone was noteworthy in itself, but more significant was the way in which Davy's succumbing to it reflected on her spiritual development. The insight she had gained by her reading had been demonstrably wasted, and whilst falling prey to Satan's suggestions might be understandable in a novice, it was a serious failing in one who had already experienced God's deliverance. 'Oh wicked wretch', Davy chastised herself, 'that after so much love should dare to be so careless as to let Satan steal away my heart'.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps no text exhibits a more profound sense of temptation as a progressive dialogue than John Bunyan's *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Hindsight in the text was not simply a literary technique, it was the exercise of a godly understanding that, in its ability to reassess past experiences, demonstrated its sophistication and maturity. Bunyan characterised his troubles as a constant renewal of temptation every time he was able to progress spiritually. In *Grace abounding* the Devil is afforded far greater characterisation than is common in spiritual autobiographies. The voice of Satan in Bunyan's mind was gloating and arrogant, attempting to intimidate with past triumphs,

the Tempter hath come upon me also with such discouragements as these: You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you; this frame shall not last alwayes; many have been as hot as you for a spirt, but I have quench'd their Zeal (and with this such and such who were fallen off, would be set before mine eyes) then I should be afraid that I should do so too:

book he became convinced that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost. But Wilkinson's reaction demonstrates how different individuals' readings of the same godly text could be, and that lengthy descriptions of the symptoms of sin were as likely to convince the aspiring godly of their innocence as their guilt. Again we should be wary of presenting the lay response to conduct literature as monolithic. See *The Persecutory Imagination*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷ Davy, *Heaven Realiz'd*, p. 11.

but, thought I, I am glad this comes into my minde; well, I will watch and take heed what I can: Though you do, said Satan, I shall be too hard for you, I will cool you insensibly, by degrees, by little and little; what care I, saith he, though I be seven years in chilling your heart, if I can do it at last; continual rocking will lull a crying Child asleep; I will ply it close, but I will have my end accomplished: though you be burning hot at present, yet, if I can pull you from this fire, I shall have you cold before long.¹⁰⁸

The Devil's character changed to overcome any progression in Bunyan's spiritual sophistication. Thus it was a Satan as realist who tempted Bunyan to accept Ranter doctrine as a means to make his reprobation more bearable. Since Bunyan was damned anyway he might as well believe with the Ranters that there was no Judgement Day:

For if these things should indeed be true, yet to believe otherwise, would yield you ease for the present. If you must perish, never torment yourself so much beforehand, drive the thoughts of damning out of your mind, by possessing your mind some such conclusions that Atheists and Ranters use to help themselves withal.¹⁰⁹

This greater characterisation allowed Bunyan's debates with the Devil to be made more dynamic, and they argued, not only over the general question of election, but also over the finer points of scripture. The centrality of the bible in providing the soteriological truths by which the Devil might be countered also made it the most dangerous site of conflict. For if providence might guide a sufferer to a comforting scripture, Satan might lead him to a promise of damnation. In *Grace abounding* the Devil commonly transforms himself into an angel of light, forcing Bunyan to remember or pay special attention to specific texts which could undermine assurance. One such text that gave Bunyan trouble was Romans 9: 16—'it is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy'—which he noted 'did seem to me to trample upon all my desires' by showing that the mere practice of godliness could not guarantee salvation. The Devil was on hand to encourage his despair:

O Lord, thought I, what if I should not [be saved] indeed? It may be you are not, said the Tempter: it may be so indeed, thought I. Why then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if indeed you should not be Elected and chosen of God, there is

¹⁰⁸ Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

no talke of your being saved: For it is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.¹¹⁰

The effect of this scripture was to drive Bunyan to his 'wits end', and his torment was accentuated by the fact that he did not at that time realise it was the Devil who assaulted him. 'I little thought that Satan had thus assaulted me', he noted, 'but rather that it was my own prudence thus to start the question'.¹¹¹

Once Bunyan was able to discern the Devil's temptations the struggle over scripture became less one-sided. He recalled John 6: 37.—'and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'—as one of the most enduringly comforting scriptures he encountered, but described the great efforts Satan went to to undermine it. The words 'in no wise', Bunyan took to mean that no sin was unpardonable, but he noted 'Satan would greatly labour to pull this promise from me, telling of me, that Christ did not mean me, and such as I, but sinners of a lower rank'.¹¹² 'If ever Satan and I did strive for any word of God in all my life', Bunyan remembered, 'it was for this good word of Christ; he at one end and I at the other. Oh, what work we did make! It was for this in John, I say, that we did so tug and strive: he pull'd and I pull'd; but, God be praised, I got the better of him, I got some sweetness from it'.¹¹³ His developed spiritual awareness allowed him to see in retrospect the fundamental weakness of the Devil's case:

And this I well remember still, that of all the sleights that Satan used to take this Scripture from me, yet never did so much as put this Question, But do you come aright? And I have thought the reason was, because he thought I knew full well what comming a-right was; for I saw that to come aright was to come as I was, a vile and ungodly sinner, and to cast myself at the feet of Mercy, condemning myself for sin...

Satan, who had once seemed an omniscient biblical scholar, able to devastate assurance with a few well chosen quotes, was now revealed as only a talented disputant, selectively employing those scriptures which most readily supported his case and skirting around those he knew to confound his arguments.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 67.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

Diabolic Affliction and Godly Community

If experiences of diabolic intrusion were intensely personal, how did they affect the wider community of the godly? John Stachniewski has argued that Puritan self-victimisation left sufferers marginalised within a community which emphasised the restricted nature of election, and the absolute applicability of reprobation. Indeed many of the struggling godly did experience an intense isolation among those whose assurance they were unable to share. Often the belief that temptation equalled reprobation produced a fear that the godly would ostracise them should their condition become known. Elizabeth Wilkinson remembered that in her earliest temptations she could not bring herself to reveal her condition to others because 'I did not think that it was so with any other as it was with me'. Although Katherine Clark was a member of a godly congregation, and gained some comfort from sermons during her adolescent afflictions, there were no others that she felt she could consult as to her temptations. Sarah Davy, who would become a Baptist, was isolated outside her godly community, noting, 'there was few I was acquainted with whom I could in the least have any converse with in the whole town, thus did I labour to keep my troubles to myself'.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Stachniewski argues, godly ministers and laity were more likely to be on hand to confirm self-accusations of reprobation than dispute them. Sons of thunder like William Perkins and Richard Rogers could apparently inspire terror in their audiences when they preached of the terrible fate awaiting the damned.¹¹⁶

But whilst such fears were real, they may have been overly pessimistic and other evidence provides a balance to the picture of isolation. Sir Simonds D'Ewes recorded in his Middle Temple diary that he had spent one evening in January 1624 in the company of a Dr Haltern, 'an ancient lawyer'. 'Wee had much good discourse about the temptations of the devil', D'Ewes recorded, 'and how strangle a gentleman of the Middle Temple had been afflicted'. Whilst D'Ewes goes into no further detail, the conversation took place several months after he had recorded that he had been assaulted by Satan, and we might speculate that he discussed his own experiences.¹¹⁷ Moreover temptation might be seen by others to grant its sufferers an esoteric insight into the workings of the spirit. John Bunyan's conversion was the result of overhearing a conversation between 'three or four poor women' who expressed a faith which he was simply unable to comprehend. In fact the woman discussed their deliverance from temptation,

¹¹⁵ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines*, p. 420; *The Lives of sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age*, p. 152; Davy, *Heaven Realiz'd*, pp. 8-9, quote at p. 9.

¹¹⁶ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, p. 86.

¹¹⁷ D'Ewes, *Diary 1622-1624*, p. 178.

they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the Devil; moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptation of Satan in particular, and told each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults.

Here is a picture of a group of people with a common understanding of diabolic activity, able to differentiate between specific temptations, and sharing their experiences under the assumption of mutual identification. It was Bunyan who felt isolated, not at this point by temptation, but by the belief he had not been afflicted.¹¹⁸

The belief that temptation had rewards in esoteric insight provides a significant challenge to Stachniewski's picture of the suffering godly's isolation. We have seen that Protestant ministers re-established their spiritual authority in part by mediating the resistance to the Devil to their parishioners. But the experiences of the victims themselves might equally influence ministers and help shape their understanding of the soteriological significance of temptation. Robert Harris, who was credited with comforting many afflicted consciences, was particularly affected by his encounter with Elizabeth Wilkinson, who prepared a spiritual narrative of her life in order to take communion at his public assembly at Oxford. As far as Harris was concerned Wilkinson's troubles only demonstrated her especial godliness, but he was particularly impressed by the way in which her life embodied progressive temptation. After her death he forwarded the narrative to a friend with a covering letter explaining its significance, in particular in illustrating Satan's changing temptations:

His first attempt is to blow out all the light of the soul, and to quell all thoughts of a deity if possibly he can...if that cannot be, but the Conscience will be sometimes talking; then his next work is to question and argue the case, whether indeed there be such a person as God, such a thing as the soul...and if he cannot gain such a conclusion from the soul, then in the third place his question is, what manner a one this supposed God is? And first, whilst thou art under mercy, all of vengence and fury; there was no place for fear, and here is none for hope: there sin was an inconsiderable thing, and beneath Gods conscience; here sin is unpardonable, and beyond Gods mercy: In both estates he labours the destruction of faith; now in threats, then in promises.

¹¹⁸ Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, pp. 14-15.

'Thus the Deuil, up and down', Harris concluded.¹¹⁹ To arm themselves with a fore-knowledge of Satan's temptations the aspiring godly could do little better than consult Wilkinson's narrative, for 'though sometimes he shifts his hands and findes out new wayes yet here lies his road for the most part'.¹²⁰

Harris also noted of Wilkinson's long-term illness that she 'was yearly dying before she dyed her last'. Her sickness had allowed her to prepare for a godly death which would be an active victory over Satan.¹²¹ This points to another area in which deeply personal struggles with the Devil could have a profound effect on the wider godly community. Accounts of death-bed experiences were produced in large numbers, with the edifying words of dying saints avidly recorded. Indeed the transitional stage between life and death seems to have been viewed as a period of special insight in which impending dissolution brought the dying closer to the knowledge of God.¹²² It might also give force to the experience of diabolic conflict. Ralph Houlbrooke has suggested that spiritual crises during last sickness were relatively rare, but the medieval *ars moriendi* tradition predicted that the dying would be assaulted by Satan, a prediction that was maintained in the guides written by Thomas Becon and William Perkins.¹²³ Protestantism had done away with the common *ars moriendi* image of the death-bed conflict as a battle between demons and angels with the dying looking passively on.¹²⁴ The responsibility for overcoming the last temptation was shifted onto the individual and the heightened spiritual insight of the death-bed scene gave struggles with Satan a greater significance for the wider community.

The physical intensity of death-bed temptations imbued diabolic struggle with a tangibility for the observers that may have reinforced the soteriological significance of affliction in their own minds. The reformer, John Knox, lay for several hours 'very often giving great sighes, sobbes, and groans, so as the standers by well perceived that he was troubled with some grievous temptation'. He explained to those present that, as a final twist in their progressive life-long battle, the 'wily serpent' had tempted him to assurance, in order to overcome his

¹¹⁹ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-two English Divines* (London, 1677), pp. 424-425.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

¹²² Houlbrooke, 'The Puritan Death-bed, c. 1560-c. 1660', in Durston & Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism*, pp. 139-140; A similar assumption lent force to the didactic moralizing of penitent criminals as they spoke from the scaffold and warned of the consequences of sin, whilst in witchcraft accounts the identification of the witch by a dying victim was accorded special weight. See J. A. Sharpe, '"Last Dying Speeches": Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth Century England', *Past and Present*, 107 (1985), pp. 150-154.

¹²³ Houlbrooke, 'The Puritan Death-bed, pp. 124-125, 135; William Perkins, *Salve for a Sicke Man. Or, a treatise containing the nature, differences and kindes of death*, in *Works*, I, pp. 492-493.

¹²⁴ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313-327.

vigilance at the last minute. Recalling appropriate scriptures had allowed him to resist the Devil, a deliverance he abjectly attributed to God's providence.¹²⁵ In 1644, Julines Herring was assaulted by Satan the night before he died: 'as was perceived by those who were then with him; for rising upon his knees, with his hands lifted up, he spake these words: He is ouercome, ouercome, through the strength of my Lord'. Similarly John Dod spent his last days expounding scripture to those who attended on him, and 'spake to one that watched with him all night, about two of the Clock in the morning, that he had been wrestling with Satan all that night, who accused him that he neither preached, nor prayed, nor performed any duty as he should have done, for manner or for end, but he said, I haue answered him from the example of the prodigal and the publican'.¹²⁶ As we have already seen in the cases of Katherine Stubbes and Katherine Brettergh, the edification derived from public death-bed conflicts with Satan was not confined to the ministry.

Thus whilst Protestant demonism in general emphasised the commonplace nature of demonic temptation, the introspective culture of the godly allowed it to be seen as a rarefied experience for those of tender conscience, which carried with it an inherent sophistication of spiritual insight. Richard Baxter described how, as his spiritual sophistication increased, he was able to make use of the opportunities offered by temptation. 'Though formerly I was wont', he remembered, 'when any such Temptation came, to cast it aside, as fitter to be abhorred than considered of, yet now...I was fain to dig to the very Foundations, and seriously Examine the reasons of Christianity, and give hearing to all that could be said against it, that so my Faith might indeed be my own'.¹²⁷ It was surely this understanding that motivated the godly to record their experiences of the Devil in diaries and private (unpublished) autobiographies. As Dr Stachniewski himself has shown in his identification of Puritan 'one-downsmanship', even the intense perception of reprobation was understood to be a rarefied spiritual experience by those who suffered it.¹²⁸ Many of the godly saw their deliverance from temptation as setting them apart from those who had experienced no such special grace. Margaret Corbet apparently used to declare that, 'I was in the Deuils claws, but Jesus Christ, the sweet Bridegroom of my soul...hath deliuered me'. Even during periods of affliction some sufferers showed an awareness of the esoteric nature of temptation in their dealings with other godly, and it could arm them against others' assessments of their reprobation. In pointing to the lack of sympathy among the

¹²⁵ William Perkins, *Salve for a Sicke Man*, p. 514.

¹²⁶ Clarke, *The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines*, pp. 168, 178.

¹²⁷ Baxter, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, p. 22.

¹²⁸ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 40-41.

assured godly, Stachniewski cites the experience of Bunyan who, when he plucked up the courage to tell 'an ancient Christian' that he believed he had sinned against the Holy Ghost, received the answer that 'he thought so too'.¹²⁹ But Stachniewski ignores Bunyan's final verdict on the ancient Christian, who he concluded was 'though a good man, a stranger to much Combate with the Devil'. However they might have liked to present themselves, those who were untroubled by Satan were not necessarily believed to have a monopoly of insight into election, and Bunyan finally decided to discount a judgement not based on experience.¹³⁰

Finally, another of Bunyan's experiences provides a significant sidelight on the place of demonic experience within the culture of the godly community. Perhaps uniquely, Bunyan hinted at the potential dangers of the vigilance that was so often argued to be the best defence against temptation. Resisting temptation involved cultivating a profound sense of distrust in the origins of one's own thoughts that could, according to Bunyan, be disastrously misplaced on occasion. Once, he remembered, when 'ready to sink with fear, suddenly there was as there had rushed in at the window, the noise of Wind upon me'. In this wind he heard a voice, with which he conversed in exactly the same way as he had debated with the Devil. The voice questioned him,

*Didst ever refuse to be justified by the Blood of Christ? and withal my whole life of profession past, was in a moment opened to me, wherein I was made to see, that designedly I had not; so my heart answered groaningly No. Then fell with power that word of God upon me, See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, Heb. 12. 25. This made strange seisure upon my spirit; it brought light with it, and commanded a silence in my heart of all those tumultuous thoughts that before did use, like hell-hounds, to roar and bellow, and make a hideous noise within me.*¹³¹

But although Bunyan experienced comfort as a result of this voice he could not accept it at face value. 'As to my determining about this strange dispensation', he recalls, 'what it was I knew not; from whence it came, I knew not. I have not in twenty years time been able to able to make a Judgement of it'. Bunyan's implication, however, was that he believed the experience to be another deceit of the Devil, and he noted 'I thought then what here I should be loath to speak'. He was reluctant to recall his thoughts because he had since decided the voice was a

¹²⁹ Stachniewski gives a detailed, but over-played, description of isolation in Bunyan's *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, see *ibid.*, pp. 133-136.

¹³⁰ Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 55; Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 134-5.

¹³¹ Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, p. 53.

message from God. But he concluded with an equivocation, 'that rushing Wind, was as if an Angel had come upon me; but both it and the Salvation I will leave until the Day of Judgement'.¹³² Thus over-vigilance might lead to the sin of faithlessness, but the paradox was born out of the relatively un-contentious nature of demonic experience within godly culture. When looking for signs of election and rarefied spiritual experience, the perception of the Devil's agency was unproblematic compared with the dangerous antinomian potential of providence. When recording his demonic experiences, Bunyan dealt in matters of fact, assuming his readership's acceptance of the normality of such an occurrences, even perhaps their identification with them. But he was far more uneasy recalling contact with a seemingly preternatural messenger. In the godly search for signs of election, the experience of a extraordinary personal communion was far more contentious than the notion that salvation might be discerned in the special attention of the Devil.¹³³

Conclusion

Far from being a marginal aspect of their culture, demonism was central to many of the godly's conception of the world, and to the observances by which they organised their lives. In line with Protestant convention, cosmic theodicy found little place in the godly's contemplation. Instead they were concerned with the nature of man's intimate relationship with Satan, defined by the fall and revolving around the experience of internal temptation. If the very expectation of temptation was self-fulfilling, this does not diminish the reality of the experience for those who felt themselves to be afflicted. But affliction, and responses to it, varied enormously. Some like Simonds D'Ewes seem to have been able to assimilate rare experiences with relative ease. Others, like Margaret Hoby were afflicted more consistently, but placed temptation within a cyclical scheme which made it manageable. The extent and depth of affliction was, unsurprisingly, a result of individual personality. There is no evidence to suggest that extreme affliction was an inherent consequence of Protestant theology, only that it was produced by an individual susceptibility to the belief in reprobation. But whilst there are marked variations in the nature of individuals' demonological beliefs and experiences in early modern England, a picture of what the Devil *was* to the

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ See also Abiezer Coppe, *A Fiery Flying Roll: A Word from the Lord to all the Great Ones* (London, 1649), p. 8.

godly emerges strongly. The experience of dislocation, of an insidious barrier to communion with God, manifesting itself in an uncontrollable subversion of the conscience from within, was how the godly commonly *felt* the Devil's presence. In the twentieth-century the experience would be understood as a relatively uncomplicated form of cognitive dissonance, produced by unrealistic expectations of personal piety and discipline. To many of the godly in Reformation England, it represented a very palpable intrusion of the demonic into their minds.

Incarnate Devils: Crime Narratives, Demonization and Audience Empathy

Temptation provided the godly with intense personal experiences of Satan's agency, but what of those, probably the majority, whose religious and moral observance was too unreflective to incorporate the rigorous introspective scheme, which for the godly identified temptation and encouraged an engagement with the experience? Were complex experiences of temptation largely confined to zealous Protestants with the inclination to indulge in in-depth self-examination and, consequently, was the influence of the Protestant emphasis on the Devil's internal agency limited? Whilst the majority of the population of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England have left no record of their demonological beliefs, those areas of culture which sought to appeal to a sense of the demonic provide insight into the potential for a far wider influence of the concept of internal temptation. Any study of demonism must take account of demonization, identified by historians as prevalent from the medieval period to the present. The practice of stigmatisation by associating subjects with the Devil has been interpreted as a simplistic form of projection, in which groups and individuals were marginalised in a functionalist one-way exchange of meaning. Jews, heretics, criminals, witches and subversives might be made to appear alien and 'anti-human' by association with Satan, justifying their persecution.¹ Yet a very different picture is revealed by an examination of demonization in early modern England—particularly the 'populist' demonization of criminals which became a prevalent part of the developing pulp press. Cheap and accessible pamphlet narratives commonly depicted crime to be the result of a diabolic seduction into sin, and this chapter will suggest that such stories could only be fully understood through an empathy with the emotional experiences of the criminal as he succumbed to temptation.² These narratives qualitatively associated mundane and

¹ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 16-59; R. I. Moore, *The Formation of Persecuting Society*, 35, 64-65, 89-91, 123.

² Peter Lake, 'Deeds against Nature', pp. 268-269; Lincoln B. Faller, *Turned to account: The forms and functions of criminal biography in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 22-31. Sources containing narrative and fiction, once considered unreliable and unrepresentative as a basis for history, are being employed with increasing confidence by historians as a means of gaining insight into the cultural processes by which identity and

criminal temptations and opened up the possibility that the Devil could be experienced vicariously in populist and semi-literate culture. In drawing the reader into a mental world infused with diabolic agency the pulp press gave far wider transmission to the dominance of internal temptation in demonism, and the result was a radical shift in the role of demonization. As Lincoln Faller has noted, it was not the 'otherness' of criminals that mattered in early modern culture, but their ordinariness.³ Similarly an emphasis on diabolic temptation placed at the heart of commonplace experience the mechanism by which men descended into the most heinous crimes. As a result, demonization actually discouraged the belief that intimate demonic experience was an aberration which clearly identified society's marginalised enemies. Every man and woman had experienced the same temptations that led some to murder and witchcraft, thus the gap that separated them from these 'incarnate devils' was very small.

Indeed witchcraft narratives, which emphasised the physical presence of Satan and the otherness of witches, were, in this respect, unusual in pulp press demonism. The Devil who appeared as an animal to bargain for the witch's soul has long been considered an elite interpolation which sat uncomfortably with populist non-diabolic witch beliefs.⁴ J. A. Sharpe has convincingly challenged this view, arguing that the folkloric elements of the animal familiar suggest the existence of a popular conception of the Devil.⁵ But the place of the Devil in pulp press narratives of witchcraft was more complex, the result of an amalgam of different influences and agendas. Legal records and the populist stories contained within them were shaped by pamphleteers' desire to place narratives within a more sharply drawn Christian scheme, and so, whilst the common reciprocal trade between witch and Devil was prevalent (incorporating popular notions of blood culture and anti-motherhood), the Devil was also depicted as the tempter who took hold of the witch's malice and conflated it into *malefic* and murderous desires. Thus witchcraft narratives both maintained a scheme of temptation and 'othered' witches, and the explanation seems to lie in the contested nature of the crime. The physical presence of Satan and the marginalised character of the witch were explicitly used to attest to the reality of the invisible crime, and physical evidence of diabolism (such as the witch's mark) became increasingly important in proving the crime in court.⁶ It was the crime itself, not the Devil's involvement in it, which was uncertain. By contrast demonic involvement in murder seems to have been

experience were shaped. For examples of this approach see Michael Macdonald, 'The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies* 31 (January 1992), pp. 35-37; David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London & New York, 1993), *passim*.

³ Faller, *Turned to account*, pp. 52-54.

⁴ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 627.

⁵ Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 75-78.

⁶ Holmes, 'Women: Witnesses and Witches', pp. 45-78.

relatively un-contentious, and was enshrined in the standard indictment wording. Thus, whilst witchcraft shared many elements of the scheme of temptation which became prevalent in pulp press crime narratives, its specialised agendas ensured it remained a separate, if overlapping genre, which was characterised by its interest in the physical Devil.

Reporting Satan's Agency: Crime and the Pulp Press

Stories of murder and witchcraft were a staple of the pulp press which burgeoned in England in the late sixteenth-century.⁷ From the 1560s onwards they became an increasingly prevalent part of the popular literature produced in London. Before 1600 ballads were slightly more common in depicting murder than pamphlet accounts (roughly 60% of the output), possibly due to the speed and ease with which they could be produced, cashing in quickly on the scandal well known cases evoked.⁸ It was common for two or three ballads to be produced on a single murder case. For instance the murder in 1589 of one master Page in Plymouth, by the wife who had been forced to marry him, seems to have been a notorious crime. The story was incorporated into a pamphlet written by the hack Anthony Munday, and was recounted in at least four ballads, one by Thomas Deloney.⁹ Other cases, such as the murder of a goldsmith called John Brewen, and of George Saunders (both by their wives), and the attempt of a Yorkshireman called Calverley to do away with his family, occasioned similar numbers of publications.¹⁰ As the genre developed the publication of pamphlets increased, eventually equalling the number of ballads.

The pulp press narrative of how murder occurred was very much at odds with the real incidence and nature of the crime. Social historians have shown that if the level of interpersonal violence in the period was relatively high, the number of premeditated murders was low. The majority of murders were crimes of passion made fatal by the inability of the medical profession to competently treat

⁷ Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (London, 1983), chapter 2.

⁸ This discussion is based on the bibliography by Joseph Marshburn, *Murder & Witchcraft in England* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1974), as the best introduction. Marshburn's book has various problems in that it is not comprehensive and describes some works as lost when they do actually survive.

⁹ Anthony Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumaine Murthers* (London, 1591); *The Lamentation of Master Pages wife of Plimmouth* (No date), *Pepys Ballads*, I, pp. 126-127; Thomas Deloney, *The lamentation of Mr Pages wife of Plimouth* (no date), in *The Works of Thomas Deloney*, ed. F. O. Mann (Oxford, 1912), pp. 482-485.

¹⁰ Anon, *Two Most unnatural and bloodie Murthers: the One by Maister Caverly, A Yorkshire Gentleman, practised upon his wife, and committed upon his two children, the tree and twentie of Aprill 1605* (London, 1605).

the wounded.¹¹ Yet the writers of the murder accounts insisted that the crime was never spontaneous, it always occurred at the culmination of a protracted conflict or was the end of a long-term descent into sin.¹² Murder in the pamphlets was almost always premeditated. A widower from Warborne, near Ashford in Kent, named Lincoln was motivated to murder his children by the barrier they presented to his plans to re-marry. Envy at the success of his neighbour, Robert Greenoll, caused a mercer called Thomas Smith to lure his victim with a pretence of friendship, beat him to death and hide the body in his cellar.¹³ Many narratives were built around what historians have identified as 'familiar murder', an inversionary challenge offered by petty treason and uxoricide to the familial and patriarchal picture of earthly authority.¹⁴ One such case was the murder of Page in 1589. A similar plot was hatched by the wife of Thomas Beast and her lover Christopher Tomson, whom she persuaded to poison her husband. As we shall see in the case of the petty traitor Elizabeth Caldwell, the desire to subvert patriarchal household authority by murder was often presented as diabolic temptation.¹⁵

There was a good deal of variation in the extent to which the Devil appeared in these murder narratives. Although more often present than not, some accounts gave a detailed description of his involvement, whilst others relied on simple statements or solely on woodcut images to express an deeper implication of the diabolic which was not made explicit. In the pamphlet of 1591, *The Araignment, Examination and Iudgement of Arnold Cosbye*, a very detached account of the court proceedings against the murderer, diabolism was more a concern of the courtroom than the pamphleteer. The only reference to the Devil came in a verbatim reproduction of the indictment which declared the Cosby had committed the

¹¹ J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in seventeenth-century England. A county study* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 123-138; Lawrence Stone, 'Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1980', *Past and Present* 101 (1983) pp. 23-33; see also the debate between Sharpe and Stone, 'The History of Violence in England: some observations', in *Past and Present* 108 (1985) pp. 207-224.

¹² Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of God's Iudgements: reuised and augmented* (London, 1631; 1st ed. 1597), sig. A7; John Taylor, *The Vnnatural Father: Or the cruell Murder Committed by one Iohn Rowse of the Towne of Ewell* (London, 1621), sigs. A3-Bv; Anon, *The life and death of M. Geo: Sands, who after many enormous crimes by him committed...was executed at Tyburn* (1626), *Pepys Ballads*, I, pp. 128-129; see Lake, 'Deeds against Nature', pp. 268-269.

¹³ Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumaine Murthers*, sig. A3; *A Briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers* (London, 1583), sigs. A5-B2.

¹⁴ Faller, *Turned to Account*, chapter 2; Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, passim; David Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 12-18.

¹⁵ Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumaine Murthers*, sigs. B2-B3v. The Beast conspiracy is described in *A brief discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers*, sigs. B2v-B4; for a similar story see Arthur Golding, *A brief discourse of the late murder of master George Saunders* (London, 1573); on the case of Elizabeth Cauldwell see Gilbert Dugdale, *A True Discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Cauldwell* (London, 1604); numerous ballad accounts were produced about petty traitors who were burned to death, see, *A warning for all desperate Women By the example of Alice Davis* (1628), *The unnatural Wife Or, the lamentable Murther of one goodman Dauis* (1628), *Anne Wallens Lamentation For the Murthering of her Husband* (1616), *Pepys Ballads*, I, pp. 120-125.

crime 'not having the feare of God before his eies' and 'upon a diuellish and most malicious intent'. *A cruell murther committed lately upon the body of Abraham Gearsy*, a ballad of 1635, prefaced its tale with a moral aphorism which intimated the diabolism of the crime—'This money was the cause of manies death, / As 'twas the cause that one late lost his breath; / The devill and the money workes together, / As by my subject you may well consider'. In concentrating on the way two brothers, Robert and Richard Reeve, had lured Gearsy to his death rather than pay him the money he was owed, the ballad commented simply—'Abraham Gearsie was his name that was kil'd / By those two brothers, as the devill wil'd'.¹⁶ In many narratives however the point at which the Devil's role was made explicit, as much as the rhetoric used, could express an awareness of a certain dynamic of temptation. The early seventeenth-century ballad *A Warning for all Murderers* described how a number of relatives were disappointed of the inheritance they had expected from their uncle, whose death they had all eagerly awaited. When his fortune was left entirely to his son, who soon married and conceived a child, the cousins began to plot against him. The Devil could have been presented as the driving force behind their avarice and covetousness, but instead he enters at the point at which they search for a solution to their problem. 'Then did the Divell intice them straight / to murther, death and blood', the ballad runs, 'Thereby to purchase to themselves / their long-desired good'. As a result of Satan's input they devised 'a hundred waies' to kill the son.¹⁷

Yet, whilst the use of the Devil was prey to the most sensationalist tendencies of the printers of ephemeral literature, his role in the murder pamphlets represented something more fundamental. In his discussion of the Protestant appropriation of the murder pamphlet form, Peter Lake has noted the frequency with which the Devil was used by moralising authors to instil a perception of an external 'all-pervasive malice' which preyed on the human propensity for sin.¹⁸ Murder was to be understood as the culmination of a progression by which Satan

¹⁶ *The Araignment, Examination, Confession and Iudgement of Arnold Cosbye: Who wilfully Murdered the Lord Burke, neere the Towne of Wandsworth* (London, 1591), sig. A2v; *A cruell murther committed lately upon the body of Abraham Gearsy, who liv'd in the Parish of Westmill, in the County of Harford, by one Robert Reeve and Richard Reeve, both of the same Parish* (London, 1635), Roxburghe Collection, I, pp. 488-489.

¹⁷ Anon., *A Warning for all Murderers* (no date), Roxburghe Collection, I, pp. 484-485.

¹⁸ Peter Lake, 'Deeds against Nature', pp. 268-269; and 'Popular form, puritan content? Two puritan appropriations of the murder pamphlet from mid-seventeenth century London', in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*, eds. A. J. Fletcher & P. R. Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 313-334; Cynthia B. Herrup, 'Law and Morality in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present* 106 (1985), pp. 109-112. A treatment of crime as sin in the Augustan period is provided in Faller's *Turned to account*, whilst a more generalised examination of the literary reaction to deviance is given in Ian A. Bell, *Literature and Crime in Augustan England* (London, 1991). Frances Dolan interprets murder narratives, including pamphlets, in terms of gender in *Dangerous Familiars*. The best general description of Protestant notions of the Devil and his part in human sin has been with reference to New England, see Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion*, chapter 3, passim.

swept men from one sin to another, hastening them to perdition. Such sins increased in scale until the reprobate could do little but descend finally into murder, the sin which (as the opening words of virtually every murder pamphlet and Protestant commentary would attest) was especially hated of God.¹⁹ A notion of cumulative sin, and the role of Satan as the driving force behind it, allowed pamphleteers to trace by hindsight the course that the individual criminal had followed in his descent into murder and damnation. Getting the greatest didactic mileage out of the moral history of a murderer involved highlighting the common ground between his early activities and those of the readership. Thus the 'formative' years of the murderer were commonly characterised with those same sins (idleness, drunkenness, fornication and swearing) that informed so many a Protestant harangue at the 'ungodly', particularly the young.²⁰ From such fruitful beginnings it was a relatively simple task to isolate the one sin among so many that, Satan having caught hold of it, provided the impetus to murder. Thus the murder pamphlets, and the conduct literature from which much of their rhetoric was drawn, provided an explanatory gloss for the crime.

Witchcraft cases were similarly well publicised, becoming notorious both among believers and sceptics, but the genre was far less clearly defined. Whilst the reporting, stage-depiction and academic discussion of murder tended to be fairly consistent, there was very wide variation in focus, tone, seriousness and style amongst accounts of witchcraft.²¹ Reportage was carried out almost entirely in pamphlets, and, for the most part, cases tended not to generate multiple accounts. Only a handful of ballads were produced on the subject²², and whilst the witch-play became a sub-genre of the contemporary stage there was possibly only one overt attempt to dramatise an actual case.²³ The variety of contexts and agendas in which witchcraft was discussed seem also to have produced a wide variation in notions of the Devil within the genre, but he was always depicted as physically present. This seems to have been because both the authorities and the populace shared general assumptions as to how witchcraft was effected through a

¹⁹ Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of Gods Iudgements* (1597); John Reynolds, *The Triumphs of Gods Revenge against the crying and Execrable sinne of (willing and premeditated) Murther* (London, 1657; 1st ed., 1621).

²⁰ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, pp. 224-230.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of this issue see Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London, 1999).

²² The publisher, John Barnes of Christ Church, produced both a pamphlet and a ballad on the case of the Flower family, accused of bewitching the Earl of Rutland's children in 1619. Seemingly both formats were published in parallel to catch the attention of different if overlapping audiences. See *Damnable Practices Of three Lincolne-shire Witches* (1619), *Pepys Ballads*, I, pp. 26-27. For another, much later example of a witchcraft ballad see *Witchcraft discovered and punished* (1682), Roxburghe Collection, II, p. 531.

²³ In 1621 William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford collaborated on a play based on the case of Elizabeth Sawyer, which took its details from a pamphlet written by Henry Goodcole. See *The Witch of Edmonton: A known true Story, Composed into a Tragi-comedy* (1621).

(normally) overt pact with Satan.²⁴ As J. A. Sharpe has argued, witchcraft narratives offer insights into a popular conception of the Devil which incorporated a number of folkloric elements.²⁵ In the earliest known pamphlet account, *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566) a cat called 'Sathan' was passed down the matrilineal line. Similarly, the network of witches apparently uncovered by Brian Darcy was based around the giving and receiving of familiars. The spirits were passed from one witch to another much in the way a useful domestic implement might be lent or given away.²⁶ Prosecutors and ministers were prepared to accept evidence of these spirits as a useful confirmation of the involvement of the diabolic, but equally prevalent was a notion of overt demonic seduction which accorded more closely to their expectations of the crime. In 1589, for instance, *The Apprehension, and confession of three notorious Witches* printed the description, by an Essex-woman Joan Prentice, of her encounter in an alms house with the Devil disguised as a ferret, who said to her, 'I am satan, feare me not my comming vnto thee is to doo thee no hurt but to abtaine thy soule, which I must and wil haue'.²⁷ Satan's identification became increasingly certain as the pamphlet genre developed. In 1613, in one of the best known accounts, Thomas Potts' *The Wonderfull discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*, the Devil appeared in human shape for the first time. Elizabeth Southern of Pendle forest confessed that some twenty years previously, returning home from begging she had encountered a boy 'one halfe of his Coate blacke, the other browne', who bargained for her soul. Similarly, Anne Whittle was plagued for four years by a devil in the shape of 'a Christian man', and eventually succumbed to his pressure to enter into a pact.²⁸

Unlike murder narratives, which highlighted the unseen demonic hold over the will, witchcraft accounts sought to expose the witting apostasy committed in a conscious and informed decision to follow the Devil.²⁹ Thus apostasy was the

²⁴ Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (1608), in *Works*, III, pp. 614-616; James I *Dæmonologie*, in *Workes*, pp. 103-105; Robert Filmer, *An Advertisement to the Jurymen of England, Touching Witches* (London, 1653), pp. 3-9.

²⁵ Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 75-78.

²⁶ Anon., *The Examination of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex* (1566), passim; W.W., *A true and just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses in the county of Essex* (London, 1582), sigs. A3v, A5v-A6; similarly see, *A Rehearsall both strange and true, of the hainous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockingham, Mother Dutton, Mother Deuell, Mother Margaret, fower notorious witches, apprehended at Winsore in the Countie of Barks*. (London, 1579), sigs. A5v-A8v.

²⁷ Anon., *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches. Arreigned and by Justice condemned and executed at Chelmes-forde, in the Countye of Essex* (London, 1589), sigs. B-Bv.

²⁸ Thomas Potts, *The Wonderfull discoverie of Witches* (1613), sigs. B2v-B4v, D3-D3v. The most bizarre confessions of interaction with demons were produced during the Essex witch-scare of 1654-47, see Hopkins, *The Discovery of Witches*, pp. 2-3; Stearne, *A Confirmation And Discovery of Witchcraft*, pp. 13-18.

²⁹ *Examination and confession of certaine Wytches*, A7-A8; *The aprehension and confession of three notorious Witches*, sigs. B-Bv; Potts, *The Wonderfull discoverie of Witches*, sigs. B2v-B4v; Henry

scheme into which temptation was fitted, rather than *vice versa*. As a consequence temptation was presented in witchcraft narratives as a relatively straightforward reciprocal trade. The Devil commonly approached the witch and offered to perform *maleficium* on her behalf in return for her soul. Thus the temptation of the witch provided a religious gloss to the demonization of spirit magic that had increasingly taken hold in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-centuries.³⁰ But the emphasis on the witch's malice—a conception shared between popular and elite stereotypes, and in no way confined to Protestantism—did provide an opening for some later witchcraft narratives to express more complex notions of the role of temptation. Whereas many early pamphlets tended to describe the pact with the Devil as taking place before the witch came into conflict with those she would eventually harm, some seventeenth-century examples adopted the understanding of cumulative sin, and argued that the witch's malice acted, like the murderer's anger or jealousy, as an invitation for Satan. In 1619 Joan Flower and her two daughters came into conflict with their benefactor, the Earl of Rutland, becoming consumed with 'hate and rancor'. 'When the Divell perceived the inficuous disposition of this wretch, and that she and her daughters might easily bee made instruments to enlarge his Kingdome', a pamphlet account of the case attested, 'he came neerer unto them, and in plaine tearmes to come quickly to the purpose, offered them his service'.³¹ Similarly the ordinary of Newgate, Henry Goodcole, recorded that Elizabeth Sawyer was approached by the Devil as a result of her cursing. 'Never before...did I see him, or he me', she apparently confessed to Goodcole in prison, 'and when he, namely the divel, came to me, the first words that he spake unto me were these: Oh! Have I now found you cursing, swearing and blaspheming? Now you are mine.'³²

Thus, whilst both murder and witchcraft narratives sought to put across a sense of the Devil's central role in criminality as a manifestation of his earthly power, they presented very distinct pictures of the dynamic of temptation. One, with its emphasis on the fine line between sin and criminality, and on the power of unseen satanic influence, reduced the empathic gap between the reader and the criminal. The other, based entirely around physical interaction with the Devil had the opposite effect. Marginalising a single incident of temptation (but not, of course, the more general sins that led up to it) in an encounter recognised to be real, but beyond the experience of most.

Goodcole, *The wonderful discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer* (London, 1621), p. 12; James VI & I, *Daemonologie*, pp. 103-105; Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, pp. 614-616; J.A. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 74-75, 82-85, 134-137; Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, pp. 25-38.

³⁰ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, pp. 188-197.

³¹ *The Wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower, daughters of Ioan Flower* (London, 1619), sig. C4v.

³² Goodcole, *The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer*, p. 12; the scene was faithfully dramatised in Rowly, Dekker & Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton*, act II, scene i, 94-175.

Components of the Devil's Kingdom

The depiction of diabolic crime was bound up with questions of perception and interpretation. The 'strange news' advertised on the frontispiece never remained so to the last page of the pamphlet. Even the most bizarre occurrences, and the most bloody crimes, could be assimilated into a scheme which deprived them of their uniqueness, and this, to a large extent, was the self-conscious purpose of the pulp press pamphlet. Acts of murder and *maleficium* might occur in isolation, but their perpetrators constituted component parts of Satan's earthly kingdom, a kingdom not here defined geographically, but as a *de facto* composite of human sin. Criminals became mediators of the Devil's agency, their victims the channels through which the diabolic assault on the whole Christian commonwealth was effected. A ballad of 1615, *The Araignment of John Flodder and his wife, at Norwidge*, described the punishment of two supposed papists for setting fire to the town of Wymondham in Norfolk. These 'rogues and beggars' went from town to town, until they decided on arson. The ballad was unconcerned with their motives, commenting instead that, 'sure the Diuell, or else some Feend of his, / Persuaded them vnto this foule amiss, / With Fire to wast so braue a Market Towne, / That flourisht faire, with riches and renowne'. That the criminals were merely mediating Satan's agency was further demonstrated by the seemingly preternatural nature of the fire: 'A Fier that was deuised of the Diuell, / A Fier of all the worst, and worse than euill: / Wilde fier it was, that could not quenched bee, / A ball thereof lay kindling secretly'.³³ With every crime Satan's hold over the earth was maintained and reinforced, and he ever threatened to tighten his strangle-hold around the beleaguered godly, who found themselves surrounded by his human servants.

Sensational crimes emerged as the most palpable form of sin, be they attributable to man's corruption or the Devil's influence. That they be interpreted correctly was of paramount importance precisely because they forced themselves into man's line of sight. Arthur Golding, in his pamphlet *A brief discourse of the late murder of master George Saunders* (1573), bemoaned the fact that murder was the cause of so much talk and speculation, but so little introspection. God did not exhibit murder so that 'men should gaze and wonder at the persons as byrds do at an Owle', he explained, but that it 'should by the terror of the outward sight of the example, drive us to the inward consideration of ourselves'.³⁴ Superficial

³³ Anon., *The Araignment of John Flodder and his wife...for the burning of the Towne of Windham in Norfolke*, (1615), *Pepys Ballads*, pp. 130-131, quotes at p. 130.

³⁴ Golding, *A brief discourse of the late murder of...George Saunders*, sigs. A2-A2v, C3-D2, quote at sigs. C3v-C4; Anon., *A true reporte or description of an horrible, wofull, and most lamentable murther*,

perception posed a different threat for the Exeter merchant, John Reynolds, compiling through the 1620s his collection, *The triumphs of Gods revenge against the crying and execrable sinne of (wilfull and premeditated) murther*. The danger was that 'the crying and scarlet sin of Murther makes so ample, and bloody a progression', that man might think God had abandoned the world entirely to the Devil.³⁵ The perception of murder might even tempt man to atheism: 'to believe, there were no heaven, towards the righteous: or hell, to punish the ungodly'. But as with all temptations perception was also the solution, and the correct interpretation of murder was akin to regaining part of the spiritual insight man had lost. 'If we will divert our hearts from earth to heaven', Reynolds noted, 'we shall then not onely see what engendereth this diabolical passion in us, but also find means to detest and root it out from amongst us'.³⁶

This equation was explicit in some pamphlets, and implicit in most. *A Detection of damnable driftes practiced by three Witches arraigned at Chelmsforde* (1579) promised,

on thone side the cleare sight maie espie the ambushments, which Sathan the secret workmaster of wicked driftes, hath placed in most partes of this realme, either by craftye conueighaunces, to creep into the conceits of the simple, or by apparaunt treacherie to undermine and spoile the states of such as God permitteth him to haue power ouer. And on the other side the eye that is wimpled may hereby be advertised of the darkenesse, wherwith his understanding is ouercast, and puttyng of the viele of vanitie, maie reclaime his concept, and esteeme of the impietie of the offendours and the vilanie of their actes.³⁷

The more moralistic pamphlets sought to make the wider consequences of murder and witchcraft as palpable an experience as the crimes themselves. In 1604 Gilbert Dugdale published an account of an attempted petty-treason of which he had personal knowledge. Attempting to transmit to his audience the experience of a godly man coming to terms with murder, he described the progression of his thoughts—a progression followed in turn by the narrative of the pamphlet. He noted,

After my long being at Chester, in the time of this reported trouble, I in my melancholie walkes bethought me of the strange invasion of Satan, lately on the person of Elizabeth

doen in the cittie of Bristoew by one John Kynvester, a Sherman by his occupation (London, 1573), sig., A3; *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches*, sigs. A4v-A5; *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches*, sigs. A2-A2v.

³⁵ Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, sig. A2; see also *A briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers*, sigs. A2-A3.

³⁶ Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, sig. A2.

³⁷ Anon, *A Detection of the damnable driftes practiced by three witches at Chemisforde* (London, 1579), sigs. A2-A2v.

Caldwell, and her bloody louer Ieffrie Bownd...how that vglie fiende (euer mans fatall opposite) had made practice, but I hope not purchase, of their corruptable liues, & brought them to the last steppe of mortall miserie.

Before thoughts of the enormity of satanic power could overwhelm him he, 'revolving with myself', remembered the mercy of God in calling sinners to repentance, whereby even the most heinous criminal might find redemption.³⁸ The story of Caldwell's moral collapse was a depressing example of the potential extent of demonic power, but her celebrated repentance and godly end cut short the Devil's reign. As Dugdale told it, hundreds flocked to be edified by the saint in prison, and communal acknowledgement of her repentance demarcated the limits of Satan's intrusion. By the end of the pamphlet the reader was not only to have entered the narrative world of temptation and murder, but also to have experienced some identification with the cyclical progression from shock and pessimism, to optimism and faith, by which Dugdale claimed to have assimilated the case himself.

Exposés of the Devil's agency were often also exposés of society's negligence in opposing it. For one author, a case of witchcraft in Windsor in 1579 was indicative of the way in which Satan 'hath of late yeares, greatly multiplied the broude of them, and muche encreased their malice'. This 'he hath more easily performed for that wholesome remedies provided for the curing of such cankers are either a whit, or not applied'. In his description of the 1582 St. Osyth witch trial, Brian Darcy demanded that witches be made examples of as a demonstration, as much to God as to man, of the will to engage with diabolic 'detestable abuses'. It was a symptom of indulgence, he noted, that these 'apparent' apostates suffered no greater punishment than other felons.³⁹ Satan was never at rest, making it necessary to constantly provide such exposés of his agency. The author of *A brief Discourse of two most cruell and bloodie Murthers* (1583) reminded his readers that, concerning the stories he was about to relate 'albeit they carrye terrour sufficient, to forwarne the unnatural children of this worlde: yet daylie doo fresh enormities spring up, able (had nature so agreed) to urge the very bowells of the earth, to heepe foorth fearefull acclamations agaynst us'. *A Most Wicked worke of a wretched Witch* (1592), saw the threat of Satan's composite kingdom to lie in his ability constantly to replenish it, remarking that, though God might 'weed' out witches, 'but Satan still doth hatch / Fresh imps, whereby of all sorts he may catch'. These pamphleteers made generalisations to argue for the wider significance of the cases they related, but concern over the

³⁸ Dugdale, *A True Discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Caldwell*, sig. B4.

³⁹ Anon, *A rehearsal both strange and true, of the hainous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile*, sigs. A2-A2v; W. W., *A true and iust Recorde*, sigs A3v-A4.

issue of perception could be very specific. The fullest example was itself a response to the Windsor witch case. The local gentleman, Richard Galis, produced an autobiographical prequel to the pamphlet, in which he charted his constantly frustrated attempts to get the local authorities to take his accusations against Rockingham and her accomplices seriously. Believing himself to be the principle target of their malice, he first argued that their witchcraft had turned his community against him (he was imprisoned at one point, although on what grounds is not clear), and later that the authorities' blindness was a providential test, which, Job-like, he had to endure.⁴⁰

The extent to which Satan's composite kingdom became a central trope of criminal exposé is further demonstrated by the way it came to dominate the later productions of the long-established 'rogue pamphlet' genre. In the sixteenth-century exposés of the tricks of vagabonds and cony-catchers, the Devil was almost entirely absent.⁴¹ However the production of Thomas Nashes' *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the Diuell* (1592) re-defined the genre, most particularly as it was carried on by Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker.⁴² The standard format of the rogue pamphlets was to expose, one by one, the scams practised in the London flesh-pots, identifying various types of criminals in turn. In the examples produced around the turn of the seventeenth-century, these were identified as components of the Devil's kingdom, and Satan himself either appeared to survey the activity of his subjects, or was communicated with by letter. In Thomas Middleton's *The Black Book* (1604), the Devil takes a turn around the brothels and dens of London, observing 'villanous meetings, pernicious plots, black humours, and a million mischiefs', and concluding that 'my entertainment was not barren, nor my welcome cheap or ordinary'.⁴³ These satires became increasingly focused on the threat that exposure and perception posed to the diabolic underbelly of English society. Thus in Thomas Dekker's *Lanthorne and Candle-light* the stygian court of hell is shown disrupted by the news that the Bellman of London (the subject of a previous pamphlet) had 'looked into the secrets of the best trades that are taught in Hell, laying them open to the broad eye of the world'. Satan's kingdom could only survive as a hidden subversion, and he is warned that if such exposés continue 'the angels that are coined below will

⁴⁰ Richard Galis, *A Briefe Treatise conteyning the most strange and horrible crueltye of Elizabeth Stile*, see above pp. 117-118.

⁴¹ See the examples from the first half of the sixteenth-century in the collection, *The Elizabethan Underworld*, ed. A. V. Judges (London, 1930), and the cony-catching pamphlets of Robert Greene in *The life and complete works in prose and verse of Robert Greene*, ed. A. B. Grosart (London, 1881-86).

⁴² Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the Diuell* (London, 1592).

⁴³ Thomas Middleton, *The Black Book* (1604), in *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A. H. Bullen (New York, 8 vols., 1964), VIII, p. 32.

never be able to pass as they have done, but be nailed up for counterfeits'.⁴⁴ Each new production competed to reveal more of Satan's servants.⁴⁵ The Devil's response to the threat of exposure was to try to replenish his kingdom by the secret patronage of criminals, and the pamphlets developed a satire of shared interest which more clearly defined the satanism of rogues, cut-purses and prostitutes. For example, Dekker's *O Per Se O* (1612) described 'fraternities' in which the rogues 'vow themselves body and soul to the Devil' to perform ten articles of mutual support and protection.⁴⁶ Thus whilst remaining part of a separate, satirical genre, rogue pamphlets assimilated the notion of a composite demonic kingdom, and, in lending it their pre-existing sense of organised roguery, offered a more general expose of diabolic patronage than that provided by murder or witchcraft accounts.

Devilish Humans and Audience Empathy

The perception into demonic agency these publications advocated, and sought to provide for, was vicarious, seeking to transmit to the reader the experience of diabolic temptation. It demanded, not a distanced observation of the exposé, but an engagement and empathy with its protagonists. Lincoln Faller has described how early modern 'criminology' was innocent of the modern tendency to see criminality as reassuringly aberrant. It referred instead to man's inherited corruption to develop a Christian aetiology of crime that embraced the possibility of a general potential for criminality.⁴⁷ Correspondingly narratives were written in the understanding that readers *could* empathise with the psychological/spiritual experience of criminals. The notion of cumulative sin allowed authors to force an identification with the commonplace emotions and drives which were the prelude to crime. As the Protestant scheme of temptation predicted, the Devil entered the conscience and took hold of the corruption already present, blowing it up until it exploded into violence or murder. The audience's recognition of the anger, greed, or jealousy that Satan inflated into murder allowed them to experience diabolic agency vicariously.

Thus perception into the Devil's agency required a special insight, which could only be gained by accepting the interpretative monopoly of the pamphlets. The demonization of 'others' in medieval Europe had relied on no such special

⁴⁴ Thomas Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light. Or the Bell-mans second Nights walke*, in *Non-dramatic Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart, (London, 1963), III, pp. 211-212.

⁴⁵ Dekker, *O per se O* (1612), in *The Elizabethan Underworld*, pp. 366-382.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.

⁴⁷ Faller, *Turned to Account*, pp. 52-54.

insight.⁴⁸ Instead the allegiance to the Devil practised by Jews, Muslims and heretics was embodied in physical transformation or expressed in inversionary activity as the Devil lent his recognisable physical characteristics to his servants. Jews were commonly pictured with horns, a tail, a goat's beard and a disgusting odour.⁴⁹ Heretics in turn were demonized by their acts. Groups such as the Bogomiles, the Waldensians and the Cathars were believed to take part in an inverted diabolic baptism and to engage in unimaginable sins such as infanticide, cannibalism and incest.⁵⁰ Demonization in such cases rested on the de-humanisation of the subject, to present him as more devil than man.

Whilst the 'otherness' of witches might be highlighted in pulp press accounts, there was no real attempt to 'other' murderers, who maintained their humanity. The symptoms of violent madness could imply the demonic, but generally murder narratives avoided physical descriptions of their protagonists. Instead early modern crime narratives were concerned with the criminal's state of mind, firstly the state by which the Devil's notice was attracted, and secondly the havoc he wreaked on the moral faculties once he gained entrance. Criminals were exposed to a conflation of two methods of diabolic temptation, both assumed to be intuitively comprehensible to the audience if the guidelines provided in the narrative were followed. It has been argued above that men's consciences were understood to exist as balance of good and evil motions, as a consequence of the fall.⁵¹ The godliest of men only maintained the most fragile equilibrium of these competing impulses by constant vigilance. In luring men into crime, a favoured policy of the Devil was to swamp the conscience with evil influences, not only tempting men to sin, but at the same time stifling their impulses to godliness. By these means he sought to destroy the equilibrium of the conscience that kept behaviour moderate, allowing him to take a more firm hold over the will. This hold was again understood to involve a very real intrusion of the demonic into the mind, but in narratives of crime, and especially murder, the picture of diabolic invasion was more tightly focused than in the general theological and conduct book discussions of temptation. Crimes of intent were turned into real actions by a process of amplification by which Satan took hold of sinful thoughts and blew

⁴⁸ An early example of the argument that the Devil was lord of a satanic host comprising the 'other' (although without the terminology) is to be found in Maximillian Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature* (La Salle, 1931, reprinted, 1959), chapter 14; its best expressions remain Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, chapters 1-3; and R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, pp. 88-91; whilst Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*, chapter 5; Link, *The Devil*, pp. 183-184; and Messadié, *The History of the Devil*, chapters 14-16, are the most recent studies to put forward this argument.

⁴⁹ Joshua Trachtenburg, *The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 44-50; Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-semitism* (London, 1965), I, pp. 141-144.

⁵⁰ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, chapters 2 & 3.

⁵¹ See above, chapter 3.

them up into irresistible desires to commit violence or witchcraft. This picture of diabolic agency was explicit in many pamphlet accounts and implicit in all.

In populating his diabolic terrestrial kingdom the Devil of the pulp press most commonly appeared as an opportunist. Time and time again the authors of murder and witchcraft narratives bewailed the fact that in pursuing a life of sin men laid themselves open to the assaults of the Devil, should they come into his path. John Reynolds provided a detailed picture of the holistic diabolic assault assumed to be experienced by all criminals, expressed in the tempting triumvirate of the world the flesh and the Devil. For Reynolds the Devil was utterly single-minded and was 'indifferent to him, either how or in what manner we enlarge and fill the empty rooms of his vast and internal [sic] Kingdom'.⁵² If the temptations of the world and the waywardness of the flesh were not sufficient to bring a man to perdition, Satan would make himself known in his usual guise as an angel of light.⁵³ Should insinuation still fail, Satan 'hath yet reserved troops and forces', and, 'exchanging his smiles into frowns', he would afflict man with 'Grief of mind and body...indignation, despair, revenge and the like'. It was by this final 'string to his Bow' that the Devil brought men to murder, for he would 'watch us at every turn, and wait on us at every occasion: for are we bent to revenge, he will blow the coals to our cholar'. All men should expect the test of diabolic affliction, which might manifest itself in murderous passion, but temptation could be resisted by reason. To cast off religion when it was needed was akin to letting go of the helm in a storm. So when our 'cholar so far prevaileth with us (or rather the Devil with our cholar) that we...lift up our hands against our Christian brother', man should consider that to do so is to be 'not of God' and to 'walketh in darkness', knowing 'not whither [we] goeth'. The latter quotes Reynolds took from *I John* and they intimate the alienation and confusion so often taken to characterise those who have thrown in their lot with the Devil.⁵⁴

This holistic assault was characterised by an atmosphere of chaos and license enveloping the lives of protagonists in pulp press narratives. As individuals were increasingly swamped by temptation, crime became more likely, and Satan was sometimes credited with arranging situations in which the bonds of a godly conscience might be loosed. In Anthony Munday's pamphlet account, the murder of Master Page stemmed from a forced marriage, attributable directly to Satan. George Strangwich, as apprentice to a shop-keeper in Testock, became involved with his daughter, incurring the resentment of his master. At this point the Devil intruded on the narrative to set the scene for tragedy. 'Satan', the story continued, 'crept so far into the dealings of these persons that he procured the parents to

⁵² Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, sig A2v.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ I John 2: 2.

mislike of Strangwich, and to persuade their daughter to refraine his companye, shewing her that they had found out a more meeter match for her'. By the Devil's instigation the daughter was forced to marry Page, a widower in Plymouth, but continued an affair with Strangwich that eventually led to the hire of an assassin to deal with the unwanted husband. The witchcraft practised by Joan Flower and her daughters in Lincolnshire in 1619 was the result of a protracted conflict with Sir Francis Manners, the Earl of Rutland who had dismissed the daughters from his service. The pamphleteer who described the case could only explain how the malicious Flowers could ever have held the favour of the Earl and his wife by attributing it to the work of Satan. 'Such was the subtlety of the Devil to bring his purposes to pass', the author noted, 'that all things were carried away in the smooth channel of liking and good entertainment on every side'.⁵⁵ In John Taylor's *The Unnatural Father* of 1621 the match made by a fishmonger, John Rowse, to a 'very honest and comely woman', presented a barrier to the Devil's influence which had to be removed. Rowse lived quietly with his wife, 'till the devil sent an instrument of his to disturb their matrimonial happiness'. The couple employed a maidservant, Jane Blundell, whose subsequent affair with Rowse was the death of his wife.⁵⁶ Freed from all constraint Rowse embarked on a dissolute life which eventually led him to be cheated out of his land by a 'false friend', and culminated in the murder of his children in an act of despair.

A number of narratives used readily identifiable human tempters—such as prostitutes, lovers and Catholics—to make diabolic envelopment more palpable to the reader. These satanic agents took on diabolic characteristics, not physically, but in the means they used to further tempt their target into sin. Elizabeth Caldwell, whose absentee husband left her 'without such means as was fitting for her', fell under the seduction of one Jeffrey Bownd. Throughout Gilbert Dugdale's pamphlet account temptation was embodied in the figure of Bownd, who used all the devices commonly attributed to the Devil. He was persistent and persuasive and took advantage of the unhappy state of Caldwell's marriage to prey on her vulnerability. The words Dugdale used to describe Bownd's temptations were those commonly employed when discussing Satan—they were 'allurements', and 'assaults and encouragements'. Finally, when his own efforts were insufficient to completely stifle Caldwell's godly conscience, Bownd himself employed his own

⁵⁵ Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumane Murtheres*, sig. B2; *A briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers*, sig. B2v; *The Wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower*, sig. C4.

⁵⁶ John Taylor, *The Vnnatural Father*, sig. A3v. A similar case was described in the murder of one Thomas Beast, killed by his wife and her lover. He 'kept a handsome Young man to his servant, called Christopher Tomason, to whome (by the wicked instigation and prouocation of the deuill) the good wife of he house used far better affection than to her owne husband'. Finally 'lust had gotten so much power of the woman', that she began to plan the murder, see *A Briefe Discourse of two most cruell and bloodie Murthers*, sigs. B2-B2v.

diabolic agent to envelop her. A widow Isabel Hall was 'prefered as *an instrument* to work her to an unlawfull reformation'.⁵⁷ Her exact role in the seduction of Caldwell was not made clear, but in echoing Bownd's arguments and enticements, her position seems to have given them some 'matronly' acceptability. Hall as sophist provided another human embodiment of a method of temptation particularly associated with the Devil, whose arguments were at their most dangerous when they appeared most reasonable. It was only with her aid that Bownd was able to entice Caldwell into committing murder.

In the pamphlet of 1616 *A pittillesse Mother*, Catholics were the incarnate devils that brought the gentlewoman Margaret Vincent to murder two of her children. 'Consider with thy self', the author advised his readers, 'how strangely the divell her set his foote and what cunning instruments hee used in his assaylements'. Vincent had the misfortune (in a woman) of 'being witty and of a Ripe understanding', and resorted frequently to divines to discuss matters of religion. Whereas in many woman such godly zeal might be praised within limits, in Vincent's case it simply left her exposed to the wiles of devillish papists, who in turn transformed her into a diabolic instrument:

at last there were such trappes and engins set, that her quiet was caught, and her discontent set at liberty; her opinion of the true faith (by the subtil sophistry of some close Papists) was converted into a blinde belief of betwitching heresie, for they have such charming perswasions that hardly the female kind can escape their inticements, of which the weake sex they continually make prise of and by them lay plots to ensnare others, as they did by this deceived Gentlewoman, for she, good soul, being made a bird of their owne feather, desired to beget more of the same kinde, and from time to time made perswasive arguments to win her husband to the same opinion

Vincent's fall into Catholicism had dire consequences, as she eventually became convinced that the only means to save her children's souls from the pernicious influence of Protestantism was to kill them.⁵⁸

Murder, once initiated, was believed to snowball to catch a number of seemingly innocent souls who might never have come to their respective sticky ends but for their lack of vigilance as to the Devil's wiles. Often the murderer himself was presented as the diabolic tempter, who, having had violent thoughts implanted in his mind by Satan, became the medium for their wider transmission. The story of Lincoln of Warborne was one such example. Finding himself in hardship he desired to make an advantageous match, but was refused by a widow

⁵⁷ Dugdale, *A True Discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Caldwell*, sig. A4v, my emphasis.

⁵⁸ *A pittillesse Mother. That most vnnaturally at one time, murthered two of her owne Children at Acton* (London, 1616), sigs. A2-A2v. For a discussion of the depiction of motherhood and infanticide in this pamphlet see Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, pp. 145-150.

of 'reasonable wealth' on account of his 'great charge of children'. At the point of his being presented with this dilemma 'the deuill entered so farre into his minde, that he cast many wayes in his thoughts how to make them awaie'.⁵⁹ Lincoln became the mediator of the Devil's temptations when, discussing the problem with a man who was living in his house, he hit upon his diabolic plan. He would pay the man to commit the act whilst he was out of town, and would refuse to allow him to be pursued when the hue and cry was raised. Little attention was paid in the pamphlet to the motives of the assassin—the thought of murder was passed on with a simple appeal to his greed—what was significant was that in committing his own crime, Lincoln simultaneously acted as a diabolic agent, laying traps to catch others.

The mediation of the diabolic was at its most sinister when it intruded on the household, using familial relations to give it credibility. In such circumstances it could have a terrible ability to undermine even the most godly conscience. The pamphlet *News from Perrin* [Penryn] was constructed around the temptation of a woman to kill for money, and the protracted sophistry by which she mediated it to her husband, finally persuading him to murder his unrecognised son.⁶⁰ In the narrative a wayward son returns home a reformed man after a career as a pirate and galley-slave. He reveals his identity only to his sister and his unsuspecting father takes him in as a lodger. The prodigal's absence has previously led to the death of his mother, and his good-natured but weak father has married again. The step-mother, seeing that the traveller has returned to England a wealthy man, hatches a plot to murder him and steal his money. Only after considerable effort does she manage to coax and shame her husband into committing the deed, and thus the scene is set for tragedy. The son, in his dying agony, recognises his murderer but is unable to speak, and when the father learns from his daughter the stranger's identity, he kills himself. The step mother follows his example and the tragedy is complete. She lives long enough, however, to take the entire responsibility for the crime upon herself.

The narrative first described how Satan achieved a direct influence over the step-mother. The ease with which the weak woman gives in to Satan contrasts with her husband's resistance. But the threat lies not only in womankind's susceptibility to the Devil, but in that, as his instruments, they might hide his temptations within the everyday negotiations and compromises made between married couples. To persuade her husband to carry out the killing, the stepmother mediated the 'divellish arguments to approve the lawfullness of it'—his financial problems may be solved at a stroke and the crime may be accomplished safely

⁵⁹ Munday, *Sundrye strange and inhumaine Murthers*, sig. A3.

⁶⁰ *Newes from Perin in Cornwall: Of a most Bloody and vn-exampled Murther very lately committed by a Father on his owne Sonne...at the Instigation of a mercilesse Step-mother* (London, 1618); Lake, 'Deeds against Nature', p. 265; Marshburn, *Murder and Witchcraft in England*, pp. 179-182.

since the sailor arrived late and unseen into their house.⁶¹ Twice 'by her deuillish inticements' he attempted the deed but was unable. True to form, these set-backs merely goaded the Devil into renewed effort, 'for the more valiantly he is resisted [he] growes the more malitious'.⁶² When even the sight of the money failed to rouse her husband, the step-mother taunted him with accusations of cowardice, giving him the knife with which he finally killed his son, by which act 'the Divell and she prevailed'.⁶³

* * *

What happened to the criminals themselves as they fell under the influence of the Devil and his human instruments? Most pulp press writers shared with Protestant theologians a belief in the Devil's ability to intrude directly into the mind, pushing endemic, 'normal' sin to extremes. The implication was that the consciousness, however sinful, was incapable of conceiving of murder without Satan's influence. Cumulative sin was not a seamless progression, but a series of watersheds, each confirming a further descent into sin until the mind was ready to entertain thoughts of unquestionably diabolic crimes such as murder and witchcraft. In the pamphlet account of the witchcraft of the Flower family, the conflict with the Earl of Rutland (which we have already seen was contrived by Satan), was merely a preliminary to make the women susceptible to the Devil's temptations:

When the Diuell percieued the inficious disposition of this wretch [Joan Flower], and that she and her daughters might easily bee made instruments to enlarge his Kingdome, and bee as it were the executioners of his vengeance; not caring whether it lighted vpon innocents or no, he came more neerer vnto them, and in plaine tearmes to come quickly to the purpose, offered them his seruice⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Newes from Perin*, sig. B5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, sig. B5. Hugh Latimer summed up the Devil's flexibility succinctly in his seventh sermon on the Lord's Prayer, with particular reference to the Devil, noting 'when we be in health, the devil moveth us to all wickedness and naughtiness, to whoredom, lechery, theft, and other horrible faults; putting out of our mind the remembrance of God and his judgements, insomuch that we forget that we shall die. Again, when we be in sickness, he goeth about like a lion to move and stir us up to impatiency and murmuring against God; or else he maketh our sins so horrible before us that we fall into desperation', *Sermons*, pp. 429-432, quote at p. 432.

⁶⁴ *The Wonderful discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower*, sig., C4v. The description was closely followed by the ballad account produced by the same publisher,

Wherat the old malitious feend,
with these her darlings thought:
The Earle and Countesse them disgrac't,
and their discredits wrought:
In turning thus despihtfully,
her daughter out of dores,
For which reuengement in her mind
she many a mischiefe stores.

Heereat the Diuell made entraunce in,
his Kingdome to inlarge.

When the scope of their desired revenge widened beyond those with which they had a grievance, the Flowers passed a watershed and descended to a new depth of sin, making them vulnerable to exploitation by Satan.⁶⁵ Similarly it was the envy of Thomas Smith at the success of his neighbour, Robert Greenoll, that provided an open invitation to Satan. 'The Deuill so farre ruled the course of his envious intent', noted the author of *A briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers*, 'as nothing would surface the desire thereof, but onely the making away of Greenoll by death, which though he had no reason for, yet such was the persuasion of the evill spirite with him'.⁶⁶ In the Penryn narrative, the sight of the prodigal's gold ignited the step-mother's covetousness and, 'thinking of her present wants', she 'cast about twenty wayes, how to enjoy it'. She was engrossed in her covetous contemplation when,

presently the deuill, that is alwayes ready to take holde of the least advantage that may be to increase his kingdome, whispered this comfort in her eare, shewing her the golden temptation: saying, all this will I give thee, if thou wilt but make away with a poore stranger that sleeps under thy mercy.⁶⁷

One of the stories recounted by John Reynolds in *The triumphs of Gods revenge* concerned the Italian uxoricide, Alibius, who poisoned his wife, Merilla. He was given to debauchery and abandoned her several times. He resolved to reform and try to make his fortune in Venice, but, whilst sojourning in the town of Brescia, his profligacy caught up with him, and, as the sights of the local flesh-pots rekindled his old desires, Satan kindled a new loathing of his wife, who Alibius believed had lost her beauty. As 'his eyes (the Lustfull sentynalls of his heart) espie so many beauties', Reynolds tells us, 'he began to loath his owne Merilla, and to wish her in another world, that he might have another wife in this'. But this was nothing less than the Devil amplifying his lust into thoughts of murder, as Reynolds explains, 'loe, here the divell beginnes with him anew to persuade him to hate his wife'. Through his talent for flattery Alibius became a favourite of the town oligarchy,

And puts his executing wrath,
vnto these womens charge:
Not caring whom it lighted on,
the Innocent or no,
And offered them his diligence,
to flye, to run, to goe.

See *Damnable Practices Of three Lincoln-shire Witches*, stanzas 9-12.

⁶⁵ The pamphlet was an example of a shift in witchcraft narratives, which increasingly played down the notion that the grievances held by witches might be justified, see Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London, 1999), pp. 101-109.

⁶⁶ *A briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Muthers*, sig. A5.

⁶⁷ *News from Perrin*, sig. B4.

and Satan, for his part, made sure that preferment stoked rather than dampened his murderous intent. 'The devill was so busie with him, or hee with the devill, that in hope of a higher and fayrer wife, hee resolves to poyson her according as hee heretofore had many times thought and premeditated', and his reaction to meeting the young, rich and fair Philatea confirms the Devil's hold:

so strongly hath the devill possessed him with these hellish designes and bloody resolutions, as his love to Philatea, defacing his respect to Merilla, hee sees her a blocke in his way, and a stop to his preferment and so concludes that she must bee remooved and dispatched.⁶⁸

Lust, greed, anger, jealousy and disappointment might all be taken hold of by the Devil and amplified into murderous intentions.

Almost invariably, premeditation was depicted as diabolic in the pulp press accounts, and Satan the advisor who provided the schemes by which evil intent might be carried out. Criminal intentions had their origins in the demonic amplification commonplace sinful thoughts every man was prone to; but the single-mindedness necessary to carry them out was the satanic contribution which marked murderers, rapists and witches as beyond the pale of endemic, 'ordinary' human sin. One pamphlet recounted the story of a tailor called Thomas Cash who had the misfortune to marry a 'troublesome' wife, and conspired with a maidservant to do away with her. Having decided on the act he began to consider 'what course he were best to take, to rid himself of her', at which point 'the Divell failed not to fitte him with a Divelish devise'. He would suffocate her and attribute her death to her long and well known illness.⁶⁹ Having instilled murderous envy in the mind of Thomas Smith, Satan did not fail to provide also a plan of how the act might be committed. 'A thousand Devises were canvazed over by this lewde man', so the narrator tells us, 'at last, as the deuill wanteth no occasions to helpe man forward to his own destruction, so he presenteth Smith with a fit opportunity whereby he might execute the sum of his bloody will'.⁷⁰ The 'deuilish devise' provided to Smith—to suffocate his wife by forcing a cloth down her throat—was so heinous that even those confirmed diabolic humans, Jews and Turks, would be shocked by it.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, pp. 66-67.

⁶⁹ *Two Horrible and inhumane murthers. Done in Linconeshire by two husbands* (London, 1607), pp. 37-8.

⁷⁰ *A briefe discourse of two most cruell and bloudie Murthers*, sig. A5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v; similarly see Anon., *A Blazing Starre seene in the West at totnets in Devonshire...*, *Wherein is manifested how Master Ralph Ashley, a devout Cavalier, attempted to ravish a young Virgin, the daughter of Mr. Adam Fisher, inhabiting neare the said towne* (London, 1642), sig. A3.

But appealing to the commonplace emotions in which crime originated was not always sufficient to convincingly place the experience of criminals within the scope of the audience's empathy. Cumulative sin might present the didactic model of the descent into crime, but such moralising warned only of what was to come, it did not directly appeal to the reader's experience. The balancing act between the motivations of self-indulgence and social responsibility was likely to have been within the experience of the majority of the audience, and many of the narratives recognised the need to incorporate the cycles of conscience that were symptomatic of the competition between good and evil motions within the mind.

* * *

Such was the emphasis on the diabolic metal/spiritual state of murderers that, for all the pamphlets lovingly retold the bloodiest aspects of the crime, the acts themselves tended not to be directly demonized. There was no sense that the act of stabbing, bludgeoning or poisoning characterised the diabolic, even if the acts of murderers could be excessively violent. Master Page was strangled in his bed, evidence of the desperate struggle seen in the self-inflicted wounds left when he tore at his throat to try to free himself, 'even in the anguish of death'. By contrast the wife of Thomas Cash, weakened by illness, in 'no way was able to make resistance against his barbarous crueltie'. But again it was the 'psychological' state in which these acts were carried out which confirmed the Devil's hold over the murderer, not the acts themselves. As with premeditation, such cruelty required a degree of will-power and single-mindedness which could only originate with Satan. It was the savagery with which the Bristol man, John Kynvester, stabbed his wife to which attention was drawn. 'A wound or twoo had bene enow / If it had been no more', yet every spark of life in the injured woman had merely driven Kynvester further into a frenzy. Unaware of his murderous intent, Thomas Cash's wife had 'spoke in kind and loving manner unto him', which should have placated him, but, 'the divell growing great within him, and pricking him forwardes to the pretended murther', he abandoned all constraint of conscience and husbandly feeling.⁷² In the case of John Reynolds' Alibius, when an initial attempt to poison his wife failed he remained focused—'the deuill had bewitched his understanding and judgement: for he could see by no other eyes, but those of revenge and bloud'.⁷³ Sometimes the Devil's influence rendered murderers so blood-thirsty that the deaths of their victims were not enough. In 1605, the nobleman Sir John Fitz, killed an innkeeper in Twickenham. The killing might have been expected to assuage his violent madness, 'yet was the Devil so strong in him, as that not contented therewith, he prickes him on vnto further mischiefe: he will not be

⁷² *Two horrible and inhumaine murthers*, p. 38

⁷³ Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, p. 68.

satisfied vnlesse he shed his own blood likewise'. Fitz inserted his sword into a mud wall, enabling him to run himself through.⁷⁴

Perhaps the best example of the Devil's work on the criminal's mental state is contained in the pamphlet produced by a number of non-conformist divines to tell the story of Thomas Savage. Savage, a profligate who went from sabbath-breaking to consorting with prostitutes, was persuaded by one 'vile strumpet' to steal money from his master, a vintner to whom he was apprenticed. His initial resistance stemmed not from morality but from practicality, to rob his master he would first have to kill the housemaid. On the day he finally committed the killing he returned to his master's house having been with his prostitute. Even though she had 'again perswaded him to knock the Maid on the head', there is no indication in the narrative that he actually intended to do so. Rather than premeditation proper, his violence seems to have been the result of an argument he had with the maid. She berated him for consorting with prostitutes, and, as he grew angry, the Devil took hold of his thoughts. 'While he was at Dinner', the pamphlet relates, 'the Devil entered so strong into him, that nothing would satisfie but he must kill her, and no other way but with a hammer'. Throwing a hammer at the maid he knocked her down, but having committed the initial assault he was paralysed, and although he attempted three times to bludgeon her, he could not complete the killing. It was only through Satan's influence that the frenzy was renewed, as the pamphlet describes, 'at last the Diuel was so great with him, that he taketh the hammer and striketh her many blows with all the force he could and even rejoyced that he had got the victory over her'.⁷⁵

It has been noted that demonized criminals in the period did not exhibit the devillish physical characteristics—such as horns or tails—that had been applied to marginalised groups in medieval Europe. But there was a diabolic physicality which was symptomatic of the Devil's in hold on the mind in the same way as the convulsions and ravings of demoniacs. Rather than in aberrant (preternatural) characteristics, demonic physicality was embodied as a human grotesque, exhibiting an hysterical, murderous frenzy and unnatural strength. John Fitz provides one of the most explicit examples. Suffering from an hysterical fear of being pursued for a previous killing, Fitz had appeared:

his eyes looking as if they hadde sparked forth fire; his countenance so terrible and ghastly, as that it was of the power to have scarred a mann out of his wittes; and his

⁷⁴ *The Bloudy Book, or the tragicall and desperate end of Sir Iohn Fites (alias) Fitz* (London, 1605), sigs. D3-E3.

⁷⁵ Robert Franklin, Thomas Vincent, Thomas Doolitel, James Janeway, Hugh Baker, *A Murderer Punished and Pardoned: Or, a True Relation of the Wicked Life, and Shameful-Happy death of Thomas Savage* (London, 1668), p. 4.

strength so forceable...it was bootles for one or two to withstand him, (for needs must he go whom the divell drives)⁷⁶

* * *

But more striking was the way diabolic intrusion turned its victims into 'emotional grotesques'. Criminals mediated Satan's agency because his influence had wrought within their consciousness some fundamental confusion of morality and judgement. As empathy demanded that the reader recognise the motivating emotions of the murderer, it could also bring into focus the satanic disruption visited upon moral reasoning. Accompanying diabolic intrusion was a progressive moral degeneration, another potential vicarious experience for the reader, by which he could 'feel' the Devil turn the criminal into a human grotesque. Rather than being the unthinking servants of Satan, criminals were seen to share a basic interest with him, expressed in a corrupted moral logic. This perverse reasoning marked the crime out as far beyond the pale of endemic human sin, but the workings of the criminal's mind were still assumed to be intuitively comprehensible to the audience.

In the narrative of the Penryn murder, diabolically induced confusion was expressed in the step-mother's careless assumption that her crime might go unpunished. The author equates her with Eve when he notes that:

she like her first Grandam, seeing the golde fare to look too, and the taske easily and without much danger to be affected, tooke the Deuill at his worde, and tyed her self to him with an oath, that if she might peaceably inioy the gold, the true owner of it should never wake.⁷⁷

In resisting temptation, the father concentrated on the inevitable 'strange iudgements of God' worked on those guilty of murder, demonstrating a concern for his spiritual estate in stark contrast to her carelessness. 'He concluded his speech with that part of scripture; What will it awayle a man or woman to get the whole world, and lose his owne soule', the pamphlet noted, implying his potential for godliness.⁷⁸ But Satan's control over the step-mother's mind was total, 'for such a deepe impression of gaine, and palpable reasons of safety, had the Deuill granted in her thoughts, twas impossible to rub them out'.⁷⁹ If presumption and despair represented the poles of spiritual experience, each potentially indicating reprobation, Protestant soteriology was clear as to which was the most dangerous.

⁷⁶ *The Bloudy Book*, sig. D4.

⁷⁷ *Newes from Perin*, sig. B5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

In *The Practise of Piety* Lewis Bayly wrote 'despaire is nothing so dangerous as presumption; for we read not in all the scriptures of above three or foure whom roaring despaire ouerthrew; but secure presumption hath sent millions to Perdition without any noise'.⁸⁰ Presumption here expressed not a misreading of the Protestant ideal of assurance, but rather a careless assumption of a more general and less demanding election than that predicted by strict predestination. The step-mother's arguments did not stem from antinomianism, but from a spiritual carelessness instilled by Satan, 'whose advocate she was'.⁸¹ In her words and conduct, spiritual and physical safety were equated, and her condition for carrying out the killing—that she should be allowed to enjoy her gold 'peaceably'—was to be read as a reference to both conscience and liberty. Her husband, even as he committed the act, was achingly aware that a difference must be drawn between man's earthly estate and that in which he will spend eternity. Even the former is so precarious that the latter can never be ignored; God's providence might be visited on a man at a moment if it is exercised by such a sin as murder. The confusion of the step-mother's moral reasoning was Satan's triumph. As William Perkins eloquently expressed it, in a treatise on the flesh and the spirit, the Devil was 'painting out the eye of the mind with the deceitfull profits and pleasures of poisonous sin'.⁸² In the Penryn narrative the father's method of murdering his son, slitting his throat, was to be seen in all its unnatural horror, evidenced by the prodigy that accompanied it: the beating and crying of a screech-owl at the window 'as if she had said, Awake young man awake'.⁸³ But again it was not so much the act that was diabolic as the step-mother's spiritually careless belief that it could go unpunished. The audience was to recognise that such emotions were incongruous with the act being carried out; moral reasoning had been lost.

Nor was it the act of poisoning which was diabolic in Gilbert Dugdale's account of Elizabeth Caldwell, but instead her inability to bring herself to prevent it. The satanic assault on Caldwell produced in her a kind of moral degradation, in which the moral reasoning, whilst remaining intact, was unable to assert itself over the evil that surrounded it. Throughout her seduction by Jeffrey Bownd and Isobel Hall, her developed godly conscience struggled to regain its moral equilibrium, an experience internalised as a diabolically induced psychomachia, and externally expressed as an attempt to persuade Bownd from his course:

⁸⁰ Bayly, *The Practice of Piety*, p. 133.

⁸¹ *News from Perin*, sig. B5.

⁸² William Perkins, *Two Treatises: I. Of the Nature and Practice of Repentance. II. Of the Combate of the Flesh and the Spirit*, in his *Works*, vol. I, p. 463.

⁸³ *News from Perin*, sig. C.

shee often times entring into consideration with herselfe, what a damnable part it was, first to abuse her husbands bed, and then in seeming to deprive him of his life, was greatly tormented in her conscience, and divers times, earnestlie intreated them to surcease in this practice, laying before them the great and heavy punishments, provided for such offenders in the world to come.⁸⁴

When Caldwell finally acquiesced to the murder, and gave her husband poisoned oat-cakes, her conscience was struggling to assert itself to the last. 'So soone as he was departed the chamber with the cakes', Dugdale noted, 'feare drove such a terror to her hart as she lay in bed, as she even trembled with remorse of conscience, yet wanted the power to call to him to refraine them'. Poisoning, as a secret crime, was reserved special condemnation in contemporary jurisprudence, yet Dugdale's pamphlet made no attempt to suggest that this method was unusually diabolic when practised by Caldwell and her tempters.⁸⁵ Instead it was this inability to warn her husband that confirmed her moral degradation. It was true that she committed a diabolic act in acceding to the poisoning, but more significant was that she failed to commit a godly act in preventing the crime when the opportunity was presented to her. Through the employment of his instruments, Bownd and Hall, the Devil laid, not a single snare, but a web to catch Caldwell's soul, and envelopment allowed her godly instincts to be almost completely stifled. This seems to have been how Caldwell herself came to view her crime. In her execution speech she reportedly stated that her sin stemmed from 'her owne filthy flesh, the illutions of the deuill, and those hellish instruments which he set on worke: yet notwithstanding, she ever had a detestation to those sinnes that she lived in, but she affirmed that she wanted the grace to avoid them'.⁸⁶

Perhaps the most developed expression of the diabolic confusion of moral reasoning is to be found in those murders which betrayed patriarchal obligations to protect and maternal obligations to nurture—uxoricide and infanticide. The response to petty treason has often been seen to express particular fears over the fragility of patriarchy, the crime was, after all specifically defined in law, whereas uxoricide was not. But in uxoricide a man abandoned the ideal of reasoned government over his wife and embraced a form of domestic oppression which Frances Dolan has usefully termed 'petty tyranny'.⁸⁷ In such cases the illogicality of destroying one's own household was presented as chaotically demonic. In 1573, John Kynvester confessed to murdering his wife as the result of a demonic

⁸⁴ Dugdale, *A True discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Caldwell*, sig. B.

⁸⁵ For a useful discussion of the cultural resonance of poisoning and their manipulation in the court process, see David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard*, pp. 164-167.

⁸⁶ Dugdale, *A True discourse of the Practices of Elizabeth Caldwell*, sig. D.

⁸⁷ Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, pp. 106-109.

voice which intruded on his mind urging him to do it. But the act brought none of the hysterical guilt with which the more moralising of the pamphleteers liked to characterise their killers⁸⁸, instead he experienced a bizarre satisfaction. Had he been sure of his escape, he commented, he would have called his neighbours 'to see what had between us fall', and eventually the urge to exhibit his work proved irresistible:

For then my wife on ground laie dedde,
Before a slepe she was on bedde,
And yet my minde was awaies ledde,
Against her for to be,
For I no sorrowe yet did taste,
Rose up againe in all the hast,
Out at a windowe I her cast,
Cause people should her see.⁸⁹

Confirmed in sin, Kynvester embraced chaos for its own sake—there was no inversion or perverted logic behind his violence and his pride in meaningless, chaotic destruction was a demonstration of the indelible change the Devil had wrought on his moral faculties. As readers were able to recognise the commonplace emotions that led to murder, they might also identify the fundamental dislocation of morality, emotion and context which diabolic temptation produced. Satisfaction was utterly incongruous with the act Kynvester had carried out, whilst other emotions which should have been present, such as pity and remorse, were conspicuously absent. The implication was that Satan had stifled the workings of the murderer's humanity. In another example, John Reynolds endowed his narrative of Alibius' murder of his wife with overtones of suicide, equating wife-murder with an abandonment of the natural human instinct of self-preservation which could only be diabolic. 'To kill those who love us', he

⁸⁸ Anthony Munday succinctly expressed a common view, 'horroure and feare alwayes accompanieth the murtherer, his owne conscience is to him a thousand witnesses, hee standeth in dreade of every bush, beast and birde, he imagineth that every thing discouereth his euill, and many times it falleth out, that the silly creatures of the earth detecteth him', *Sundrye strange and inhumaine murthers*, sig. A2.

⁸⁹ *A true reporte or description of...Jhon Kynvester*, sig. A5. The importance of an assessment of the murderer's emotional state after the fact, and the utility of the Devil in providing one is hinted at by other pamphlets. The bawd and petty-traitor Margaret Ferneseede seems to have been convicted on purely circumstantial evidence, and the account lays a great stress on her inability to even feign sorrow over the death of her husband—'she whome the Deuill now would not suffer to dissemble, (though his greatest art be in dissimulation)'. The implication was that Ferneseede was either unaware of the nature of her crime or utterly careless of its consequent punishment, the Devil's hold was so strong that she could not/would not even approximate the emotions of innocence in order to hide her guilt. *The Araignment & Burning of Margaret Ferne-seede, for the Murther of her late husband Anthony Ferne-seede, found dead in Peckham Field neere Lambeth* (London, 1608), sig. A4.

noted, 'and to deprive those of life, who (did occasion present) are ready to sacrifice theirs for the preservation of ours, it must needs proceed rather from a monster then a man, or rather from a devill then a monster'.⁹⁰

Child-murder in early modern England was most commonly infanticide, a crime of desperation carried out by women in order to escape the consequences of bearing an illegitimate child.⁹¹ But again pamphlet narratives could be starkly at odds with the real nature of crime, and in some cases another diabolic perversion of familial logic accounted for the murder of children. Parents were shown murdering their offspring in a confused effort to protect them. Such was the case with Margaret Vincent in 1616, whose Catholicism drove her to kill two of her children. At first her husband had indulged her religion and attempted to persuade her from it, but eventually he grew tired of debating with her, 'many times snubbing her with some few unkinde speeches which bred in her heart a purpose of most extremity'. Vincent became convinced that murder was the only way to save her children from Protestantism:

For having learned this maxim of their Religion, that it was merritorious, yea and pardonable, to take away the lives of any opposing Protestants, were it of any degree whatsoever, in which resolution of bloody purpose she long stood vpon and at last onley by the Diuels temptation resolued the ruine of her owne children, affirming to her conscience these reasons, that they were brought up in blindnes and darksome errours, hoodwinked (by her husbands instructions) from the true light, and therefore to save their soule (as she vainly thought) she purposed to become a Tygerous Mother and so wolvisly to commit the murder of her owne flesh and blood, in which opinion she steadfastly continued, never relenting according to nature, but casting about to find time and place for so wicked a deed⁹²

'By the fury and assistance of the Devil', Vincent strangled two of her children with a garter, and was only prevented from dispatching a third because it was with a nurse. The author drew attention again and again to her diabolically corrupted logic. Vincent 'by nature should have cherished [her children] with her owne body, as the Pelican which pecks her owne breast to feede her young ones with her own bloode'. The Catholicism that drove Vincent's 'inhumane devotion' put her actions beyond the pale as she became a 'creature not deserving Mother's name'. But rather than an expression of the anti-motherhood which recent witchcraft studies have shown to express a pervasive threat to contemporaries,

⁹⁰ Reynolds, *Triumph of Gods Revenge*, p. 63.

⁹¹ Cynthia Herrup, *The Common Peace*, p. 173; J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England*, pp. 109-110.

⁹² *A pittillesse Mother*, sig. A3.

Vincent's perverted logic was a hollow mask, hiding the Devil's influence.⁹³ As in the case of Sir John Fitz, the emptiness of the act became clear when its commission failed to satisfy her and she was driven in a murderous frenzy to attempt suicide. 'She began to grow desperate and still desire more blood', the pamphlet noted describing how she tried first to hang and then to drown herself.⁹⁴

In other cases the murder of children was an expression of diabolically induced despair, akin to that by which the Devil drove men to suicide.⁹⁵ In John Taylor's account of the crimes of John Rowse, symptoms of diabolically corrupted reasoning allowed the author to explain how this most female of crimes had been taken up by a man. Necessity had driven Rowse to return to his second wife and children, but his poverty and misery made him easy prey to diabolic temptation. 'The Diuell still tempting him to mischiefe and despaire', Taylor observed, 'putting him in mind of his former better estate, comparing pleasures past with present miseries'.⁹⁶ In a state of utter despair Rowse decided to end his children's misery by working 'some meanes to take away their languishing liues by a speedy & vntimely death'.⁹⁷ He drowned them in a water spring in the cellar of his house, but was so 'weary of his life' that he made no attempt to escape.⁹⁸ Taylor's mawkish commentary sought to highlight again the incongruity between the emotional drive and the action, which were symptomatic of the Devil's influence. 'It is too manifestly knowne what a number of Step mothers and Strumpets haue most inhumanely muredred their Children', he commented,

but in the memory of man (nor scarcely in any history) is it not to be found, that a Father did euer take two Inocent Children out of their beds, and with weeping tears of pitillesse pitie, and vnmercifull mercy, to drowne them, showing such compassionate cruelty and sorrowfull sighing, remourselesse remorse in that most vnfatherly and vnnatural deede.

'All of which', Taylor concluded, 'may be attributed to the malice of the Diuell'.⁹⁹

⁹³ Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, pp. 29-65; Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, pp. 129-139.

⁹⁴ *A pittillesse Mother*, sig. A4v; for a discussion of the fluid cultural associations of maternal infanticide with both self-destruction and self-preservation, with reference to *A pittillesse Mother*, see Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, pp. 142-150.

⁹⁵ MacDonald & Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 34-60.

⁹⁶ Taylor, *The Vnnatural Father*, sig. B.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. Bv.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. B2.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. C.

Temptation and the Physical Devil

Whilst physical interaction with the Devil maintained its hold in witchcraft narratives, the notion of internal intrusion did reshape the physical depiction of Satan in some plays and ballads. For obvious reasons theatrical representations of Satan were physical¹⁰⁰, but it is significant that they could be used to dramatise the diabolic intrusion into the mind inherent in temptation. The representations by which demonic activity was 'signposted' to the audience could be appropriated to intimate the invisible workings of the Devil on the conscience.

In Rowley, Dekker and Ford's play *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), diabolic intrusion is represented in a sub-plot concerning the bigamy and then murder committed by Frank Thorney. Duped into secretly marrying Winnifride, he is then pressured into marrying Susan Carter as an advantageous match. He resolves to run away with Winnifride, but the clinging Susan, unaware of his intentions, angers him by trying to hold him back. The Devil has already appeared in the play in the shape of a black dog called Tom, and has forced the old crone, Elizabeth Sawyer, to compact with him and become a witch. Now he appears to drive Thorney to a murder he had not previously contemplated. For the Devil it is just one more malicious act, but in declaring his intention he notes how Thorney's anger has made him susceptible to murderous temptation. 'Now for an early mischief and a sudden', Dog declares, 'The mind's about it now. One touche from me / Soon sets the body forward'.¹⁰¹ As Thorney and Susan argue, Dog approaches and 'rubs' him; a representation of his power over the mind, after which Thorney becomes immediately set on murder:

Frank Thorney. Why, you almost anger me. Pray you, be gone.

You have no company, and 'tis very early;

Some hurt may betide you homewards.

Susan.

Tush! I fear none.

To leave you is the greatest hurt I can suffer.

Besides, I expect your father and mine own

To meet me back, or overtake me with you.

They began to stir when I came after you;

I know they'll not be long.

Frank Thorney. [*Aside*] So. I shall have more trouble.

¹⁰⁰ See for example Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1589); Robert Greene, *The Honourable of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1598); Anon., *The Birth of Merlin, or The Childe hath found his Father* (Elizabethan, printed London, 1668); Anon., *The Merry Devill of Edmonton* (London, 1608); Thomas Dekker, *If This be not a Good Play, the Diuell is in It* (1612).

¹⁰¹ Rowley, Dekker & Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, III, iii, 1-3.

DOG rubs him.

Thank you for that. Then I'll ease all at once.

'Tis done now, what I ne're thought on. [*To her*]

You shall not go back.

Susan. Why? Shall I go along with thee? Sweet music!

Frank Thorney. No, to a better place.

Susan. Any place, I.

I'm there at home where thou pleasest to have me.

Frank Thorney. At home? I'll leave you in your last lodging.

I must kill you.

Susan. O, fine! You'd fright me from you.

Frank Thorney. You see I had no purpose, I'm unarmed.

'Tis this minute's decree, and it must be.

Look, this will serve your turn.

[*Draws a knife*]

.

Your marriage was my theft,

For I espoused your dowry, and I have it.

I did not purpose to have added murder;

The devil did not prompt me. Till this minute

You might have safe returned; now you cannot.

You have dogged your own death.

*Stabs her.*¹⁰²

Through the physical action of Dog, the audience—who are invited to use the same special insight as the readers of the murder pamphlets—perceive the Devil take hold of Thorney's will, which he himself does not. Thus the scene dramatised the ease with which the Devil might place thoughts of murder in a mind already given over to sin, and how those thoughts could appear to originate within the individual.¹⁰³

Similarly, the early seventeenth-century ballad, *A new Ballad, shewing the great misery sustained by a poore man in Essex, his wife and children, with other strange things*

¹⁰² Ibid., III, iii, 7-25 & 34-40.

¹⁰³ For other examples in which the physicality of the stage expressed a dynamic of satanic envelopment and intrusion, unseen to the protagonists by shown to the insight of the audience see, William Shakespeare, *Othello*, passim, esp. II, iii, 315-329; *Macbeth*, I, iii, 133-141, I, v, 48-52; Anon., *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (London, 1608), V, 43, 57-62; Anon., *The Life of Mother Shipton: A New Comedy* (London, 1660), I, i.

done by the Devil demonstrates how comfortably these pictures of the diabolic corruption of moral reasoning could sit with the more folkloric elements of popular narratives. The ballad may loosely be based on a real event, but is an amalgam of folklore, contemporary views on social responsibility and the motivation for entering into a diabolic pact, and the role of the Devil in driving men to murder; all glossed with a Protestant rhetoric of temptation. It does not dwell on the crime itself, indeed murder only becomes likely towards the end of the story, and is averted by the last minute return of a local gentry-man. Instead it concentrates on how the poor man is propelled by his desperate circumstances into the path of the Devil.¹⁰⁴

The narrative tells of the terrible pressure on the poor man to find food for his starving family. His wife is lying in after the birth of another child, and his other children beg him 'pittiously' to provide for them. The poor man resolves to go to a wood to find acorns to roast, and on the way meets several farmers from whom he begs food. In a parallel of the witch's fall, charity is refused by these 'churlish sort', who reject his offer to work in return, claiming they have already given him too much. The poor man is now in a suitable mental state to encounter the Devil, who appears in human form: 'behold! / a tall man did him meet, / And cole-black were his garments all / from his head to his feet'. When the Devil asks him why he is so wretched, the poor man, without knowing who it is, asks to borrow some money. In other folk-tales in which humans made pacts with the Devil, they did so with seemingly little threat to their eternal souls once Satan's immediate machinations were thwarted. In *The Poor Man*, however, the heinousness of his unwitting apostasy is made clear, associating the narrative with more self-consciously Protestant concerns over the dangers of hidden diabolism within the 'quick-fix' culture of cunning men and folk magic.¹⁰⁵ 'Hereby', the ballad declares, 'this wretched man / committed wondrous evill, / He begd an almes, and did not know / he askt it of the Devill'. The Protestant emphasis becomes more apparent when Satan, adopting his familiar tempting guise as sophister, attempts to undermine the poor man's godly self-conception. He taunts him with questions such as 'an odious sinner art thou then, / that dost such want sustain?' and 'if thou so faithfull be, / why goest thou begging then?' The poor man is able to overcome these questions with reference to Job, and explicitly places himself among the 'godly'. The narrative re-adopts its folkloric style when finally the Devil gives him 'the fairest purse in sight / That ever mortall eye beheld', with a promise that he should have more if he wants it.

¹⁰⁴ *A new Ballad, shewing the great misery sustained by a poore man in Essex, his wife and children, with other strange things done by the Devill* (c1620-1630), pp. 286-287.

¹⁰⁵ Stuart Clark, 'The rational witchfinder: conscience, demonological naturalism and popular superstitions', in S. Pumfrey, P. L. Rossi & M. Slawinski (eds.), *Science, culture and popular belief in Renaissance Europe* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 227-235.

The poor man has fallen foul of a classic trick of the Devil, for when he gets home to his family he finds the money in the purse has turned to oak leaves. Returning to the wood to try to find the money, he encounters the Devil again, who tells him to look inside his shirt, where he had kept the purse. When the poor man finds no money, but his shirt full of toads, he is finally overcome by the Devil's arguments that his troubles are a sign of his reprobation, allowing the Devil to introduce thoughts of suicide and murder into his mind:

'See', quoth the Devill, 'vengeance doth
pursue thee every houre!
Goe, cursed wretch!', quoth he,
'and rid away thy life;
But murther first thy children yong
and miserable wife.

The poor man, 'raging mad', heads home to commit the deed, but the Devil's plan is thwarted by the providential return of 'the chieftest man / that in that parish dwelt', bringing food and money which he, in contrast to the 'churlish' farmers, deals out liberally. He has the poor man bound to his bed until, after a long sickness, he is cured of his murderous thoughts. The ballad ends with a plea to God to similarly protect others 'from all temptations'.

Thus whilst a distinction between physical and internal temptation persisted, it it only remained sharply drawn in witchcraft narratives. In other areas of culture the conception of temptation was more fluid, and more susceptible to the influence of the Protestant emphasis on internal intrusion. Through the use of 'unseen' characters on stage, or the depiction of sudden changes in character after physical contact with Satan, audiences could be expected to understand the insidious nature of the diabolic subversion of the will. Perhaps, as with the murder pamphlets, they might also be expected to enter into the scheme of special insight into satanic agency, and experience an empathy with the victim of temptation.

Conclusion

Is this, then, what the Devil was to the reader of the narrative of diabolically inspired crime? It is at least what their authors hoped he would be. The responses of the readers themselves are unrecoverable, but the depiction of diabolically inspired crime is consistent enough, throughout the seventeenth-century and into the eighteenth-, to suggest that it found favour with the readership. We cannot

assume that readers responded to a narrative as a whole, and we must recognise their ability to enjoy a story without accepting, or even listening to any of the moralising or demonization contained within it. But I would suggest that the depiction of the Devil in these narratives is so bound up with the appeal to the audience's emotional empathy, and *vice versa*; and the emotions the Devil is assumed to manipulate so commonplace, that the stories become incomprehensible without to some degree entering into the dynamic of diabolic temptation depicted in them. Diabolism in criminal narratives, it is being argued, allowed the threat of demonic temptation and its consequences to be made insidious by interpreting it as the amplification of corrupt human traits and drives, recognised and identified with by the reader. This picture of diabolic agency corresponded to that being produced in theological and conduct literature, and was essentially Protestant. Even if the audience did not fully internalise the *consequences* of the dynamic of diabolic temptation, these narratives were an effective method of delineating a Satanic agency contained by the re-focused Protestant remit of his activity. The apostate step-mother took the Devil at his word when he appealed to her spiritual carelessness and he set up his kingdom, piece by piece, in opposition to that of Christ. Caldwell's sin was spiritual weakness and the Devil was the stifling enveloper, blocking out the godly influence she so badly needed. The very emphasis on the havoc Satan wreaked on moral judgement provided further evidence of the consequences of temptation, to be understood vicariously by the reader.

The art historian, Luther Link, describing the difficulty artists and iconographers had depicting Satan, notes that he was essentially an abstraction, and that 'not convincingly felt as a "person", he could not be shown as an evil force'.¹⁰⁶ The use of the Devil in the crime narratives would not lead us to such a conclusion. Satan was an empathic expression of the potential for evil found within men, but he was not a symbolic projection. The conception of the Devil's temptation as an internal working of the mind was not a half-way house on the way to an acceptance of the potential for purely human evil. Rather it was a sophisticated appeal to the imagination that did not transplant evil to the removed safety of the monstrous. Murderers and witches, accepting the Devil's terms and being morally/spiritually transformed by them, were, in a very literal sense, 'incarnate devils'. As such they embodied and expressed Satan's agency for those with the required insight to see. Perception did not involve a distanced observation, it required an engagement with the world of the diabolic, and incarnate devils facilitated that engagement. Rather than marginalising his influence around a criminal element, demonization through temptation affected to bring ordinary people closer to the Devil. No reassurance was offered by asking

¹⁰⁶ Link, *The Devil*, p. 183.

the audience to empathise with the emotional experience of insidious temptation. Through guided empathy the Devil might indeed be 'felt'. It seems that, potentially, in the empathic expression of diabolic influence, rather than its animistic representation, the Devil might be experienced vicariously as never before.

Part Three

The Temptation of the Body Politic

‘What Concord hath Christ with Belial?’: De Facto Satanism and the Temptation of the Body Politic, 1570-1640

As internal temptation allowed the godly, and not-so-godly, to engage with the experience of the demonic subversion of the conscience, so a concept of the temptation of the body politic provided a parallel political analogy which gave a focus to the perception of the subversion of the commonwealth. The final part of this study examines the development of this discourse within England’s internal politics, from its definition in Elizabethan conflicts over religious subversion and treason, to the Caroline regime’s increasing inability to maintain a theocratic opposition between kingship and diabolism, and ultimately to the reactions to the breakdown of government in the 1640s, in which the perception of diabolism pervaded the polemic of both the royalist and parliamentary parties.

It has been argued by a number of historians of the early modern period that the English political nation possessed no language of opposition. Political rhetoric was dominated by an emphasis on consensus, and thus conflict originated in disagreements over the practical operation of the constitution.¹ This picture has been supported by recent work on witchcraft, which has highlighted the way in which an equation between witchcraft and rebellion provided, in Peter Elmer’s words, a ‘normative system of discourse which fostered unity and concord in the body politic’.² Moreover this discourse could only survive as an instrument of consensus. Its factionalisation during the Civil War, Dr Elmer argues, destroyed entirely witchcraft’s political vitality.³ The ideas, and the practice of divine kingship were bound up with a perceived opposition between what Stuart Clark has called ‘marvellous monarchy’ and witchcraft as anti-government. The

¹ Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution*, p. 9; Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, chapters 5-7, passim; Conrad Russell, ‘Divine Rights in the Early Seventeenth Century’, in J. Morrill, P. Slack & D. Woolf (eds.), *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England: Essays Presented to G.E. Aylmer* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 101-120; in contrast see Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, p. 3-4; Richard Cust & Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* (London, 1989).

² Peter Elmer, “‘Saints or sorcerers’” p. 174.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175, 179.

position was expressed by consistent reference to 1 Samuel 15: 23.—'For Rebellion is the sin of witchcraft'.⁴ This rhetoric of consensual politics was employed widely through early modern Europe to demonstrate the mirror kingly authority provided to its divine origin. Challenges to that authority must by definition be an expression of the contrariety practised by God's ape. Theocracy, as with so many early modern political, religious and social tenets, was best understood through an exploration of its antithesis, but preaching consensual politics as an ideal was not the same as practising it. Johann Sommerville has demonstrated that profoundly different views on the nature of politics underlay agreement on the principle of unity, and Linda Levy Peck has argued persuasively that the ideology of political patronage, and the perception of its abuse, provided a language in which opposition might be expressed through accusations of corruption, and which would eventually be used to justify the overthrow of a supposedly absolute monarch.⁵

The hitherto unexplored prevalence of a concept of diabolic subversion of the commonwealth provides a similar qualification. Within a decade of the Elizabethan settlement of 1559, a number of interested groups were arguing that the English body politic was as prey to temptation as the individual human body. In the established church hierarchy, and even in the operation of Elizabeth's parliaments, lay a satanic presence which threatened to seduce men into evil against the commonwealth. As we have seen, temptation was understood to involve the Devil entering the mind and exploiting the evil potential already lying within. Spiritual health involved actively resisting his influence and suppressing the insidious corruption he introduced into the conscience. The diabolic potential that lay within the commonwealth was the human population itself. Every individual was corrupted with the legacy of Adam and his inherent sinfulness might be activated if the Devil managed to introduce the right triggers into the nation. Belief in the parallel temptation of body and body politic did not, of course, in itself constitute a language of opposition. It still maintained an ideal of consensual Christian government and presented satanic agency as driven by a desire to subvert that ideal. Yet where the Devil's triggers were to be found was an open question and one which allowed individuals to interpret those aspects of church or state to which they were opposed—and, as importantly, those in opposition themselves—as pollutants from the Devil, who sought to seduce the nation into apostasy. For some the maintenance of the Devil's episcopacy

⁴ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, chapter 41; Elmer, "Saints or Sorcerers", pp. 164-165.

⁵ Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, passim; Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in early Stuart England* (London, 1990), pp. 185-221.

provoked arrogance and tyranny in the bishops' government of the church. Similarly papal claims to deposing power could appear to be a trigger that could ignite regicidal fervour in once-loyal Catholic subjects. Or the justifications of divine right in the 1620s might seem to tempt the King to tyranny.

For many the ideal of consensus under theocracy could not be allowed to overshadow the importance of establishing and maintaining the purity of the Christian commonwealth. 1 Samuel 15: 23 might express the diabolism of opposition/rebellion, but it was only one of a number of scriptures commonly cited to guide political judgement and action. Equally prevalent was 2 Corinthians 6: 14-15—'What Concord hath Christ with Belial?' Used extensively in anti-Catholic synagogue of Satan polemic, the text demanded an absolute purity of religion and church government, and was extensively used by nonconformists and separatists to denounce the tolerance of popish remnants they perceived in the reformed church. A further reference to 2 Corinthians 11: 14.—'for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'—warned against the potential dangers inherent in that which might appear most beneficial or harmless. Whilst all but the most radical separatist paid lip service to the ideal of consensus under the (more or less) divine monarch, many not only believed in the possibility of the demonic temptation of the commonwealth, but were also ready to vehemently argue divergent views as to where that corruption lay, often placing it at the heart of politics, culture or religion. Those most vocal in expressing these concerns were naturally those with an axe to grind, but there is no reason to suppose the perception of diabolic subversion was extremist in itself. It was a legacy of the confessional disputes of the reformation which have been examined above, bound up with the popular fear of Catholics and witches, and it also fed the concerns over disorder, which historians have shown to be widely shared in the period.

The Elizabethan Religious Controversies and the Concept of *De Facto* Satanism

The 'synagogue of Satan' was as suited to the denunciation of perceived failure of Protestant reform as it was to the stigmatisation of Catholicism. It rested, as we have seen, on a monopoly of interpretation demanding that the Devil be seen hidden in that which might not appear diabolic. Moreover it had been extensively used to stigmatise popish ceremony and the episcopacy, elements which for many remained troublingly 'half reformed' after 1559. If the popish episcopate was by nature the Devil's hierarchy, why should the English bishops be seen any differently? Potential for further trouble inhered in the idea that the greatest

threat to the true church lay, not from a frontal assault, but from demonic subversion. If the Devil had been able to corrupt so totally the primitive church from the inside, might not he be able to do the same to the fragile reformed faith, beset by foreign enemies and threatened from within by an uncertain number of recusants? Whilst they naturally adhered to a single interpretative and polemical scheme, which highlighted demonic subversion as the greatest threat facing the reformed faith, Protestant conformists and nonconformists each perceived that subversion to inhere in the divergent activities of conformity and resistance. In the hands of Protestant controversialists the synagogue of Satan exhibited demonism's potential to be a sharply politicised interpretative scheme within the English establishment half a century before the outbreak of the Civil War.

Concern over the demonic subversion of the faith became increasingly prevalent after the religious settlement of 1559, as the prospect of further reformation seemed to diminish, and the Elizabethan regime demonstrated its willingness to enforce conformity. Clerical dress, the maintenance of superstitious elements in the sacraments and the precedence given to the reading of prepared homilies and injunctions over the pure preaching of the word; all were condemned as popish and antichristian remnants polluting the reformed faith.⁶ For nonconformists toleration of these remnants constituted the reality of a *de facto* satanism within the church. Since these practices had been the very cornerstones of the demonic subversion of the primitive church they maintained, by definition, a satanic presence within the reformed faith. Indeed, refusing to cleanse the English church of long-term diabolic subversion was tantamount to advocacy. A manuscript dialogue, probably written by William Turner, interpreted the surplice as a diabolic symbol of the Marian persecution. 'Have you forgotten', Turner's nonconformist demanded, 'those cruel and popish butchers which not long ago burned so many Christian martyrs, *which had on their heads such woollen horns?*'⁷ It was a taste of what was to come when frustration forced an accommodation of moderates and radicals around the issue of presbyterianism. For reformers like Edward Dering and Thomas Cartwright, the church presented a bewildering mixture of Protestant self-awareness, anti-Catholicism and half-measures at reform, with the maintenance of un-sanctioned popish remnants and the active

⁶ Thomas Wilcox & John Field, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1572), in *Puritan Manifestos: A Study of the Origins of the Puritan Revolt*, eds. W. H. Frere & C. E. Douglas (London, 1907, reprinted, 1954), pp. 5-39.

⁷ Quoted in Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 95, my emphasis; see also the letter of George Withers to Frederick III, Prince Elector Palatine, requesting him to use his influence with Elizabeth against a diabolic attempt to subvert the reformation by introducing Lutheranism, and Hierome Zanchius' letter to Elizabeth I of 10 September 1571, *Zurich Letters (Second Series)*, pp. 157, 339.

suppression of well-intentioned moves to purify the faith. These contradictions became focused in the dichotomy of 2 Corinthians. The English church was mixing Belial with Christ.

Thomas Wilcox and John Field's presbyterian manifesto, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1572), explicitly turned synagogue of Satan polemic onto the English church.⁸ England, it noted, was so far from reformation that 'as yet we are not come to the outward face of the same'.⁹ The Devil's influence was most clearly to be seen in the survival of the episcopate, whose justification was derived unequivocally from the papacy, and hence from the Devil.¹⁰ The Prayer Book ordinance for the consecration of bishops, Field noted, was 'nothing else but a thing worde for worde drawne out of the Popes pontifical, wherin he sheweth himself to be Anti-christ most lively'. Regardless of personnel, a hierarchy derived from papal precedent maintained the Devil's government in the church since 'the Canon law is Antichristian and devilishe, and contrarie to the scriptures'.¹¹

The case for *de facto* satanism was polemically astute. It did not require nonconformists to elaborate on what the bishops had done to encourage diabolism within the English church so much as what they had not done to prevent it. Indeed the burden of proof was firmly laid on the episcopate to show that they were *not* the servants of Satan. The point was well made by the pamphlet *An Exhortation to the Bishops and the Clergie*, a satirical attack made in the wake of the *Admonition*. The pamphlet affected to beg for some clarity on the confusing issue, noting that if the *Admonition* was true, 'we ought not to hear [the bishops], although they speake a truth, more then the devill was to be suffered, although he professed Christ'. If the bishops could prove their innocence men might 'cast away that peevishe and fonde book', but if they could not England faced a stark choice between two deities. 'If Baall be God: folowe him', the author advised, 'if the Lord be God, followe him'.¹² Such rhetoric baited the episcopate by making unacceptable any defence that did not incorporate an active separation of Christ and Belial; akin in effect to the 'when did you stop beating your wife' trap. This

⁸ Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 119.

⁹ Wilcox & Field, *Admonition to the Parliament*, p. 9; see Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I* (London, 1967), pp. 133-137; .

¹⁰ Wilcox & Field, *Admonition to the Parliament*, pp. 11-12, 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30; similarly *An Exhortation to the Bishops* rejected the bishops' claims to tradition, noting, 'antiquitie may deceive us, nay we see it hath deceived us, it is not true to say, it is old, therefore it is good: Sathan hath bene Lord of this world a great while', see *Puritan Manifestos*, p. 76. See also John Greenwood, *A Briefe Refutation of Mr. George Giffard his supposed consimiltude between the Donatists and us* (1591), in *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow 1591-1593*, ed. L. H. Carlson (London, 1970), p. 27.

¹² *An Exhortation to the Bishops and their Clergie*, p. 73.

pre-emptive strike denounced any relative or subjective judgements as to the possible necessity of maintaining some traditional structures, noting,

it is a common saying of two evils it is best to chuse the least: better it is to have a gospel of Christ joined with a peece of Antichrist, then to have none at all: thus they perswade them selves, the other [nonconformists] do not so, they thinke it not lawful to joine God & Belial together: surely they have some reason, nay they have greate reason, for what societie hathe light with darknesse.

The theme was taken up by Thomas Cartwright in his *A Replye to an answere made of M. Doctor Whitgifte* published in 1573. Was the difference between true faith and false doctrine really so muddled that they could no longer be separated without destroying the whole church? 'Seeing that Christ and Belial cannot agree', he noted, 'it is strange that the pure doctrine of the one, and the corruptions of the other, should cleave so fast together, that pure doctrine cannot be, with her safety, severed from the corruptions'.¹³ Since the Corinthians dichotomy remained a prevalent part of conformist attacks on Catholic idolatry, such polemic was probably especially cutting.¹⁴

But if the presbyterians were now prepared to openly talk of a devilish episcopacy, conformists were as willing to denounce presbyterian diabolism. Of course they rejected the assessment of *de facto* satanism within the established church, instead they drew on another aspect of synagogue of Satan polemic, that of 2 Corinthians 11: 14—'for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'. They argued that the nonconformist attack was itself an orchestration by the Devil who, in the face of the success of the reformation, had now to subvert the church anew by adopting the guise of an ardent reformer and throwing religion into chaos. For Whitgift the *Admonition* was driven not by an interest in the faith but by that most diabolic of motives—malice. It was 'not loving, but spiteful, not brotherly, but unchristian, nay no admonition indeed, but a very scolding and uncharitable railing'. As such the church was under no obligation to take notice of it, but it was potentially more sinister still. It sought to overthrow the 'lawful and

¹³ Ibid., pp. 76-77; John Whitgift, *The Defense and answere to the Admonition, against the replie of T. C.*, in *The Works of John Whitgift*, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge, Parker Society, 3 vols., 1851-53), I, p. 39; Robert Harrison & John Browne, *A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthew* (1582), in *The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne*, eds. A. Peel & L. Carlson (London, 1953), p. 211; John Penry, *The Notebook of John Penry 1593*, ed. A. Peel, Camden Society, Third Series, LXVII, (1944), p. 33; similar remarks were made by Job Throckmorton, quoted in Richard Bancroft, *Dangerous Positions and proceedings* (London, 1593), p. 58.

¹⁴ See for example the Elizabethan contribution to the homilies, 'An Homily of the Right Use of the Church', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 172-173.

convenient' practices of the church and replace them with chaos and confusion, exchanging sound government for disorder. Seen in this light the true nature of the *Admonition* was all too clear. It was 'the extreme refuge of Satan, when by other means he cannot, then to seek the overthrow of the gospel through contention about external things'.¹⁵

The initial burst of agitation for presbyterianism was short-lived and commanded only limited support, but its rhetoric continued to influence the nonconformist attitude to the established church and its government. The Marprelate controversy gave more focus to these debates, and took the bishop-baiting begun by the *Exhortation* to new heights. But behind their satire, the Marprelate pamphlets made very serious points about the political and pastoral consequences of diabolic subversion. Marprelate did not disguise his delight at having (so he believed) caught out the dean of Salisbury, John Bridges. Bridges, writing against Cartwright in 1587, had claimed that there were only bishops of God and bishops of the Devil, the latter being those whose authority relied on man rather than the word.¹⁶ For Marprelate Bridges' own words put him between a rock and a hard place, since in order to deny episcopal diabolism he had to deny Elizabeth's authority over the English church. 'Our bishops are the bishops of the diuel', he gloated in *Hay any work for Cooper* (1589), 'or their callings cannot be defended lawful, without flat and plaine treason in overthrowing her Maiesties supremacie'.¹⁷ In the light of Elizabeth's high profile defence of her supremacy, this was far more than frivolous satire.

Similarly Marprelate claimed to have proof of the threat the Corinthians dichotomy posed to the bishops' pastoral authority, and the lengths they were prepared to go to maintain it. In 1586, he noted, members of the parish of Sedbergh had forced Archbishop Whitgift to deprive their Calvinist pastor, Giles Wiggington, by demanding that he take decisive action to separate Christ and Belial. According to the ringleader, one Atkinson,

you are both so contrary the one from the other, that both of you cannot possibly be of God.

If he be of God, it is certain you are of the deuill, and so cannot long stand: for he will be

¹⁵ Whitgift, *The Defense of the Aunswere to the Admonition*, p. 38; see also Heinrich Bullinger's comments to Edwin Sandys (10 March 1574) on the diabolism of separation, *Zurich Letters (Second Series)*, p. 241.

¹⁶ Martin Marprelate, *Certain Mierall and Metaphysicall Schoolpoints to be defended by the reuerende Bishops and the rest of my clergie masters of Conuocation house* (London, 1589), see point 15—'our L Bp [Lord Bishops] in England are the bishops of the diuell: the defendant in this point (I thank him) is father John O Sarum'; Bridges had made the point in, *A defence of the government established in the church of England for ecclesiastical matters* (1587).

¹⁷ Martin Marprelate, *Hay any worke for Cooper* (London, 1589), p. 29.

your ouerthrowe. Amen. If you are of God, then he is of the diuell, as wee thinke him to be. & so being of the deuill, will not you depriue him? Why will you suffer such a one to trouble the Church?

The consequences of failing to separate Christ and Belial were apparently made threateningly clear to Whitgift—the congregation would be forced to draw their own conclusions, which would very likely tend away from sympathy with the Archbishop:

‘Now, if he be of God, why is your course so contrary to his? and rather, why do you not follow him, that we may do so to? Truely, if you do not depriue him, we will thinke him to be of God, and go home with him, with gentler good will towards him than we came hyther with hatred; and looke you for a fall’.

In Marprelate's interpretation Whitgift's bluff was being called and he deprived Wiggington to maintain the disguise over his diabolism.¹⁸

Whilst the perception of diabolic subversion was a powerful polemical device, profound emotional significance attached to the belief that the episcopate was forcing godly men into diabolism. The separatist Henry Barrow grieved that England was possessed of ‘a people so redy and fit for the kingedome of Christ’, yet the bishops suffered them ‘to continue in this confusion, false worship, antichristian bondage, even the snare of the devil’.¹⁹ John Penry, writing in his notebook in 1593, emphasised that the consequences of conformity were simply irreconcilable with his sense of Christian duty. ‘Although wee differ...in no one poynt of the truth established by hir maiestie’, he remarked, episcopal tyranny prevented his practice of worship within the established church ‘except we wold joyne Christ and Antichrist god and Beliall together’.²⁰ This sense of duty

¹⁸ Martin Marprelate, *Oh read over Dr. John Bridges* (London, 1588), pp. 26-27. The confrontation at Sedbergh was not the first time Giles Wiggington had come in to conflict with Whitgift, the two had been enemies at Cambridge when Wiggington was a Fellow of Trinity and Whitgift was vice-chancellor; see H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*, pp. 171-172; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 130; McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*, p. 158. Marprelate reported that Atkinson later repented of his actions and travelled to London the year after Wiggington's deprivation to beg his forgiveness.

¹⁹ Henry Barrow, *A Brief Summe of the Causes of Our Separation*, originally part of *A Plaine Refutation of M. G. Giffardes Reprochful Booke* (1591), in *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London, 1962), p. 129; Greenwood, *A Breife Refutation of Mr. George Giffard*, p. 26.

²⁰ Penry, *Notebook*, p. 33; see also Penry's letter to the deprived nonconformist minister Christopher Goodman, p. 42; in his examination on 10 April, 1593, Penry used similar arguments to contrast the motives of separatists with the diabolical separation of recusants, see Anon., *The Examinations of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, & John Penrie before The High Commissioners, and Lordes of the Counsel* (1593?), reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany II*, pp. 40-41.

bolstered presbyterians and separatists against accusations of schism. 'Is Martin to be blamed for finding out and discovering traitors', Marprelate demanded, 'whether I be favoured or no, I will not cease in the love I owe to her Maiestie...to write against the Diuels bishops'.²¹ In December 1592 Henry Barrow and John Penry defended separatists leaders to Star Chamber by arguing that it was hardly surprising that they should appear seditious given that their beliefs 'cannot be made to accord to [the bishops'] kingdome and works of darkness', yet 'they will not be found contrarie or offensive to anie godly government'.²²

Again the conformist response was to characterise presbyterianism and separatism as diabolic agencies intent on destroying the progress made by the Reformation. These arguments were most forcefully expressed in Thomas Cooper's *An Admonition to the People of England*, published in response to Marprelate in 1589. Satan's resort to presbyterian sedition demonstrated how effectively he had been ousted from the established church, since 'when Sathan seeth the doctrine of trueth to spring up amongst men..., then seeketh hee by lying and slander to discredit it and deface the messengers that God sendeth with his word as instruments that he useth to advance and sette foorth his trueth, by this meanes to worke hinderance to the truth itselfe.' Every watershed in Christian history, Cooper noted, had been met with similar attempts at sabotage.²³ He sought to turn the nonconformist use of the Corinthians dichotomy on its head. Either the bishops were God's chosen instruments of reform, or the progress made by the English church was entirely a sham perpetrated by demonic impostors. 'Christ would not suffer that the devill shoulde utter anything to the glorie of God', he continued, 'and will he suffer "devillish and antichristian" persons to bee the chiefe Preachers and restorers of the Gospell'.²⁴ If the fact of reformation was accepted, then the queen and court were the shepherds, and the bishops the 'barking dogges', that protected the commonwealth, whilst Satan took the form of an angel of light to lend credence to his call to abolish episcopacy.²⁵ Pastoral concern was again prevalent, and Cooper reversed the anti-Catholic stance that

²¹ Marprelate, *Hay any worke for Cooper*, p. 29.

²² Henry Barrow & John Penry, 'To the right honourable the Lords and others of her Majestie's most honourable Privy Counsell', in *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow*, pp. 398-399. The Evidence for Barrow and Penry's authorship is presented by Carlson on pp. 396-397. The supplication was delivered to a clerk but was never actually presented to the Privy Councillors in Star Chamber, see Carlson, p. 395 and Penry, *Notebook*, p. 39; see also Thomas Cartwright's defence against taking the *ex officio* oath in 1590, in which he claimed it was a device employed by Satan to silence those who threatened to reveal the church's hidden corruption, *Cartwrightiana*, eds. A. Peel & L. H. Carlson (London, 1951), p. 41.

²³ Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England*, pp. 17-20, quote at p. 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

had seen episcopacy as empty theatre. Presbyterianism/satanism targeted the bishops because they inspired godly men to a clerical career. 'The frailtie and corruption of mennes nature' (so often the first principle of the Devil's agency) dissuaded men from the clergy without some 'reward of learning'. 'If that state of the Cleargie shall be made contemptable, and the best reward of learning a mean pension: [the Devil] foreseeeth that...yong flourishing wittes will easily incline themselves to godly learning'. Thus there would be 'farre fewer dogges to bark at him, and almost none that shall have teeth to bite those hell houndes'.²⁶

Perceptions of diabolism in the episcopacy fluctuated in prominence with the fortunes of Puritanism, and after the quashing of presbyterianism they became much less pronounced. But recent assertions that, through the maintenance of localised and less high-profile networks, organised Puritanism had far greater continuity than historians have assumed, suggest that there is no reason to suppose that suspicion of the bishops evaporated in the 1590s. Relatively quiet throughout the first decades of the seventeenth-century, printed attacks on the diabolic episcopacy were to explode again in the 1630s, with, if anything, more violence than even Marprelate had been able to muster. As Jackie Eales has argued, whilst Laudian religious policies forced many Puritans into militancy, their desire to be rid of recent innovations such as the Book of Sports and the altar policy was an expression of more long-term objectives that were consciously associated with the Elizabethan Puritan programme.²⁷ As we will see, attacks on the bishops by Puritans such as William Prynne, John Bastwick and John Lilburne were pervaded by a sense that Laudianism fulfilled the potential for diabolism inherent in a half-reformed church. John Lilburne, flogged and pilloried for his involvement in clandestine publishing, believed all bishops came from the Devil and Laud was the most demonic of bishops. But if so he was only the latest, most evil incarnation of the same episcopal tyranny which had sent Penry, Barrow and Greenwood to Tyburn.²⁸

The Divine Monarch and the Devil: Elizabeth I, James I, and Catholic Treachery

Fear of the diabolic subversion of the secular government paralleled that of the church, particularly the belief that Satan lay behind all forms of treason. The problem of the succession, and priority afforded to notions of order and degree,

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²⁷ Jacqueline Eales, 'A Road to Revolution: The Continuity of Puritanism, 1559-1642', in Durston & Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism*, pp. 184-185.

²⁸ John Lilburne, *Come out of her my people* (? London, 1639), pp. 28-29.

made the threat of treason one of the perennial concerns of Elizabeth's reign. Her parliaments were pervaded by warnings of subversion and hidden danger, which argued that her life, and with it the Protestant faith was under constant threat.²⁹ Similarly the Stuarts' vigorous espousal of divine right concentrated attention on the notion of politics as cosmic struggle, and demanded that political action be assimilated into a scheme which posited an absolute separation of light and darkness. Under Elizabeth and James fear of diabolic subversion was focused very firmly on personal threats to the monarch, most notably from disaffected Catholics. Lucifer, the author of the first, and all subsequent rebellions, was believed to personally target these Protestant rulers.

There was of course an obvious connection to be drawn between Lucifer's revolt in heaven and the actions of English rebels. As the regime of Protector Somerset faced uprisings over religion and enclosure in 1549, Thomas Cranmer instituted a programme of sermonising against rebellion. His own notes for an homily on the subject reveal how resistance to reformation was already giving diabolic subversion a specific tangibility. 'The devil can abide no right reformation in religion', he noted. Rebellion, he explained in another sermon, was driven only by a 'devilish' spirit of wanton destruction.³⁰ The rhetoric of temptation was also apparent and Cranmer described how Satan worked on the rebels' spiritual blindness. 'Is it not a great wonder', he noted, 'that the devil should so rob these men of their wits...that they do forget death?'³¹

The Elizabethan regime sought to drive home the connection, including it as one of the fundamental subjects of the 1562 version of the *Book of Homilies*. 'An homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion', was a programme of exposition and thanksgiving in which parishioners were shown the diabolism of rebellion, and encouraged to thank God for the Queen's deliverance.³² It castigated rebels as 'the vile slaves of...Satan' whom 'the devil hath so far inticed against God's word'.³³ Rebellion had to be understood in the context of the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man, which had disrupted the peace of the cosmos and were the 'principal

²⁹ *Proceedings in the parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I, pp. 203-204, 212-218, 283, 299; II, pp. 28-29.

³⁰ Thomas Cranmer, '[Notes for a homily against rebellion]' and 'A sermon concerning the time of rebellion', in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. J. E. Cox (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1846), p. 189, 196; Bishop Bonner followed his instructions to preach that Lucifer was the father of all rebellion, despite using the opportunity to argue for the real presence, for which he was denounced by Latimer and Hooper, see *A & M*, V, pp. 745, 757, 760.

³¹ Cranmer, 'A sermon concerning the time of rebellion', p. 192; see also Edward VI's answer to the Devonshire rebels, *A & M*, V, p. 732; John Hooper's letter to Heinrich Bullinger, 25 June, 1549, in *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, p. 66.

³² The homily consisted of six parts, each to be accompanied by a prayer asking God to protect Elizabeth and the Protestant cause, 'An homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 587-642.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 606, 610, 617-618.

cause both of all worldly and bodily miseries'. As a result God provided man with laws and governors 'lest all things should come unto confusion and utter ruin'. Thus all rebellion was demonic because it threatened to return the world to the chaos Satan had effected by tempting man to disobedience. But the homily implied a more specific analogy between the temptation of man and the temptation of the body politic. The order enshrined in patriarchy—king over commonwealth, husband over wife, parents over children—constrained the chaos wrought by Adam's rebellion in the same way that the individual godly conscience stifled the innate stock of corruption that threatened to lead to sin. As demonic intrusion subverted the conscience and allowed sin to explode within the individual, rebellion could be the catalyst for the exponential growth of sin within the body politic.³⁴ Thus the homily emphasised that rebels were 'the very figures of fiends and devils', who could expect only an eternity of perdition for their efforts.³⁵

Unsurprisingly, Catholicism on the continent provided a focal point in which to find the demonic origins of dissent in England. But the Devil might also be perceived in the activities of Puritans, if less explicitly. In July 1574 the Bishop of Ely, Richard Cox wrote to Heinrich Bullinger of trouble with both Puritans and Catholics. Cox commiserated over the conflicts experienced within the faith in Zurich through the machinations of 'the enemy', and compared them with the storm caused by the English Puritans, of whom he noted 'we know not what monstrosities they are hiding in secret'. 'Certain of our nobility, pupils of the Roman pontiff', he continued, 'have taken flight, some into France, some into Spain...with a view of plotting some mischief against the professors of Godliness. So difficult is it to keep the church of Christ in a state of defence against the ministers of Satan'.³⁶ In 1579 Edwin Sandys wrote more optimistically to Rudolph Gualter that despite the subversion of stubborn Puritans and secret papists, England's 'flourishing' Protestantism could 'neither be overturned nor defiled by any devices of Satan'.³⁷

Mary Stuart's claim to the throne gave demonic treason a more specific tangibility. The Duke of Norfolk, involved in the Ridolfi plot, was accused in January 1572 of 'not having the fear of God in his heart...but seduced by the instigation of the Devil, contrary to that cordial affection and bounden duty that

³⁴ 'An homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion', in *Certain sermons or homilies*, pp. 588-589.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 616-618, quote at p. 616.

³⁶ *The Zurich letters*, pp. 308-309.

³⁷ Edwin Sandys to Rudolph Gualter, December 9, 1579, in *Ibid.*, p. 332.

true and faithful subjects of our said lady the queen do bear'.³⁸ The Duke's servant, Robert Hickford, was told at his trial the following month: 'God hath sown in you good gifts and qualities, meet to have served any prince on Christendom, but...the devil and his ministers, wicked seedsmen, sowed in you...treason and disloyalty'.³⁹ In the wake of the plot, parliament was called in March 1572 to consider measures for the Queen's safety. A petition by a committee of both Houses, presented on the 26 May, described Mary's 'develishe and traiterous devices'.⁴⁰ For Nicholas St Leger (30 May), irritated by the Queen's unwillingness to take action against her cousin, Mary was 'the monstrous and huge dragon', and Norfolk 'the roaring lion'.⁴¹ Similar language was used in the trial of Anthony Babington in 1586, and Sir Christopher Hatton concluded the proceedings by observing that the 'wicked and devilish youths' had hatched their plot at the instigation of 'devilish priests and seminaries'.⁴² Pressure for Mary's execution increased following the Throckmorton and Babington conspiracies. Job Throckmorton, speaking in parliament on the 4 November 1586 saw the satanic hordes of the last days revealed in the activities of Mary's supporters. 'Hath not the murder of her majestie', he noted, '(whom the Lorde still preserve in despite of Satan) found out an Allen, a Campion, a Bristow, a Saunders, a Gyfforde, and I knowe not who?' Of Mary he concluded, 'ye have heard the Devill himselfe, I trowe, or rather (yf ye will) the Devill herselfe to authorize yt'.⁴³

In this atmosphere treason appeared to be an especially virulent form of temptation, in which the struggle between the forces of light and Darkness—between Elizabeth and demonic Catholicism—was carried out in microcosm within the individual soul. In his judgement on Robert Hickford, the Chief Justice of the Kings Bench, Robert Catlin, noted that loyalty to the prince overshadowed all others. In putting loyalty to his master first Hickford had succumbed to a specific temptation of the Devil. 'If in any case, any respect shall allure a man from loyalty and truth to his prince', Catlin observed, 'they must be forsaken, they

³⁸ *Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanours*, volume I, ed. W. Cobbett (London, 1809), p. 959; for similar charges against Norfolk's fellow conspirators see p. 961. The wording was of course similar to that used in indictments for murder.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1046.

⁴⁰ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I, p. 278, see also Thomas Digges and Thomas Dannel's assessment of the motives of the Duke of Norfolk: 'upon the back of these twoo untamed beastes, ambition and love, hell hath now placed the furie of revenge', p. 296.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁴² *State Trials*, I, pp. 1132, 1133, 1139-1140; see also Thomas Deloney, *A proper new Ballad breiefely declaring the...Execution of fourteen most wicked traitors* (1586), in *Works*, pp. 464-468; Aske, *Elizabetha Triumphans*, pp. 12-13.

⁴³ *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, II, p. 228.

must come behind; it must be said, *Vade post me, Satana*'.⁴⁴ A pamphlet account of the activities of the double agent William Parry, who confessed to conspiring to murder the Queen in 1584, described the internal battle in which the counter influences of Elizabeth and the Devil acted on his humanity. 'The deuill enforcing this trayterous heart to execute his intent', the account noted, 'he was troubled looking on the Queene, and remembering her excellencies'. Only strength from Satan allowed Parry to stifle the last vestiges of his humanity. 'What more devilish intent could possesse a traytour', the pamphlet observed, 'then to labour to suppress a final remaine of conscience abhorring to kill so excellent a personage'.⁴⁵

But the very fact that demonism encapsulated the horror of rebellion undermined the regime's ability to monopolise the identification of diabolic subversion. The threat of satanic treason allowed some in parliament to assert its right to discuss contentious issues such as religion and the succession, arguing that not to do so was to knowingly expose the monarch to danger, and so to aid the Devil. A speech, possibly given by John Molyneux on 18 October 1566, implied that parliament would be playing the tempter's role in the body politic if it failed to draw the attention of the head (the Queen) to the dangers of a contested succession.⁴⁶ For Molyneux resistance to temptation was inherent in parliament's function, since it was created by God's providence to guard against 'trayterous flattery and devillish dissimulation'.⁴⁷ 'We must either', he declared, 'in this counsell, serve God or Beliall, shew ourselves true Englishmen, or traytors'. Giving in to the fear of disfavour for speaking out was itself a demonic temptation that must be overcome. 'Whensoever any conceipt or terror shall...draw us back from speaking', he noted, 'let us learne of Christ and say, "Away, Divell, with thy hellish conceipts"'.⁴⁸ A decade later Peter Wentworth took these arguments much further. On the 8 February 1576 he made an extraordinary speech in which he all but implicated the Queen in the diabolic subversion of the Houses' rights. Elizabeth's sole prerogative to decide issues of religion and the succession was, he argued, enforced by rumours of disfavour and the bishops' vetting of bills concerning religion (instituted after 1572). 'I would to God', Wentworth declared,

⁴⁴ *State Trials*, I, p. 1045.

⁴⁵ Anon., *A True and Plaine Declaration of the horrible Treasons, Practiced by William Parry the Traitor, against the Queenes Maiestie* (London, 1585), p. 49; for accusation of diabolism at Parry's trial see *State Trials*, I, p. 1112; see also, Aske, *Elizabetha Thriophans*, p. 9.

⁴⁶ T. E. Hartley gives a number of suggestions for the possible authorship of this speech, including Peter and Paul Wentworth, and a Mr Lambert, and notes that it may be an undelivered draft, but suggests that references to the preparation of a bill on the succession make Molyneux the most plausible candidate, see *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, I, pp. 119-120.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

'that these two were buried in Hell, I mean rumours and messages, for wicked undoubtedly they are: the reason is, the Divill was the first author of them, from whome proceedeth nothing but wickedness'.⁴⁹ Whilst the Queen was not guilty of witting diabolism, the use of methods invented by the Devil maintained a *de facto* satanic influence at the heart of government, turning parliament into an assembly of flatterers and 'soe fitt a place to serve the Devill and his angells in and not to glorifye God and benefitt the commonwealth'.⁵⁰ Again the Corinthians dichotomy loomed large in Wentworth's argument. Had parliament not been called to advise on the Queen's safety in the wake of the Ridolfi plot, why then were its members being ignored? Parliament's unencumbered role must be to 'boldly reprove God's enemyes, our prince's and state's, and soe shall every one of us...shew ourselves haters of evill and cleavers to that that is good'.⁵¹ Whilst many in parliament surely sympathised with Wentworth's frustration, his language was simply too strong, and the Commons took action themselves against him, sending him to the Tower on the 15 March.

* * *

The language of temptation continued to characterise accusations of treason after the accession of James I. At his trial in 1603 Sir Walter Raleigh was accused by the Attorney General, Sir Edward Coke, of pursuing 'a devilish policy' and 'the most horrible practices that ever came out of the bottomless pit of the lowest hell'.⁵² But the Gunpowder Plot of November 1605 gave satanism an unprecedented tangibility, which overrode individual perception and allowed the regime a near-monopoly of perception into diabolic subversion thereafter. In its wake a picture of the temptation of the body politic far more clearly focused on Catholic subversion was to define the notion to the end of James' reign. To contemporaries, the Protestant political establishment narrowly escaped an extinction that was a prelude certainly to a *coup*, and probably to another invasion. Who else but Satan could have been the author of such a heinous crime? A public thirst for details encouraged the authorities to throw together an official account of the affair, popularly known as *The King's Book*, which saw the plot as a potential outbreak of hell on earth.⁵³ 'The earth, as it were opened', the official commentary noted, 'should have sent forth out of the bottom of the Stygian lake such sulphured smoke, furious flames, and feareful thunder, as should have, by their diabolical doomsday, destroyed and defaced, in the twinkling of an eye, not only our present

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 426-427.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 426.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 433.

⁵² *State Trials*, II, p. 9.

⁵³ On the compilation of the *King's Book* see Nicholls, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot*, pp. 26-29.

living princes and people, but even our insensible monuments reserved for future ages'.⁵⁴ Other commentators reiterated the demonism of the official line. William Barlow, the bishop of Rochester, preaching at Paul's Cross on the 10 November, declared the plot was 'a cruell Execution, an inhumane crueltie, a brutish imanitie, a diuelish brutishnes & an Hyperbolical, yea an hyperdiabolicall diuelishnes'. 'Is this a rule of religion? Or rather of a legion?', asked the anonymous author of *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors* (1606), 'where the synagogue of Satan sat in council...to make way to some fury to bring the most flourishing kingdom on the earth to the most desolation in the world; to kill at one blow...king, queen, prince and peer'.⁵⁵

Divine right saw the plot as a battle in a continuing personal war between the King and Satan. For James, speaking in parliament on the 9 November, it was a sequel to the Gowrie conspiracy of 1600, concluding 'it was the same devil that still persecuted me'.⁵⁶ For the vicar of Holy Trinity in Coventry, Thomas Cooper, writing in early 1606, it was a 'diuelish policie' for the plotters 'desperately to lay hands vppon the Lords anointed'. *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors* emphasised that the conspiracy paralleled the rebellion of Adam, 'for, since the betraying of the Lord of heaven and earth, was there ever such a hellish plot practised in the world?'⁵⁷ Perhaps satanic assaults were only to be expected against God's king but, in threatening to also obliterate the entire political establishment, this plot was qualitatively more hellish.⁵⁸ It 'was a destruction not prepared for me alone', James reminded parliament, 'but for all you that were here present, and wherein no rank, age, nor sex should have been spared'. Thus 'this was not a crying sin of blood, as the former [Gowrie conspiracy], but it may

⁵⁴ James I, *His majesty's speech in the last session of Parliament, concerning the Gunpowder-plot* (1605), in *The Harleian Miscellany*, III, p. 15. The *King's Book* was reprinted, minus James' speech to parliament, *The Workes of the most High and Mightie Prince, James* (1616), see p. 224; see also the characterisation of 'devilish' treason in 'A proclamation denouncing Thomas Percy and other his adherents to be Triators', 7 November, 1605, reprinted in *Stuart Royal Proclamations: Volume I, Royal Proclamations of King James I 1603-1625*, eds. J. F. Larkin & P. Hughes (Oxford, 1973), p. 124; William Barlow, *The Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse, the tenth day of Nouember, being the next Sunday after the Discouerie of this late Horrible Treason* (London, 1606), sig. C3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C2v; Anon, *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors* (1606), in *The Harleian Miscellany*, III, p. 49; Nicholas Breton, *The Hate of Treason, with a touch of the late Treason* (1616), in *The Works in Verse and Prose of Nicholas Breton*, ed. A. B. Grosart (New York, 1966), p. 3.

⁵⁶ James I, *His majesty's speech*, pp. 6-7, 13; *Triplici nodo, triplex cuneus. Or an Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance*, in *Workes*, p. 247.

⁵⁷ Thomas Cooper, *A brand taken out of the Fire. Or the Romish Spider, with his Webbe of Treason* (London, 1606), pp. 1-2; *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors*, p. 49.

⁵⁸ 'Kings', James noted, 'as being in the higher places like the high trees, or stayed mountains, and steepest rocks, are the most subject to the daily tempests of innumerable dangers; and I amongst all other kings have ever been subject to them'. See *His Majesty's speech*, p. 6.

well be called a roaring, nay a thundering sin of fire and brimstone'.⁵⁹ Such an interpretation was reflected in the consensus which immediately declared Guy Fawkes the most monstrous of the conspirators. It was probably William Barlow who coined the popular description of him as the 'Diuell of the Vault', a term that was expressive enough to become the title of a verse pamphlet describing the affair. But if it captured in a nutshell the extent of Fawkes' treachery, the name also had very literal connotations. In being the conspirator who was ready to put fire to the powder, it was Fawkes who would have, quite literally, released hell on earth, making him, according to one anonymous pamphleteer, 'the great devil of all'. He was 'justly called, The Devil of the Vault; for had he not been a devil incarnate, he had never conceived so villainous a thought, nor been employed in so damnable an action'.⁶⁰

Thus the plot seemed a clear-cut example of Satan's machinations against the English state, an attempt to recover God's most favoured nation by unleashing chaos and hellfire. In its wake a direct connection was made by polemicists between synagogue of Satan idolatry and the dynamic of Catholic resistance theory. Both relied on appealing to man's corrupted instincts—the first to fickle and lazy religiosity, the second to intemperate proaction.

It was James I himself who showed the keenest awareness that the Pope's claims might be a trigger to activate the diabolic potential within his people. Initially he relied on a separation between satanic potential and actuality to draw a more nuanced picture of recusant guilt which he hoped would spare his loyal Catholic subjects the possible excesses of an outraged parliament. James' position towards papists had always been ambiguous as a result of his desire for religious unity, and he tended to be more concerned over issues of religious authority than doctrinal differences.⁶¹ Popery offered arguments to justify the overthrow of legitimate rulers, in doing so, James believed, it bred an inherently diabolic subversive will amongst its adherents. This was another form of *de facto* satanism. But whether individual Catholics acted upon this will depended on the extent to which they had succumbed to the Devil's delusions. No other sect of heretics, James argued in his speech on the 9 November, ever went as far as the papacy in

⁵⁹ James I, *His majesty's speech*, pp. 6-7; Barlow, *Sermon preached at Paules Crosse*, sig. C4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., sig. C3v; Anon., *The Divell of the Vault. Or, the Vnmasking of Murther in a Brieve Declaration of the Catholike-complotted Treason, lately discovered* (London, 1606); *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors*, pp. 48-49.

⁶¹ Fincham & Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I', in Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Houndsmills, 1993), p. 28. On the doctrine of the Pope's deposing power, and the variety in the extent to which it was accepted by Catholics themselves see Sommerville, *Politics & Ideology in England*, pp. 13-14, 59-60 & esp. 197-198; John Bossy, 'The English Catholic Community 1603-1625', in Alan G.R. Smith (ed.), *The Reign of James VI and I* (London & Basingstoke, 1973), pp. 92-95.

making a virtue of murder in the name of religion. Although there were traitors and murderers of every faith, 'yet ever, when they came to their end and just punishment, they confessed their fault to be in their nature, and not in their profession, these Romish Catholics only excepted'. The gunpowder plot fulfilled the potential of Catholicism's murderous doctrine, representing the very depths of its 'mystery of iniquity', but it was a point to which the majority of English recusants had not fallen. James followed his Elizabethan predecessors in recognising that the synagogue of Satan deluded men into thinking it better answered their spiritual needs, but regrettable as this was, it did not equate to treason and regicide. Most recusants, he assured his audience, had simply too shallow an understanding of popish doctrine to comprehend its treacherous content. If they could not comprehend it, they could not with justice be accused of believing it, and the fact that loyal and even godly men's consciences were distracted by issues such as the real presence and the number of sacraments was explicable in these terms. Thus whilst diabolic potential inhered in Catholicism's maintenance of the pope's deposing power, it was not necessarily activated in differences of devotional practice amongst loyal subjects. 'Honest men', James asserted, 'seduced with some errors of popery, may yet remain good and faithful subjects', and he emphasised that, without belittling the evil of the conspiracy, 'the mysteries of this wickedness' should be searched 'as far as may be', and that punishment should come only after 'due trial'.⁶²

To what extent contemporaries may have taken their lead from James is unclear, but the King certainly felt a need to temper the language of some of his subjects. Whilst he did not doubt parliament's good intent he was fearful 'that the zeal of your hearts shall make some of you, in your speeches, rashly to blame such as might be innocent of this attempt'.⁶³ The pamphlet *The Arraignment and Execution of Late Traitors* suggests that James' careful separation between potential and actuality, and especially his locating of resistance theory in the extreme fringe rather than mainstream of recusancy, was for many unconvincing. In contrast to James, the author explicitly connected idolatry and resistance theory, presenting them as equally fundamental manifestations of Catholic diabolism. When the tract compared Satan's working of the plot to the corruption of Adam, it emphasised that in mediating the diabolic assault on the commonwealth the conspirators had, like Adam and Eve, and millions of idolaters after them, been deluded by the Devil into thinking piety lay in the easiest and most immediately satisfying way. 'If the Pope were not a very devil', the author commented, 'and these Jesuits or

⁶² James I, *His majesty's speech*, pp. 9-10.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

rather Jebusites and Satanical Seminaries, very spirits of wickedness, that whisper in the ears of Evahs, to bring a world of Adams to destruction, how could nature be so senseless, or reason so graceless, as to subject wit so to will, as to run headlong to confusion'.⁶⁴ As Catholics found comfort in empty ceremonies that answered their lazy religiosity, so too they were blinded by the demonic sophistry that justified regicide in the name of the faith. 'Ignorance in the simple, and idolatry in the subtle take ceremony for certainties, superstition for religion'; these are the masses 'the devil sings'. Similarly, assassination was justified in the mistaken belief in the efficacy of the pope's absolution. 'Kill princes, sow seditions', the pamphlet continued, 'so it be for the Pope's profit, the church will absolve you; and, if you miss the mark to hit the mischief you shoot at, you shall be a hanging saint, till you be taken down to the devil'.⁶⁵

Treachery thus became a hallmark of Catholicism's intemperance, to be contrasted with the faithful patience of Protestants. 'The traitorous papist will pull down princes and subvert kingdoms, murder and poison whom they cannot command', ran the commentary, 'the faithful protestant prayeth for princes, and the peace of the people; will endure banishment, but hate rebellion'. According to the pamphlet, Everard Digby's speech at the scaffold made the effectiveness of this kind of diabolic sophistry clear. 'Through the blindness of his bewitched wit', he had admitted that 'to bring the kingdom into Popish idolatry, he cared not to root out all his posterity'. Thus acting on Catholic resistance theory was characterised by abandonment of the parallel and connected natural political and familial instincts:

Oh the misery of these blinded people! Who forsake the true God of heaven and earth, to submit their service to the devil of the world; be traitors to their gracious princes, to serve a proud, ungracious prelate; lose their lands and goods, beggar their wives and children, lose their own lives with an open shame, and leave an infamy to their name foe ever, only to obey the command of that cunning fox, that, lying in his den, preyeth on all the geese that he can light on; and, in the proud belief to be made saints, will hazard their souls to the devil.

Where James spoke of the handful of his subjects who had plumbed the depths of Catholicism's mystery of iniquity, *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors*

⁶⁴ *The Arraignment and Execution of the Late Traitors*, p. 49.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

preferred to refer to the 'millions' who had been carried away by the Pope's claims to deposing power.⁶⁶

In 1606 James aimed to accommodate moderate Catholics within the regime by means of an oath of allegiance which all those suspected of recusancy were required to take. It sought to realise the separation James had posited between those whose Catholicism expressed only a misguided religiosity and those who embraced its deepest corruption. The Oath made no mention of confessional positions, but instead demanded that Catholics affirm their allegiance to the King and 'abhorre, detest and abiure' the 'damnable doctrine' of the pope's power to depose monarchs.⁶⁷ James' sense of his own magnanimity probably made him optimistic, for he seems to have believed that recusants might be persuaded to take the Oath with a clear conscience, and may even have hoped that Rome would permit them to do so.⁶⁸ If so he was to be swiftly disillusioned, and his disillusionment only heightened his sense that the Devil sought to drive a wedge between himself and his subjects. The Oath proved difficult to enforce, and when two papal breves denounced subscription, James was presented with a tangible example of the Devil's triggers being introduced into the commonwealth.⁶⁹ The second breve (10 September, 1607) expressed displeasure at the numbers who had taken the Oath, and provoked in turn a contest with James over the question of whether it was a diabolic act to subscribe or to abstain. Pope Paul V understood recusant weakness to come from the desire to escape persecution and he expressed disappointment that his authority should be questioned as an expedient to disobey his instruction to refuse the Oath. But the explanation was clear, compliance with the Oath was a result of Satan's influence. 'We doe herein perceiue the subtiltie and craft of the enemie of mans saluation', the breve read, 'and we doe attribute this your backwardnesse rather to him, then to your owne will'.⁷⁰ For James the breve promoted confusion by instructing recusants to forswear an oath they had already sworn. But more importantly it threatened to overturn his carefully defined distinctions between moderate and fanatical Catholics by forcing once-loyal subjects to become active diabolic agents. In his defence of the Oath, *Triplici nodo, triplex cuneus* (1607) he argued that the Pope's actions were an attempt to subvert his own moderation in the face of Gunpowder Plot. Recusants in general, he noted, were not 'worse vsed' for the crimes of the

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁶⁷ James I, *Triplici nodo, triplex cuneus*, p. 251.

⁶⁸ Kenyon, *The Stuart Constitution*, p. 167.

⁶⁹ The first breve was dated 10 October 1606 and the second 10 September 1607. The texts were printed by James in his reply. See James I, *Triplici nodo, triplex cuneus*, pp. 250-252 & 258.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 258.

conspirators and legislative measures had been taken only with the support of parliament.⁷¹ The oath was not so much an attempt to discover enemies as it was to establish friends, since it would allow him 'to make a separation betweene so many of my Subiects, who although they were otherwise Popishly affected, yet retained in their hearts the print of their naturall duetie to their Soueraigne; and those who being carried away with the like fanaticall zeale...thought diuersitie of religion a safe pretext for all kindes of treasons, and rebellions'. Indeed it was a tool to be used *by* recusants, since by subscription 'all quietly minded Papists were put out of despaire'.⁷² But the effect of the Pope's breves would be to destroy this cosy co-existence by activating the treasonous and implicitly diabolic potential inherent in the doctrine of papal authority. They forced English recusants to transform their blinded but essentially apolitical religious instincts into an active resistance to the King's authority. The Pope's commands were a diabolic 'trick for interrupting this so calm and clement a course'. Indeed James threw the Pope's words back in his face, commenting of the breves that he 'might iustly reflect his owne phrase vpon him, in tearming it to be The craft of the Deuill'. In driving English Catholics to a position of active resistance 'if the Deuill had studied a thousand yeeres, for to finde out a mischiefe for our Catholikes heere, hee hath found it in this'.⁷³

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The memory of Gunpowder Plot, and the debates over the respective powers of King and Pope were prominent features of the rest of James' reign. In 1610 fears of regicide were reawakened by the assassination of Henri IV of France. On the 4 May Henri was murdered by a Catholic zealot, Francois Ravallac, in revenge for his anti-Habsburg politicking with the Dutch Republic and the Protestant princes in Germany and England.⁷⁴ Horror at the assassination was almost universal, but in England it once more focused attention on the potential inherent in Catholic subjects for intemperate, diabolically inspired violence. On the 8 May Robert Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Treasurer announced the news to the House of Lords, commenting that Henri had been killed 'by a villian guided by the devil'. Cecil did not at that point know what had motivated Ravallac, but in his address he openly tried to impress on the Lords the need to see the event as a satanic

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 248.

⁷² The Oath was hardly as great a success as James claimed. It had to be enforced with the threat of praemunire for a second refusal, whilst some priests were prepared to die rather than subscribe to it. In provincial areas enforcement of the Oath was fitful and contradictory. See Sommerville, *Politics & Ideology*, p. 197; Fincham & Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I', p. 29, and n. 12.

⁷³ James I, *Triplici nodo, triplex cuneus*, pp. 248, 259.

⁷⁴ Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France 1560-1715* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 77-80.

assault on Christianity. Besides James I, the murder of Henri ‘concerneth more the Christian world than the death of any other prince’, he instructed the House, ‘a king by whose death not only the veins but arteries of religion bleed’. In general he reminded his audience that, ‘not to regard the care of the prince’s person is to give way unto the temptations of the devil’.⁷⁵ In the wake of the assassination a more aggressive policy towards recusancy was given royal sanction, and on 14 July Archbishop Bancroft introduced a contentious bill into the Lords for the better security of the King’s person, which provided for the punishment of any traitor’s descendants by the forfeiture of his estates. Whilst he objected to the bill Cecil noted that Protestants had little to fear since ‘the fear of attempting so heinous and devilish a treason rests not in us, for they that are like to practice this are likely to be papists that do only make, and no other religion concurs in the same opinion, the killing of princes to be martyrdom’.⁷⁶

As Gunpowder plot passed into legend, so too did the perception of its diabolism.⁷⁷ In *The powder Treason*, a broadsheet of 1615 by the satirist Richard Smith, parliament was depicted between the watchful eye of heaven and the seething chaos of the hell mouth, replete with Satan and minor demons. The plot, it noted, was ‘Propounded, By Sathan...Founded in Hell, Confounded in Heaven’. Nicholas Breton’s poem of 1616, *The Hate of Treason, with a Touch of the late Treason*, similarly placed James I’s fate between the machinations of hell and the providential protection of God:

For, Father, Brother, Neighbour, Friend or Foe,
in each of these, but fewe to ruine runne;
but, in a King, or princes overthrowe,
how many Thousands are vndonne?
woe woorth ye hand, yt such ill threed hath spunne:
as, by ye woork of Sathans wickednes
a Worlde of Christians should endure Distress.
.
But, God on High, that from his Seate beholdeth,

⁷⁵ *Proceedings in Parliament 1610*, ed. E. R. Foster (New Haven & London, 2 vols., 1966), vol. I, pp. 83-84, 238-239. The proceedings contain two accounts of Cecil’s speech, one by Henry Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon, and the other by the clerk of the House of Lords, Robert Bowyer. The clerk’s account concentrates on the details of the assassination as they were reported and is comparatively uninterested in the gloss which Cecil might have placed on them, noting only ‘God hath suffered the devil to work his will upon the person of that King’.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

⁷⁷ The assimilation of the developing legend of Gunpowder Plot into the ‘national memory’ has been charted by David Cressy in *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989), chapter 9, *passim*.

Heaven, Earth, Sea, Hell, & what each one containeth;
 and, every thought, of every harte vnfoldeth;
 and, for his service, all and som retayneth:
 hating ye pride, his powrefull hand disdayneth;
 hath broke ye Force of all theyr wicked frame;
 and made theyr woorke, vnto ye world a shame.

Similarly, the bishop of Chichester, George Carleton reminded his audience in 1624 of the motives of the plotters whose 'hellish device' was aimed at the entire political establishment—King, princes, nobility and clergy. 'All these things', he noted, 'had the devil by his agents devised at one secret blow to destroy'.⁷⁸

The Divine Charles and the Devil: Diabolic Subversion and the Language of Political Opposition

Since Peter Wentworth's speech in parliament in 1576 no one had come close to publicly accusing the monarch of diabolism. Catholic regicide had seemed the most tangible of the demonic threats to the body politic. But the Devil's agency was in the eye of the beholder, and for some satanism began to seem equally tangible in the absolutist claims and the religious innovations of the Caroline regime. The Devil's sophistry was now seen by many to lie in over-arching claims to theocratic inviolability and in the Laudian rejection of reformed austerity in the church. Suspicion centred around those closest to the King, particularly George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, and William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633. After the accession of Charles I, Buckingham, in David Underdown's words, 'became the focus of all the searing fears and anxieties that so violently gripped his contemporaries'.⁷⁹ He was blamed for the phenomenon of 'new counsels' and for the forced loan. It was significant, Underdown argues, that through his plethora of female Catholic relatives Buckingham was seen to be particularly prey to the satanic forces of malign feminine influence, which in a number of recent court scandals had been palpable in its ability to unleash disorder and inversion. The trial of Frances Howard, for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, was infused with talk of diabolism and witchcraft, and the family of the Secretary of State, Sir Thomas Lake, were embroiled in accusations of

⁷⁸ Cornelius Burges, *Another Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons now assembled in Parliament, November the fifth, 1641* (London, 1641), pp. 1-2, 7, 11-14, 35, 44-45.

⁷⁹ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 33.

incest.⁸⁰ Rumours circulated widely that Buckingham had poisoned James I with the aid of his Catholic mother.⁸¹ The Duke himself was accused of practising the black arts, often with the aid his servant, Dr John Lambe (one of 'the Duke's devils'), a notorious magician who was lynched on a London street in 1628.⁸² On the day that Charles and Buckingham were supposed to have decided to dissolve the 1626 parliament a thunderstorm and tornado apparently struck London. Rumours circulated that Dr Lambe had been behind it. As Underdown has pointed out, historians have tended to ignore the seriousness with which such accusations were made and so to downplay the central place of notions of supernatural intervention in seventeenth-century politics. But the perception of Buckingham's diabolism was at least as important as the more prosaic accusations of corruption and incompetence that were also levelled against him.⁸³

The defence of the forced loan attempted to maintain the government's monopoly on the identification of diabolic subversion.⁸⁴ The dean of Canterbury, Isaac Bargrave, preached on 1 Samuel 15 before Charles I on 27 March 1627. Refusal to pay the loan, he noted, stemmed from the diabolic pride which man had inherited from the fall, and which 'ever since prooved naturally [fit] for infernall fuell'.⁸⁵ God had blessed Englishmen with a pious King in order to save them from the consequences of their demonic inheritance, obedience was thus a 'sacrifice' which paralleled the patient abandonment to God's will advocated by Protestant devotion. Refusing the loan therefore made an idol of the individual will; as 'the Witch makes the devill his God: little better doth he that makes his owne will his God'.⁸⁶ This stock of wilfulness had consistently been used by Satan to subvert the progress of religion.⁸⁷ The rector of St Giles-in-the-fields, Roger Mainwaring, preached twice to Charles in July 1627, using similar arguments to concentrate more specifically on the loan itself. In selfishly guarding their wealth for their own 'vanity...lust and luxury', Englishmen made tribute to Satan over the

⁸⁰ At the trial of one of Frances Howard's accomplices, Anne Turner, the atmosphere of diabolism had reached such a pitch that when some of the paraphernalia supposedly used by the astrologer and magician, Simon Forman, were displayed as evidence, and at that moment there was a loud crack from the scaffold, there was 'such a feare, and tumulte, confusion and crye amonge the spectators, and in the hall everye man fearynge hurt, as yf the divell had bene rayased among them indeed'; quoted in David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard*, p. 148.

⁸¹ John Rous, *Diary of John Rous, incumbent of Santon Downham, Suffolk, from 1625-1642*, ed. M. A. E. Green, Camden Society, Original series, 66 (1856), p. 20.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

⁸³ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 35.

⁸⁴ On the detail of Charles' licensing and reluctant suppression of the forced loan sermons see Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, pp. 130-131.

⁸⁵ Isaac Bargrave, *A sermon preached before King Charles* (London, 1627), p. 1.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 4-5, 7, 13, quotes at pp. 2, 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

King. 'Where the Divell hath devoured all', Mainwaring noted, 'there, God and the King, doe loose their right'. Selfishly refusing to provide money for the well-being of the Christian commonwealth was, therefore, a very real act of apostasy.⁸⁸ Selfless obedience was the very essence of religion and 'no subject may, without hazard of his own damnation in rebelling against God, question or disobey the will and pleasure of the soveriegn'.⁸⁹ Even under the persecution of Nero, Christians had accepted the duty of subjection, and never 'thought the contrary, till the Deuill, of late infused it into the heads of...the Roman Iesuites, and German Puritans'.⁹⁰

Thus the defence of the forced loan was entirely congruous with the concepts of the temptation of the body politic, and it is striking therefore that the government's attempt to monopolise the perception of diabolic subversion was decisively rejected when parliament assembled in 1628. On 17 March parliament gathered to consider King Charles' requirements for war against France, and gathered 'in a growing atmosphere of constitutional alarm'.⁹¹ Concern over the extra-legal precedents of the Five Knights case was acute, and the parliament that assembled was unique for its single-mindedness. It met with a conscious agenda, and focused on the question of whether the common law continued to adequately protect English liberty.⁹²

The opening speeches expressed the ideal that theocracy, supported by political consensus, was defined by a dynamic struggle with the Catholic forces of diabolic subversion. On the 19 March the Speaker of the Commons, Sir John Finch, reminded Charles that it was an act of deliverance from Satan's grasp that allowed the King to continue to act as a guarantor of the faith. 'Your majesty passed the fiery trial in Spain', he remembered of the ill-fated marriage negotiations in 1623, 'and gave us then assurance that your faith is built on the rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevaile'. Charles' succession had since seen a tightening of the recusancy laws, whilst the Jesuit 'incendiaries' were banished 'to lurk in corners like the sons of darkness'. But Finch was also aware that many in his audience considered Arminianism, and the tolerance of crypto-papists at court, to still maintain a place for subversive Catholicism. In this light Finch included a veiled warning to Charles as to the dangers involved in ever abandoning a vigilant Protestant policy. 1605 and 1610 were still living memories and Protestant loyalty had to be contrasted with the practices of the Catholic

⁸⁸ Roger Mainwaring, *Religion and Alegiance: in two sermons* (London, 1627), p. 30.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19, 22, 27, quote at p. 19.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, second sermon (separate pagination), p. 42.

⁹¹ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 335-336.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 340-349; Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, pp. 194-195.

regicides. Protestantism bred loyalty, indeed there was 'no cement so strong to hold your subjects' hearts together in their true obedience'. 'Our religion never bred a Clement or a Ravaillac', Finch declared, 'and that execrable villainy, never to be forgotten here, when all of us here in an instant should have been turned to ashes, was a monster that could never be engendered but by the Devil or Jesuits'.⁹³ Finch was reminding Charles where his best interest lay as a divine king with satanic forces to fight. Replying on the King's behalf, the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Coventry, assured the House of continued good faith between Charles and his subjects and that they might rest assured he would view their deliberations without applying 'sinister interpretations'. Infused with divinity, he explained, Charles was possessed of an insight more angelic than human and so 'he strains not at gnats but will easily distinguish between a vapor and a fog, betwixt a mist of errors and a cloud of evil will'.⁹⁴

This ideal of co-operation and mutual understanding within theocracy was not to be fulfilled and, although open confrontation did not occur until Easter⁹⁵, some of the assembled members of the Commons immediately demonstrated a readiness to come up with sinister interpretations of their own, seeing the Devil at work in the heart of the English political nation. In local disruptions of the recent elections, some members concluded, the Devil had attempted to subvert the unity of the body politic. On the 20 March evidence was presented to the House of attempts in Cornwall to prevent the election of the prominent critics of the forced loan, Sir John Eliot and William Coryton.⁹⁶ Many in the House viewed the sabotage as an attack on its integrity, and in this context Sir Edward Coke declared it to be inspired by Satan. 'Oh, let England be at unity with itself', he commented of this attempt to sow discord in the body politic, 'I see good faces and good men. But the devil hath put in a bone amongst us; the fountain is poisoned'.⁹⁷ When the House then turned its attention to the question of whether to petition for a public fast, the threat of diabolic agency was prevalent again in the minds some members. 'If we respect dangers, none can tell that ever they were more apparent', Sir John Phelips commented, 'I hope by this meeting we shall discharge ourselves...and free the country of their burdens'. The veteran Sir Thomas Hoby

⁹³ *Commons Debates 1628*, eds. R. C. Johnson, M. Jansson Cole, M. Frear Keeler & W. B. Bidwell (New Haven & London, 4 vols., 1977-8), vol. II, pp. 15-16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁵ Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics*, p. 360.

⁹⁶ For the details of the dispute between the loan refusers and the Deputy Lieutenants of Cornwall and its place in the 1628 parliament see Richard Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-1628* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 168-170, 201-202, 312-314; Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics*, p. 17.

⁹⁷ *Commons Debates 1628*, II, pp. 33-36, quotes at p. 35, 36.

added to this that the country was in need of a Protestant exorcism. Agreeing to the petition he noted significantly, 'many a devil cannot be cast out but by prayer and fasting'.⁹⁸

Compatible diagnoses of the sickness and the temptation of the body politic coloured the atmosphere of subsequent debates. 'The state is inclining to a consumption', Sir Edward Coke declared on the 22 March, 'it is curable. I fear not foreign enemies. God send us peace at home'.⁹⁹ For some temptation seemed particularly relevant in the question of 'new counsels'. Nathaniel Rich was surely invoking imagery of the garden of Eden when, on the 26 March, he quoted the opinion of James I that 'whosoever should bid the King to go against the law is a viper.' Similarly the latest petition for the enforcement of the recusancy laws (31 March) condemned the freedom with which the 'viperous generation' of Jesuits were able to invade and pollute the commonwealth.¹⁰⁰ Occasionally some members were highly specific as to the identification of diabolic subversion. A Mr Brown, a lawyer, quoted the jurist Henry de Bracton to condemn as diabolic the Privy Council's imprisonment of the Five Knights, noting '*Altera est potestas juris, altera injuriae. Exercere potest rex ilam juris, quia solius vicarius Dei est; injuriae autem diaboli.*'¹⁰¹ 'Does the Council Table do anything for the good of the common weal?' he continued, 'will you say it is *potestas juris* to imprison? I say it is *diaboli*. All that I speak is law.'¹⁰²

The disturbing notion that the King was languishing under a demonic temptation became far more focused when parliament considered the case of Roger Mainwaring, the most controversial of the forced loan preachers. On the 5 May a Commons subcommittee denounced Mainwaring's claim that resistance was damnable as 'a plot and practice to alter and subvert the frame and fabric of the whole commonwealth'. He was a devil disguised as an angel of light, since he had used his ministry to cover the Jesuitical origins of his doctrine; as John Pym declared on the 14 May, 'he went to hell for proof'.¹⁰³ As formal charges were being considered, Pym drew attention to way in which Mainwaring had tempted Charles. The sermons were 'spiritual poison offered to the ear of the King' which endeavoured 'to infuse into the conscience of the King an absolute power not

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Sir Edward Coke, p. 64; Secretary Coke, p. 82; for the contemporary reporting of these fears of diabolism see the letter of Mr Pory, in *The Court and Times of Charles the First*, ed. T. Birch (London, 2 vols., 1849), I, p. 332.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Sir Nathaniel Rich, p. 130; petition against recusants, pp. 214-216.

¹⁰¹ 'The power of justice is one thing, that of injustice another. The king can exercise the power of justice he alone is God's vicar. The power of injustice, however, is of the Devil', Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ 'This man has learned of Jesuits and friars this doctrine, but they are honester than he. He has belied the devil himself', *Commons Debates 1628*, III, pp. 261-262, for Pym's comments see p. 416.

bounded by law'. As the Devil used temptation to activate the sinful potential of human corruption, so these sermons sought to diabolically activate the tyrannical potential inherent in Charles' resentment at the loan refusers.¹⁰⁴ Thus the more vocal of Charles' critics were quite prepared to equate openly 'new counsels' with the demonic temptation of the monarch over a decade before the image would gain far wider currency in the 1640s.¹⁰⁵ Since 1 Samuel 15 has been identified by historians as central to the logic of theocracy and consensual politics, it is significant that, not only was its applicability to the forced loan rejected, but the text itself was perceived to have been perverted into an instrument of temptation.¹⁰⁶

We should be careful, of course, of making too much of what were, after all, a handful of speeches in four months of debates. It could not be said that fear of diabolic subversion pervaded the 1628 parliament. But it was present, and it was clearly associated in the minds of some of the regime's most consistent critics with the fear that traditional liberties were under threat from encroaching royal power, if not absolutism. What is significant is the basic congruity with which concepts of diabolism fitted into the debates when they were used. David Underdown has noted that the parliamentary debates of the 1620s were marked by an increasing violence of language which culminated in the relative tolerance adopted by the Commons in 1628. Speeches that implied royal tyranny could get men like Sir George More sent to the Tower 'with Elizabethan promptness' in 1626; in 1628 similar words were quickly explained away and excused.¹⁰⁷ The use of the language of diabolic subversion to criticise the regime, however obliquely, supports this interpretation. Even at the height of the anti-Buckingham manoeuvres of 1626 the notion of diabolism was not openly invoked in parliament, despite the widespread suspicion that the Duke was deeply involved in the black arts, and had, with the help of his witch/Catholic mother, hastened the death of James I. In 1628, however, members of the Commons were prepared to talk of demonic agency with reference to the activities of men openly patronised by Buckingham and, in the case of Mainwaring, by Charles himself. Moreover, whatever their expectations, and whatever the impact of their words, they spoke without being censured. Whilst diabolic subversion did not come to embody a rhetoric of opposition in the 1620s in the same way that the language of patronage and corruption did, it did see its inherent political potential exploited when

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 419-410.

¹⁰⁵ See below, chapter 7.

¹⁰⁶ Elmer, "'Saints or Sorcerors'", pp. 162, 164-168; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 610-612.

¹⁰⁷ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 40.

parliamentarians, convinced they faced profound threats to English liberties, were ready to see those threats originating in the Devil's temptation of the body politic.

Perhaps the reaction to the assassination of Buckingham indicates how far things had changed since 1605. As Alastair Bellany has shown, attempts to control the public's response failed markedly¹⁰⁸, and this should be contrasted with the situation in 1605. The judges at the trial of the assassin, John Felton, attempted to invoke the connection between Catholic resistance theory and treason which had been so prominent in the first decade of James I's reign. They declared that 'it was either Popery or Atheism put that malice into his heart to commit so barbarous a murder', and they explicitly compared Felton to the Jesuit Francois Ravallac.¹⁰⁹ At his execution Felton apparently declared that he had acted at 'the instigation of the devil'.¹¹⁰ But the regime could no longer command a monopoly of perception of Satan's agency, and for a large section of the political nation, both elite and popular, Buckingham remained a far more tangible diabolic agent than his murderer. Celebratory ballads and libels circulated in large numbers to defy the official line that Buckingham's assassination had been a sin against God's government, and the authorities carried out the whole business of the Duke's funeral and Felton's trial in a fear of demonstrations and riots in the assassin's favour.¹¹¹ For the many who looked to a new political future without the Duke's hold over Charles, that hope must have been informed by the certain knowledge that a powerful agent of the Devil had been removed from the commonwealth.

Such hopes were to be short lived as the 1629 session of parliament was dissolved amid chaotic scenes. Members of the Commons held the Speaker in his chair whilst Eliot attacked 'new counsels' and Arminianism in three resolutions that were carried by acclamation.¹¹² After the dissolution of parliament in 1629 the Suffolk minister John Rous copied a letter 'sent from the Devill to the Pope' into his diary which provides an insight into the disillusionment which may have pervaded the perception of the political scene. The letter begins by congratulating Satan's 'most reverend and deere sonne' on his recent preparations for action 'against the Rebellious heretickes from the Roman Catholike religion, I mean the British, Irish, Danish and Flemish'. Now is the most propitious moment to strike, it continues, since the dissolution has left England in state of chaos, unable to

¹⁰⁸ Alastair Bellany, '"Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse": Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603-1628', in Sharpe & Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, pp. 306-309.

¹⁰⁹ *The court and times of Charles the First*, I, pp. 438, 445.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

¹¹¹ Bellany, '"Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse"', pp. 306-309; Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 58-59.

¹¹² Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics*, pp. 415-416.

maintain a vigilant guard against diabolic assault. 'God hath forsaken them; their land is impoverished, their ships tattered; their state is weakened; their parliament is ended and nothing amended; their nobles disquieted; their gentry discouraged; the Commons discontented; and the whole kingdom divided; and the Roman Catholics in England gasping for your arrival'. Papal arms, the Devil declares, are an embodiment of the roaring lion and the Protestant states lambs in its claws, but even so the most important weapon is internal pollution and regicide. 'It were not amiss to practice some deadly stratagem', Satan advises, 'by powder or poison, by my servants the Seminaries and Jesuits, especially upon the king of great Britain'.¹¹³ The letter was copied between 4 and 17 April and thus gives an indication as to the immediate reaction to the dissolution of parliament. Its implicit logic was strikingly similar to that of Sir John Finch's speech at the opening of parliament a year previously. Whilst it demonstrated an overt loyalty to Charles as the enemy of Satan, feared because he could 'do much harm' to his cause, it also intimated the need for a strong parliament and Protestant governors to resist the diabolic corruption that inhered in *any* Catholic presence in England. Without attaching blame to either King or parliament, the letter pointed to the fundamental weakening of the body politic by the recent separation of the monarch from his people, and questioned its readiness now to fight off the internal assault of those diabolic triggers, the Jesuits.

* * *

The personal rule itself, however, aroused little open opposition, in part because the absence of parliament removed the only acceptable forum for the airing of national grievances, and because away from parliament many of the regime's fiercest critics still viewed it as their duty to loyally implement royal policy.¹¹⁴ In the 1630s criticism centred around religious rather than secular issues. Growing suspicions of Catholic infiltration in church and state were expressed in resistance to Laudian liturgical innovations and the Book of Sports, whilst the 'new churchmen' defined their critics as seditious 'puritans'. But it has also been noted by historians such as Esther Cope and David Underdown that politics and religion can never be separated in the seventeenth-century, and that if, in 1637, religious discontent was openly attached to politics when the personal rule ran into trouble, an underlying assumption that they were connected had endured throughout the 1630s.¹¹⁵ Puritan concern over diabolic subversion in the 1630s certainly bears this out. As it had done in 1572 and 1588, the perceived failure of parliament may

¹¹³ Rous, *Diary*, pp. 38-39.

¹¹⁴ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 41-42.

¹¹⁵ Esther S. Cope, *Politics without Parliaments 1629-1640* (London, 1987), chapter 2, esp. pp. 74-76; Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 42-43.

have led some of the more determined critics of the regime to talk more openly of the dangers of demonic agency. Again an understanding that the toleration of *de facto* satanism and complicity in diabolic subversion were synonymous was central to the Puritan characterisation of the Laudian regime. The attack on the episcopate was re-activated with force by polemicists such as Henry Burton, John Bastwick and John Lilburne, and at its heart lay the same identification of the demonic hierarchy which had motivated the presbyterians and separatists in the late 1500s. In 1633 the lawyer, William Prynne, made the most striking attack on the regime's toleration of *de facto* satanic subversion when he re-opened the complaint attack on the stage and openly accused the royal family of promoting the synagogue of Satan.

In 1624 Prynne began to put together his massive attack on the stage, and in 1633, at over a thousand pages, *Histrio-mastix, or the players scourge* emerged from the press. The book was part of his continuing campaign to alert Protestant England to the papist activity which lay behind its moral decline.¹¹⁶ *Histrio-mastix* itself was a compilation of just about everything that had already been said against stage-plays fifty years before, but said with a viciousness that Northbrooke or Gosson never approached. Prynne's central argument, wielded like a cudgel and repeated *ad infinitum*, was drawn from the translation of Salvian's attack on the stage, published as the *Third Blast* in 1580. The theatres, and also the dance, were the pompes of Satan, and he who attended them had renounced his baptism and committed apostasy. Stage-plays were triggers introduced into the commonwealth to activate the diabolic potential inherent in man to 'advance the diuels sceptre'.¹¹⁷ They made idols of the sins it re-enacted to 'animate and draw on the spectators more securely, more boldly to commit those self same sinnes'.¹¹⁸ Schooled in this particular form of idolatry and comfortable in its practice, stage-haunters were of course papists in the final analysis.¹¹⁹

What then, given it had all been said before, made Prynne's book so offensive to the authorities that they fined him heavily, sentenced him to life imprisonment and cut off his ears? *Histrio-mastix* had referred to the Roman emperor Nero's patronage of the arts as being symptomatic of his degeneracy, and had detailed his deposition and assassination as the judgement of God on his sins.¹²⁰ In Star Chamber it was alleged that Prynne was making an implicit comparison between Charles I and Nero, and that he was thus inviting the King's

¹¹⁶ William Lamont, *Puritanism and historical controversy* (London, 1996), pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁷ William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix, or, the Players scourge* (London, 1633), pp. 43-44.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 88-95, quote at p. 95.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 342.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 852.

subjects to depose him.¹²¹ 'Thoughe not in expresse tearmes', the prosecution suggested, 'yet by examples and other implicate meanes, hee labours to infuse an opinyon into the people, that for the acteinge or beinge spectatours of playes or maskes it is just and lawfull to laye violent handes uppon kinges and princes'.¹²² William Lamont is unconvinced that Prynne had any such seditious intent. *Histrion-mastix*, he notes, was too infused with a general misanthropy to be attempting anything so specific. Moreover, Prynne's collection of divine judgements against rulers who tolerated stage-plays had more in common with the popular moralising providentialism of Thomas Beard's *Theatre of Gods judgements* than with a programme of armed rebellion. It was Prynne's unsubtle insertion into an index of a description of female actors as 'notorious whores' at the same time as the queen was rehearsing her own part in a court masque that drew the authorities' attention to the seditious possibilities of his work. But if the lawyer was deliberately insulting the queen, the call to rebellion was only in the minds of his prosecutors. Perhaps this is so, but Prynne's attack on the monarch seems far more focused than Professor Lamont implies when the book is considered, not as a discrete document symptomatic of the lawyer's unique obsessiveness, but as part of the, by now long established, practice of exploiting the potential for criticism inherent in the belief in the temptation of the body politic. The presbyterians had seen the Devil in the tyranny of the episcopate, Peter Wentworth had taken the accusation too close to the queen and he ended up in the Tower. Prynne was in one sense Wentworth's successor. He took an established argument farther than anyone else was prepared to go, abandoned the buffer offered by 'evil councillors' and implicitly accused Charles not only of tolerating diabolic subversion in the stage, but actively encouraging it.

In order to understand the political consequences of Prynne's book we need to understand what it was that he thought Charles was encouraging. For Prynne it was unquestionable that the theatre was the Devil's church¹²³, but he also instilled the stage and the dance with characteristics reminiscent of the witches' Sabbath. The Sabbath myth assumed that certain locations (usually distant mountain tops) were consecrated to Satan as a church is dedicated to Christ. Willing diabolic servants travelled deliberately to those locations in order to meet with Satan. At the meeting the witches swore allegiance to the Devil and renounced

¹²¹ *Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne, in 1634 and 1637*, ed. S. R. Gardiner, Camden Society, New Series, XVIII (1877), pp. 12-13, 19; Stephen Foster, *Notes from the Caroline Underground: Alexander Leighton, the Puritan Triumvirate, and the Laudian Reaction to Nonconformity* (Hamden, Connecticut, & Springfield, Ohio, 1978), pp. 41-45.

¹²² *Documents relating to...William Prynne*, p. 13.

¹²³ Prynne, *Histrion-mastix*, pp. 228-231.

their Christian baptism, often performing inverted rites of demonic initiation. For Prynne stage-haunters and dancers were the Devil's parishioners whose renunciation of their baptism might be more implicit than the witch's, but was no less concrete. 'They that dance', he noted, 'breake that promise and agreement, which they have made to God at baptisme...for dancing is the pompe of the deuill, and he that danceth, maintaineth his pompe, and singeth his Masse.' Of course the connection with Catholic ceremony was irresistible and Prynne continued; 'the woman that singeth in the dance is the prioresse of the deuill, and those that answer are clerkes, and beholders are parishioners, and the music are the bells, and the fidlers, the ministers of the deuill.' As witches were called to gather at the Sabbat, so were the dancers called to attend on the Devil. 'For as when hogs are strayed', he observed, 'if the hogheard call one, all assemble themselves together. So the deuill causeth one woman to sing in the dance, or play on some instrument, and presently all the dancers gather together.' To enter into the dance was to both literally follow the Devil who was present, and to symbolically express a subsequent allegiance to him in life, thus dancing was turned into an act of diabolic initiation:

a dance...is the deuils procession, and he that entereth into a dance, entereth into his possession. The deuill is the guide, the middle, and the end of the dance. As many steps as a man maketh in dancing, so many paces doth he make to hell.

But dancing was also an act of consecration since Satan is 'ever-more *present and president* where such dancing is'.¹²⁴

This, then, is what Prynne was accusing the royal family of promoting. *Histrion-mastix* was simply too repetitious, the argument that plays and dances were the Devil's weapons, and that attendance revoked baptism simply too central to make it plausible that when he criticised the regime for its laxity he did not have diabolism in mind. Of 'all Christian Princes, Cittyes, States, and Magistrate', he commented, their 'connivencye at any evill which they might supresse dothe make them deeplie guiltye'.¹²⁵

This commentary was extracted and presented as evidence in Star Chamber. Having charged Prynne with casting 'aspersion vppon the Kinge', the prosecution selected extracts to support their case, and in the light of the charges *all* Prynne's accusations of diabolism became pointed attacks on Charles himself. They quoted his opinion that both players and audience were the 'mynions of the devill', given

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 229, my emphasis.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 50, 787.

over to 'infernell pleasures'. A general reference to the the betrayal of the baptism promise—'God forbid that any whoe have beene dipped in the sacred laver of Regineration...should prove such desperate incarnate devills, such atheisticall Judases to their lord and Master, such perjured cutt throats to their Religion'—seemed in the light of the charges to be a calculated attack on Charles' pretensions to divine right.¹²⁶ Prynne had written against the practice of entertaining players in private houses, which to the Solicitor General, Edward Lyttleton, was little more than a veiled attack on the royal court, and so he quoted among the lawyer's aspersions 'vppon the Kinges howse':

can you be soe besotted by the devill (as alas manye are) as to thincke to please, to honnour, courte, or entertayne Christe Jesus, to welcomme him into the world, to celebrate his natiuitye with infernall stage playes, the verye monuments and ensignes wherewith the Pagans did courte their devill godes?¹²⁷

Another indication of how the case against Prynne was constructed is given in the Attorney General, John Banks' use of *Histrion-mastix's* epistle dedicatory, in which the assessment of the number of devil's synagogues was made a direct attack on the king:

Mr. Attourneye chargeth him with the crymes and assertions against the Kinges person, videlicet, hee would make him worse than Neroe, vizt. London play houses beinge soe much augmented nowe as that all the devilles chappeeles, beinge fyve in number, maye not contayne them, when as wee see a sixt nowe added to them, whereas in vitious Neroes raigne there was but three standinge theatres in pagan Rome.¹²⁸

Thus, whatever Prynne's intent, Star Chamber was being asked to accept that he had accused the king of active diabolism. The method seems to have met with success. Sir Thomas Edmonds, regretting that Star Chamber could not impose a harsher sentence upon Prynne, noted of him that he 'taketh uppon him to forme a newe kinde of governmente and doth denounce all those that bee not of his opinyon to bee reprobates and lymbes of the devill.' Lord Richardson, finding him guilty of a 'seditious lybell against the Kinge and Queene, suche as theye of man never sawe', quoted his description of dancing as the Devil's procession that leads men to hell.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ *Documents relating to...William Prynne*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 20.

Predictably, Star Chamber turned Prynne's arguments on himself and stated that it was he who was the agent of Satan. Giving his opinion of the case on the 17 February, Lord Cottington noted that, 'Mr. Pryn did not invent this booke alone, but was assisted by the devill himselfe, and it is not the first booke of this nature hee made, for hee made one booke against the due reverence of our Saviour, which none but a devill would doe.' 'The hartes and good opinyon of a subjecte is the Kinges best treasure', Lord Richardson observed, 'and for a man to endeavour to defraude the Kinge of this treasure is a most damnable offense'. He thus compared Prynne's motivation with the lethal intentions of the Catholic plotters in 1605—'this monster spittes noethinge but venome, and that att every man; the gunpowder traytors would blowe the state into the ayer, and this man will dampe them all to hell.' Lord Dorset in his turn strove to impose dependable contrariety on Prynne's actions. 'Christ sent his disciples with *Ite praedicate*', he explained, 'and they did accordinglye preache, teache, and practyze charytye and obedyence; but the devill, on the contraye part, wrought alsoe miracles, and scited Scriptures to wicked endes, and sendes out his disciples with *totum prosternite mundum*; and this man, forsakeinge Christes rule, as one of the devilles faithfull agentes, followes his instruccions'. We have seen such exchanges before, and that they can never be dismissed as simple name calling.¹³⁰ The real influence of Prynne's writings, before he became parliament's apologist for the Civil War, has been questioned by historians, and his persecution by the authorities, especially when it was repeated in 1637, has been seen as a massive over-reaction, which back-fired more because of disgust at the show-trial than because people agreed with anything he had said. Whilst historians have rightly highlighted the personal animosity that drove the regime's pursuit of Prynne, and the cynicism with which they orchestrated his trials, there has been a corresponding tendency to understate how sinister his activities might seem to those who valued the regime and its religious practices. It was possible to see him as a profound enemy of Christianity, who, like the Elizabethan Puritans before him, held up an empty picture of pious reformation only in order to lure the commonwealth into confusion.¹³¹

* * *

The conviction of Prynne probably protected Charles from further accusations of diabolism¹³², but the same fears about his temptation that had been expressed in 1628 became focused on the Laudian episcopate. In his *Litany* (1637), the Puritan

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 16, 20-21, 24.

¹³¹ As William Lamont has pointed out Laud and his followers were deeply affronted by Prynne's accusations that they were Jesuits, Lamont, *Puritanism and historical controversy*, p. 17.

¹³² Apparently, however, a libellous sermon attacking the king was found in Prynne's study in the Tower in 1635, Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p. 759.

Physician, John Bastwick attacked Laudian attempts to capture the beauty of holiness as a betrayal of the King's pious intentions, by which the bishops proclaimed 'the synagogue of Satan[,] Rome it self to be the true church'.¹³³ Charles might protest that he would 'neuer conniue at any backsliding to popery', but the Laudians had effected to separate him from his loyal Protestant subjects by presenting them as dangerous fanatics. They gleefully publicised the case of the Puritan, Enoch ap Evan, who in 1633 decapitated his mother and brother with an axe, supposedly as a result of a row over kneeling at church. 'Have [Puritans] ever shewn the least disloyalty to his Maiesty, or plotted anything against his life', Bastwick asked, forcing a comparison with well known Catholic conspiracies. Because 'one distempered man had perpetrated so foul a crime, through some deuillish temptation', must it follow that they were all raving homicides?¹³⁴ As Mainwaring and Bargrave had a decade before, the Laudians tempted Charles disguised as angels of light, and made 'the pulpit a stage' to parade the Devil's lies.¹³⁵ In so doing they brought 'a confusion both in Church and state for the better effecting of those devilish purposes, that no gunpowder plot could bring yet to passe.'¹³⁶ Again we are seeing Sir John Finch's assessment of the king's best interests, and their betrayal through diabolic subversion, being replayed.

In mid-1637 the now-famous trial of the Puritan triumvirate was set in motion. Whereas Prynne's suffering in 1633 had aroused little public interest, his punishment with Burton and Bastwick seemed now to point to a tyrannical edge to the regime.¹³⁷ The punishment of the apprentice and future Leveller, John Lilburne, would lead to the production of a striking manifesto for resistance to the satanic government of the Laudian episcopate. Lilburne had befriended both Bastwick and Prynne and had acted as an amanuensis to both in prison.¹³⁸ He was involved in the publishing of Bastwick's *Litany*, spending several months of 1637 in Holland, and on his return he was arrested. After making himself as troublesome to the authorities as possible, he was fined, sentenced to be flogged

¹³³ John Bastwick, *The answer of Iohn Bastwick, Doctor of Phisicke, to the exceptions made against his Letany by A learned Gentleman* (Amsterdam, 1637), pp. 6, 8. On the Laudian attitude to religious organisation see Peter Lake, 'The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s', in Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church*, pp. 161-185.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4; on the case of Enoch ap Evans see Peter Lake, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and a Shropshire Axe-murder', *Midland History*, 15 (1990), pp. 37-64.

¹³⁵ Bastwick, *The answer of Iohn Bastwick*, p. 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁷ *A Brief relation of certain special...speeches in the Star-Chamber...at the censure of those worthy Gentlemen, Dr Bastwicke, Mr Burton, and Mr Prynne*, in *The Harleian Miscellany*, IV, pp. 220-238; Lamont, *Puritanism and historical controversy*, p. 20; Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, pp. 762-764.

¹³⁸ John Lilburne, *A Worke of the Beast or a Relation of a most vnchristian Censure Executed vpon Iohn Lilburne* (London, 1638), p. 14.

and pilloried, and imprisoned in the Fleet. The day after his sentence was added to when it was decided that he should be put in irons and denied all food but what he could get from the prison's poor box. In two triumphalist pamphlets, *A Worke of the Beast* (1638) and *Come out of her my people* (1639), he revealed that the reason for the harshness of his treatment was that on the pillory he challenged the bishops that in a dispute he would prove that their authority was derived only from Satan.¹³⁹ For the socialist historian, H. N. Brailsford, the significance of Lilburne's challenge was an affirmation to the death of the liberty of unlicensed printing, and he dismissed the apprentice's belief in a demonic episcopate as a 'juvenile thesis'.¹⁴⁰ But his denunciation of diabolic episcopacy was not some rash expression of youthful radicalism—as Brailsford would have it, an exciting but ultimately empty gesture—but an organising principle of his resistance to his prosecutors.

As so often before, the Corinthians dichotomy provided a means of characterising the authority of the episcopate which maintained a hold over church government by nothing more than Satan's false doctrine. 'I shall not dare to have any spirituall communion with them', Lilburne noted, 'either in publicke or private, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness;...And what Concord hath Christ with Beliall?'¹⁴¹ Beneath the seemingly pious words of the Anglican ministry their audience 'doth hear the devill'. Not only did this justify his rejection of episcopal authority, but Lilburne believed that his spiritual insight was a weapon against Satan. The power of Laud would evaporate at the moment its hellish origins were revealed by the scrutiny by one armed with the Word. The panic his challenge produced appeared to justify his faith in its efficacy. 'These Episcopall Rabbies', he recounted, 'who are Cheife members of the Kingdome of Darknesse, had no other Argument to convince me with, then to put a Gagg in my mouth, least I should have shaken the foundation of their Antichristian Kingdome'.¹⁴²

For the moment Lilburne had found his *cause celebre* and the day after his sufferings he sent a message from the Fleet to Laud repeating his challenge, offering now to prove episcopal diabolism on pain of death. Again brute force attempted to prevent his message being heard, and the Archbishop commanded that he be quarantined 'in the basest place in the Wards of the Fleet' least his

¹³⁹ Lilburne, *Come out of her my people*, p. 25; for a rather effusive account of Lilburne and his sufferings see H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (1961, reprinted Nottingham, 1976), pp. 80-83.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁴¹ Lilburne, *Come out of her my people*, p. 13.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

words should prove infectious.¹⁴³ In mid-May 1638 an examination before the King's Attorney, Sir John Banks, and the Solicitor General, Edward Lyttleton, offered Lilburne another opportunity to declare that he would prove the bishops to be servants of Satan. This time he had visions of opening the eyes of the king and requested that Charles be present to see him either demolish Laud once and for all or die in the attempt. The reaction was by now predictable, and Lilburne was returned to close imprisonment with the addition of a set of irons for his trouble. Concerned about the effect of his polemic, the authorities commanded that he be denied all writing materials, and when he wrote in spite of them, he justified their fears. In 1639 he produced an appeal to his fellow apprentices which was smuggled out by a maidservant and distributed during their Whitsun holidays. The result, although he did not intend it, was a riot.¹⁴⁴ *Come out of her my people* should be seen in the same light. It was his fourth challenge to Laud, made this time by way of the ordinary readership, and driven by the same belief that Satan's power could never stand up the scrutiny of the Word. The pamphlet ended with a direct invitation to contest the satanism of the episcopate, and the final page was given over to listing the points to that effect which Lilburne would prove on pain of death.

Did Lilburne seriously believe his gauntlet would be taken up, or was he simply exploiting the propagandist potential of his situation and baiting the Archbishop? On the pillory in 1638 he seems to have believed his eloquence would move the crowd. His appeal to the apprentices in 1639 was to ask for a fair trial, and his prison writings reveal that to his mind a fair trial was one that would allow him to make his contentious inability to hold any kind of communion with the demonic episcopacy a cornerstone of his defence. Undoubtedly he took satisfaction in baiting Laud with a challenge that was unlikely to be taken up. But Laud's 'cowardice' reinforced Lilburne's view that his methods bore an efficacy which terrified the Devil's bishops.

Conclusion

The perception of diabolic subversion cut across the political rhetoric of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Employed by the both government and critics it did not imply opposition in the sense that the language of corruption identified by Linda Levy Peck did. The notion that the body politic might be tempted was a

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁴⁴ Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, p. 85.

logical extension of the belief that the human body might be so, and it might be part of the analogical thinking which Sommerville has warned against reading too literally.¹⁴⁵ But the actual perception of the Devil's subversion was born of conviction. Hence whilst there was a wide acceptance of the possibility of the temptation of the body politic, the experience and understanding of that temptation was defined by a far more individual sense of tangibility. The Gunpowder Plot gave the Devil's agency a palpability which went far beyond any other political event before the Civil War. But even here there was room for personal interpretation and difference. For William Prynne the theatre was the embodiment of Satan's subversion, and his writings were infused with a sense of frustration at others' refusal to see how the stage sparked off man's inherent sinfulness. Yet many others, Charles I among them, looked to a more benign didacticism in the theatre, and felt no demonic presence there at all. Charles felt his Devil elsewhere. If the writings of the theocrats he sponsored are assumed to reflect his personal convictions, Satan lurked in the conscience of those who sought to limit his power and deprive him of his favourite.

The rhetoric of witchcraft might, as Elmer suggests, encourage consensus, but only within a narrowly defined political outlook. 1 Samuel 15: 23 was central only to theocracy, not to the more varied political understanding illustrated by Dr Sommerville. Theocracy versus witchcraft operated on a pre-existing identification of the nature of Satanic agency—rebellion against the divine ruler. It was an ideology that might discourage or react to opposition only if it was accepted that certain types of criticism *were* rebellion. As parliament's response to the Mainwaring case demonstrates, this was far from a forgone conclusion. The wider understanding of the demonic temptation of the body politic was simply too open to ever be able to breed consensus. Relying for its force on a personal sense of tangibility rather than on abstract theorising, the idea not only allowed for, but was defined by wide differences of perception. Elmer has also noted that 1 Samuel 15 did not become politicised until the outbreak of the Civil War, but this discussion has shown that the perception of diabolic subversion was an inherently political act. No regime maintained a monopoly of the perception of diabolic subversion, although the tangibility provided by Gunpowder Plot allowed James I greater control than Elizabeth I or Charles I. The 1640s saw an enormous increase in claims that Satan was walking through England, but, as we will see in the next chapter, what had changed was that diabolic agency had become markedly more tangible in the upheavals of the Civil War, and the breakdown of censorship, and wide recourse to propaganda had made such views far easier to express.

¹⁴⁵ Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, pp. 48-49.

‘Grand Pluto’s Progress through Great Britaine’: The Civil War and the Zenith of Satanic Politics

For many of those who lived through it, 1642-1660 appeared to mark the zenith of Satan’s activity in England, a time in which he appeared especially free to plague the nation and bring about unprecedented upheaval and change. War was inherently diabolic, a Civil War doubly so. Its chaos and bloodshed were the Devil’s hallmarks, a sign that he now walked the earth unfettered. Peace, noted one pamphleteer in 1643, was a ‘blessing’ and he who worked to maintain peace in the commonwealth was ‘a child of God’. By extension he who agitated for war to disrupt the godly nation was ‘little better than a childe of the deuill’.¹ In 1644 a pamphlet entitled *The Great Eclipse of the Sun* noted how Charles I’s belligerence could only be explained by his having fallen under the influence of Satan and his human agents. Even for a divine king, such a betrayal of godly duty tempted providence. ‘Though the Pope and all the Deuills in hell should encourage him to this bloody war’, the author declared, ‘yet it is unnatural in the sight of God and man’. ‘There is a hell and domesday, and damnation, as well for Kings as poor subjects’, he warned.²

The gamut of recognised diabolic phenomena seemed especially congruent with the times. God’s hangman was unusually active, dragging sinners, hypocritical parliamentarians, and drunken Cavaliers off to hell.³ Satan’s trusted agents, the Jesuits, went about the nation in disguise, effecting the subversion of Protestantism, and hatching plots to do violence to its guardians, the King and parliament. Satan drove people to commit brutal murders, and tempted them to witchcraft. Between 1645 and 1647, East Anglia experienced England’s only major

¹ Anon., *The miseries of War. By a louer of Troth and Peace* (? London, 1643), p. 5.

² Anon., *The Great Eclipse of the Sun, or Charles his waine over-clouded, by the euill influences of the moon* (? London, 1644), p. 6.

³ In 1641 the Devil appeared in a tavern on the Strand, causing ‘multitudes of people’ to flock there, whilst in 1642 he appeared before a drunken royalist, who soon died blaspheming against God and parliament, see Anon., *A Wonderfull and Strange Miracle, or Gods Just Vengeance Against the Cavaliers* (London, 1642), pp. 4-6.

witch panic, when, guided by the self-styled Witch-finder General, Matthew Hopkins, a witch-hunt spread from Essex to Suffolk, resulting in the executions of at least 100 witches. In recent studies the disruptions of the Civil War have been re-emphasised as the background to the hunt. A heightened sense of diabolic activity fuelled a popular local Puritanism that had already found expression in campaigns of ministerial reform and iconoclasm, and which may well have taken the satanic characterisations of royalists in parliamentary propaganda to heart.⁴ But Satan also had new tricks to play. A particularly disturbing ploy involved the proliferation of religious sectarianism. A bewildering array of pernicious heretics seemed to burst from nowhere, espousing every offensive position from atheism to antinomianism and the abolition of sin.⁵

To ask why England became prey to the perception of increased diabolic activity in the 1640s and 1650s might seem a redundant question. The Civil War and the execution of the king were profoundly disturbing events which produced massive social and cultural dislocation. In J. C. Davis's words, they produced an 'extension of the range of uncertainty'.⁶ As the work of Anthony Fletcher, John Morrill and Conrad Russell has convincingly shown, few, if any, conceived of the possibility of civil war when the Long Parliament met in November 1640.⁷ Despite agitation for an engagement among some of the parliamentary party in early 1642, the reality of a civil war was perceived as a failure of government, which heralded a descent into chaos, and set countrymen against each other in a subversion of nature. The suddenness of this cataclysmic failure bewildered and frightened contemporaries, forcing them to find some way to come to terms with it. In such an environment the Devil's malice seemed as plausible an explanation as any. A civil war was especially demanding on this kind of explanatory device. Demonic caricatures of Cavaliers and Roundheads, set out in propaganda, provided useful ammunition. But they also betrayed a need to dehumanise in order to explain what made these countrymen not countrymen at all. Cherished political beliefs were eroded when, as the war progressed, it became increasingly difficult to shift

⁴ J.A. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 140-142; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, p. 293; Peter Elmer, "'Saints or sorcerers'", p. 175, n. 86.

⁵ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, 1972, repr. 1991); J.F. McGregor & B. Reay (eds.), *Radical Religion in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1984); Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (New York, 1985); J.C. Davis, *Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge, 1986); Jerome Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press during the English Revolution: The Battle of the Frogs and Fairfords' Flies* (London, 1993), chapters 5 & 6.

⁶ Davis, *Fear, Myth and History*, p. 100.

⁷ Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London, 1981); John Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War* (London, 1980); Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991).

blame from Charles to his advisors, and his eventual execution, and the abolition of the House of Lords symbolised (or so it seemed) a repudiation of patriarchal hierarchy and the end of the ancient constitution. Government in the hands of a revolutionary minority in 1649 appeared to many the very triumph of Satan.

The perception of diabolic activity must also have provided an emotive expression for the pervasive feeling of helplessness experienced both by those who took part in the war and those who did not. From 1642 many experienced the 'agony of choosing sides' in a conflict that they did not want, and choices were made on the basis of fear as well as conviction. Fear of an Irish invasion, or fear of disorder and rioting, motivated into action men who had hoped the crisis would be short enough to maintain their neutrality.⁸ Moving armies, billeting, pillaging and war taxation threatened the livelihoods of those unfortunate enough to find themselves in the way, whilst the rumour of them was presumably equally terrifying to those who did not. Unsurprisingly then the war ushered in a national obsession with all kinds of cosmic influences and portents that became inseparable from its political and military upheavals and were equally disturbing. The pulp press reported widespread providences and signs of divine displeasure, feeding a fear that God would punish the nation for its disruption of divinely ordained kingship. In 1641 God's anger with parliament was supposedly made apparent in the form of terrible storms and the flooding of the Thames, according to a chapbook, *A Strange Wonder, or, The City's Amazement*.⁹ Over a period of four days in 1647 a pool in the town of Garreton in Leicestershire became increasingly dark, sparking off speculation that it had turned to blood, symbolising the four years of bloody war that had beset the nation.¹⁰ A plethora of cosmic disturbances such as comets, duplicate suns, raining blood and even battles played out in the sky, as well as monstrous births and particularly brutal murders, were all symptomatic of the chaos into which the nation had descended, and of God's anger.¹¹

The Devil was central to this cosmic environment of the Civil War. His appearances as God's Hangman provided further indications of divine

⁸ Martyn Bennet, *The Civil Wars in Britain & Ireland 1638-1651* (Oxford, 1997), chapter 5.

⁹ Cited in Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press*, p. 34.

¹⁰ Anon., *The Most Strange and Wonderfull Apparition of Blood in a Pool at Garreton* (London, 1647).

¹¹ The number of pamphlets produced describing prodigies was enormous, this is a sample of some of the better known examples, Anon., *A Great Wonder in Heaven: shewing The late Apparitions and prodigious noyses of War and Battels, seen on Edge-Hill* (London, 1642); Anon., *A Blazing Starre seene in the West* (1642); Anon., *A Strange And Lamentable accident that happened lately at Mead-Ashby in Northamptonshire* (London, 1642); Anon., *Signes and wonders from Heaven. With a true Relation of a Monster borne in Ratcliffe Highway, at the signe of the three Arrows* (1642); William Lilly, *The Starry Messenger, or, An Interpretation of Strange Aparitions* (1644); Anon., *A Declaration, Of a strange and Wonderfull Monster: Born in Kirkham Parish in Lancashire* (London, 1646). See also Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press*, chapters 2 & 3, *passim*.

displeasure, but they also might be particularly adept at expressing the moral ambiguity of the times. For example the pamphlet *Strange News from Warwick* (1642) told two very folkloric tales about the appearance of God's Hangman in the aftermath of the Battle of Edgehill. The first concerned a soldier who was robbed of his booty by a husband and wife who kept an inn at Warwick, the second involved a soldier who returned from battle to find his fiancée celebrating her marriage to another man. In both instances the Devil appeared in different guises to make off with the offenders, in the first case as a defence lawyer in the trial of the victim, who was imprisoned after threatening violence to get his money back, in the second as a mysterious stranger who carried off the bride while dancing at her wedding.¹²

The stories embody moral turbulence and instability. The innkeeper is seduced by a 'modern' corruption of the common law, believing that it is infinitely malleable, and anything that cannot be proved in a court to belong to someone else is rightfully his. His victim is a parliamentarian soldier, and perhaps there is a political bias in the pamphlet—but the soldier has gotten his booty by pillaging bodies on the battlefield, and, whilst he refuses to give the Devil his soul, he willingly enlists his help in exacting justice on the innkeepers when Satan appears to tempt him in his cell. Getting Satan to dispense his powers for free is a familiar victory in the folkloric narrative, but the soldier exhibits none of the clever trickery usually in evidence, instead his concern for the safety of his soul impresses Satan into helping him. As Darren Oldridge has recently suggested, this was an assimilation of Protestantism and folklore.¹³ But it was one which was fraught with confusion. Whilst the soldier's concern for his spiritual estate might be Protestant, Protestantism countenanced no witting interaction with the Devil. The only moral certainty exhibited in the pamphlet is that of the danger of swearing by the Devil, which both offenders do before being dragged off in the execution of poetic justice.¹⁴

Thus in one sense the perception of increased diabolic activity fits into the picture historians have drawn of the role of explanatory devices in the upheavals of the Civil War. As Conrad Russell has noted of anti-popery, the Devil's utility

¹² This pamphlet was probably regurgitated in the newsbook *The Faithful Scout* in December 1654. Although now set in Germany the same two tales of an innkeeper who steals money he has been entrusted to keep, and of a woman who deserts her fiancé are given as news of that week. The text is reprinted in Joad Raymond, *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England 1641-1660* (Moreton-in-Marsh, 1993), pp. 192-193.

¹³ Darren Oldridge, *Religion and Society in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 12-13. Unlike Oldridge however, I am not convinced that the Protestant elements in *Strange News from Warwick* can be described as characteristically Puritan since they embody a view of diabolic temptation that was in no way the preserve of the hotter sort of the godly, see *Ibid.* p. 19, n. 62.

¹⁴ *Strange News from Warwick* (London, 1642), sigs. A2v-A3 & A4-A4v.

might lie in his ability 'to impose order on an otherwise unintelligible mass of events'.¹⁵ But this is only one part of the picture. The conspiracy theories of anti-popery and anti-Puritanism studied by Anthony Fletcher, Conrad Russell and others; and the interest in cosmic disturbances and portents described by Christopher Durston and Jerome Friedman, are essentially seen as overly emotional reactions to political and social crisis. Professor Fletcher has described the 'abnegation of reason' by which John Pym skilfully imposed his 'over-dramatised' view of the functional breakdown of Stuart government on the Westminster establishment, his readiness to entertain rumour and distrust exposing the obsessive anti-Catholicism which gave his tactical acumen its emotional drive. For Professor Russell, the prevalence of these conspiracy theories is indicative of a tendency among Charles I and his subjects to give in to the temptation to employ simplistic and all-embracing explanatory tools as a meaningful gloss for an infinitely more complex and confusing political reality.¹⁶ But if the perception of diabolic activity could play a similar role, far more prevalent was a positive and proactive engagement with satanism that allowed the political crisis of 1640-1642, and the Civil War, to be seen as part of an ongoing campaign against Satan's attempt to subvert and tempt the body politic.

As we saw in the last chapter, demonism did not, as Peter Elmer suggests, become politicised only after the outbreak of hostilities, it was an inherently political belief from the accession of Elizabeth I. Both discerning Satan in their enemy's vanguard in 1642, parliamentarians and royalists accepted an established dynamic of diabolic agency which was bound up with the complexities of theocratic politics, rather than with an attempt to gloss them over. The demands of an intense propaganda war, and the removal of effective constraint over the press left polemicists free for the first time to say just about anything about their enemies. The pulp press went into overdrive and openly churned out the kind of libels that had only been circulated surreptitiously before. Other areas of polemic, notably the parliamentary fast sermons, were equally free with their testaments to the perception of diabolism. What is striking about these sources is not a recourse to a functional demonization and 'othering' (although of course those elements are present) but the consistency with which the dynamic of diabolic subversion, temptation of the body politic and false doctrine pervaded the various areas and genres of Civil War and Interregnum polemic.

¹⁵ Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies*, p. 527.

¹⁶ Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War*, pp. 408-412; Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies*, pp. 527-528.

This chapter will examine the ways in which demonism encouraged an engagement with the political, religious and social complexities of the decades between the calling of the Long Parliament and the Restoration. It will focus on the area of printed literature which most explicitly addressed the satanic nature of the unprecedented political and social crises. The propaganda produced by the parliamentary and royalist camps during the Civil War encompassed a sophisticated demonization of the other side which favoured a nuanced political understanding over crude stigmatisation.

'Sworne Sword-men of the devill': Diabolic Service in Parliamentary Propaganda

Nine days after Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham Castle William Carter preached a fast sermon to the House of Commons in which he characterised the impending war as a divinely ordained struggle with the forces of Satan. Parliament was not war-mongering, rather the present conflict was a natural consequence of being employed in reformation, since 'if any man be set on work for God, all the power and subtlety of Satan and his wicked instruments are set against him'.¹⁷ The fast sermons, the area of propaganda over which parliament had the most direct control, have been used by historians as a barometer of its aims, intentions and reactions, and it is surprising then that more attention has not been paid to Carter's sermon.¹⁸ This is largely because the fast sermons of 1642 are generally considered in the shadow of Stephen Marshall's *Meroz Cursed*, preached at the first of the regular fasts on 23 February. Six months before the outbreak of hostilities this sermon denounced neutrality and those who balked at shedding blood in God's cause. It called for total war and marked a watershed, in Hugh Trevor-Roper's narrative of the fast sermons, after which the Commons employed a long series of 'incendiary' preachers who scandalised both royalists and moderates.¹⁹ Yet even as the two sides prepared for war, William Carter's sermon was no thunderous incitement to violence. Rather it sought to instil in parliament an awareness of the demands placed on those who would take action in a

¹⁷ William Carter, *Israels peace with God Beniamines Overthrow* (London, 1642), p. 19.

¹⁸ See Hugh Trevor-Roper's study, 'The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament', reprinted in his *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London, 1967), pp. 294-344; and Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London, 1993), pp. 79-108, Hill briefly describes Carter's sermon on p. 90.

¹⁹ Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed, or, A Sermon Preached To the Honourable House of Commons, At their late Solemn Fast, Feb. 23. 1641* (London, 1641); Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, pp. 307-308.

theocentric conflict. Seeing the enemy as the servants of Satan complicated rather than simplified political understanding. It encouraged engagement by drawing a parallel between macro-political conflict and the personal struggles of the godly with diabolic temptation. But as Satan might subvert the piety of individual Christians, so too he might subvert any apparently godly cause. Hence, whilst demonism provided a similar emotional energy to that which Christopher Hill has identified in Apocalypticism, it also demanded that parliament keep in sight the precarious boundary that separated just resistance from diabolic rebellion.

By the outbreak of hostilities the polemical battle lines had long been drawn. Parliament's Laudian enemies were described as popishly affected idolaters who wished to force a separation between the king and his people and turn back the reformation. From their inception the fast sermons continued the critique of government tolerance of diabolic subversion that had emerged in the parliaments of the 1620s and the Puritan writings of the personal rule. Cornelius Burges, preaching the first of the fast sermons on 17 November 1640, asked why in the wake of escapes from the Spanish Armada and Gunpowder Plot had England still not been given full deliverance from Babylon? The answer was that the spirit of division had allowed religion to sink into the 'deepest lakes of superstition and idolatry, under pretence of some extraordinary pietie of the times, and of some good work in hand.'²⁰ Satan had his covenant with his subjects, as evidenced by the pacts drawn up with witches, now England needed its covenant with God to be renewed, for 'who will not do as much for him as Witches and Sorcerers will do for the Devill?'²¹ But Burges was far more explicit than his predecessors as to the role of parliament in defeating the influence of false doctrine. Gunpowder plot proved, he argued, that parliament was the most important bulwark against satanism. 'For, albeit the ruine of the whole Kingdome was in their Eye who were the Cursed instruments of Antichrist, and of the Devill his Father, in that hellish Designe; yet, no blow could have come at us, but through Your [parliament's] sides'. Tradition had it that it was James I and his regime (of which parliament was only one part) which had been spared in 1605. The fact that Burges preferred to see the plotters' target as parliament itself should not be underplayed, it was highly significant if parliament was to define a role for itself as the vanguard against satanism. The members—many of whom, Burges pointed out, would never have been born had the plot succeeded—should be aware that they might once again stand in need of God's deliverance, since their work would inevitably

²⁰ Cornelius Burges, *The First Sermon preached to the honourable House of Commons now assembled in Parliament at their Publique Fast* (London, 1641), p. 54.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

invite Satan's attentions. 'You cannot be ignorant', he noted, 'of the many murmures and the more than whisperings of some desperate devilish conception suspected to be now in the womb of the Jesuiticall faction.'²²

This defining of parliament's anti-satanic role became a consistent theme of the fast sermons of 1640-1642. Stephen Marshall, preaching after Burges, reinforced his point. 'Your enemies are mighty, malicious, and cunning', he declared, 'and it may bee they are digging as deep as hell for Counsell to doe you mischiefe in this great worke that you are in.'²³ 'Let not the present troubles seem strange to you', the minister of Farnham in Essex, William Sedgwick, advised the Commons from the pulpit on 29 June 1642, 'we could not expect to finde the Dragon aslepe, and to steale away the golden fleece of Reformation'. He compared the work of parliament to the exorcisms performed by Christ in which, before being cast out, 'the Devil rent [the victim] sore'. 'So it is with us', Sedgwick continued, 'there have been some attempts to cast out the dumbe and deafe spirit of this Kingdome; but now Christ comes to doe it indeed, he raves, and teares, and foames, and blasphemes, shakes the very pillars of the Kingdome, crackes the foundation of Government'.²⁴ The Northamptonshire minister, Thomas Hill, preaching on 27 July 1642, saw parliament's role as a guard against the demonic plot to subvert the nation by leading them into spiritual blindness. 'The Pope hath many Emissaries abroad', he noted, 'who joyne with the Devill, studying a method of Soule-deceiving...you shall find the devill and deceiuers artificially methodizing their snares to draw us from the truth'. 'Never had any Parliament more work to do', he declared in the dedication of printed version of his sermon, 'let your cause be [God's] cause...then you will have more with you than against you, though the Devill and the Pope combine.'²⁵

But if parliament was to be engaged in a struggle with the Devil, it was vital that it understand its position to be analogous to that of the ordinary Christian

²² Ibid., pp. 59-60. On the 5 November 1641 Burges again preached before the Commons. This time his assessment of Gunpowder Plot was far more conventional and he may well have been influenced by the official *King's Book* account which, like him, described the event as a potential breach in the boundaries of hell and earth. 'This is the day wherein the most prodigious rage of man that ever Sun beheld, or that Hell it selfe boyled up to an height justly execrable to all the world, was ready to break forth out of the nethermost Pit, against our Late King, Queene, the Ryall Seed, the Parliament, Church, Kingdome, this Place, our selves, and all ours, all at once.' See *Another Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons now assembled in Parliament, November the Fifth, 1641* (London, 1641), p. 1.

²³ Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, now assembled in Parliament* (London, 1641),

²⁴ William Sedgwick, *Zions Deliverance and her Friends Dvty: or The Grounds of Expecting, and Means of Procuring Jerusalems Restauration* (London, 1642), pp. 9-10. Sedgwick was referring to the the exorcism described in Mark 9.

²⁵ Thomas Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (London, 1642), sigs. A4-A4v, pp. 35-36.

who sought daily to ward off his temptations. Whilst the preachers of the fast sermons provided the required exhortations to commitment to the reforming cause, they also appreciated their genuine pastoral role towards parliament. Preaching to the great and the good in London was rarely free of political implications, but neither was it simply a convenient political platform. As ministers further afield guided their more committed parishioner's devotions through the everyday conflicts with the diabolic, the fast sermons performed a similar pastoral function for a parliament willing to see satanic forces oppressing the nation's government. Spiritual preparation thus became central to political action, and there was a striking similarity of rhetoric between the 'political' demonism of the fast sermons and the personal demonism of Protestant conduct and devotional literature.

On May 15 1642 Robert Harris preached to the Commons of the subject of steadfastness in prayer, highlighting the special role of parliament's fasts to 'loose the bands of wickedness'. He drew analogies between the position of the body politic and the private Christian, both of which were torn between the competing voices of God and the Devil. 'Satan will roare upon us', he noted of the various ways steadfastness might be undermined. 'Let the Devill promise safety, secrecy, any profit, or content in a sinfull way', he noted, 'we rest in his word...All the threats and curses of the booke of God cannot dismay us.' 'Have we not reason to believe the God of Truth rather than the father of lies?', he concluded.²⁶ Edward Reynolds took Hosea 14: 2—'take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously'—as the text for his sermon preached on 27 July 1642. His exhortation to the nation to faith and prayer in the face of affliction again drew comparisons with the prescribed response to individual temptation. As with so many devotional works Reynolds ran through the Devil's nomenclature of power to emphasise the varied nature of his agency. 'Dragon' signified malice, 'serpent' his subtlety and 'lion' his strength; but none of these, Reynolds noted, could stand before prayer.²⁷

Preparation for political action was akin to the introspective preparations required before communion. Preaching on the same day as Reynolds, Thomas

²⁶ Robert Harris, *A Sermon preached to the honourable Hovse of Commons* (London, 1642), p. 10, 11, 22.

²⁷ Edward Reynolds, *Israels Petition in Time of Trouble. A Sermon Preached In St. Margarets Church at Westminster, before the Honourable House of Commons now assembled in Parliament. At the Late Publicke and solemne Fast, July, 27. 1642* (London, 1642), pp. 7, 38-39; Obadiah Sedgwick, *England's Preservation or, A Sermon discovering the onely way to prevent destroying Judgements: Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at their last solemne Fast, being on May, 25. 1642* (London, 1642), p. 51; William Gouge, *The Saints Support, Set out in A Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons assembled in Parliament. At a publick Fast, 29. June, 1641* (London, 1641), pp. 16-17.

Hill called for action informed by spiritual knowledge and warned of the dangers of diabolic subversion. 'The Schoole of Christ is indeed a Schoole of affection, and action', he noted, 'but first of knowledge; we must have science before we shall make conscience of our wayes.' 'This makes the God of this world, the Devill, bestirreth himselfe to blinde peoples minds', he continued, 'he well knew that darknesse of mind, betrays us to the workes of darknesse.' If parliament was to 'lay siege to the Devill or the Popes kingdome', it must reveal God's truth, and that process started with individuals. 'Have you set up Truth in your owne families', Hill asked, appealing to common notions of patriarchal government, 'you reckon your house, your little Common-wealth; by what law is it governed?'. Many would have men believe their households were like churches, but Hill was contemptuous of such complacency. 'Thy house a Church to God, and thou an uncleane sonne of Belial?', he demanded, 'what concord hath Christ with Belial?'²⁸ Just as individual parishioners were warned against presumption, now parliament was being encouraged to actively pursue godliness. Without unpolluted godly intent all talent and ability were simply turned over to the Devil. Every one present, Reynolds noted, must 'seriously endeavour to take away all iniquity from his person...,for whatever other honour, wealth, wisdom, learning, interest a man hath besides, if sin hath the predominancy, they are but Satans Magazine, and that man his servant to employ them against God that gave them'.²⁹

Thus when William Carter entered the pulpit on 31 August 1642, both his message that the forces of Satan were ranged against parliament, and that engagement required dedicated spiritual preparation, were familiar. Carter took Judges 20:26-8 as his text, recounting the war between the tribes of Israel and Benjamin. The point was that although the sons of Israel were instructed by God to engage with their 'brothers' the sons of Benjamin, they were defeated in battle twice. This demonstrated that a just cause was not sufficient to secure victory even in a holy war. 'The Israelites were right in what they did', Carter noted, 'they were not right in themselves that went about it, they had their Idolls and

²⁸ Thomas Hill, *The Trade of Truth Advanced* (London, 1642), pp. 19, 22-23, 41; William Greenhill, *The Axe at the Root, A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at their publike Fast, April 26. 1643* (London, 1643), p. 26.

²⁹ Reynolds, *Israels Petition*, p. 25, human resources were inherently transferable between Christ and Satan, and Reynolds also argued that the talents of Satan's servants might as readily be employed for God, see p. 12; Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons*, pp. 18-19, 31, 36-37; *A Peace-Offering to God A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons assembled in Parliament* (London, 1641), p. 49; William Sedgwick located the transferability of human talent more specifically in the universities, noting that, after the victory over the kingdom of darkness they 'will be filled, not with the sonnes of Beliall, but with sons of the prophets', *Zions Deliverance*, p. 51; for the continued use of the notion in fast sermons after the outbreak of war see Edmund Calamy, *The Noble-mans Patterne Of true and reall Thankfulnesse* (London, 1643), pp. 33-34.

false worships, still among them unrepented of; therefore God went not forth with their Armies.'³⁰ It was only after the Israelites had humbled themselves with fasting, sought God's forgiveness and renewed their covenant with him, that they were finally given victory over the Benjimites. Those engaged in God's work, Carter argued, faced two principal opponents—Satan and 'the sins of a mans own heart'. The minister resorted to the common text of Ephesians 6:12 and observed 'who ever is imploy'd for God...shall have all the power of all the Divells in Hell against him.'³¹ No matter how holy their work, only those reconciled with God would be able to withstand such opposition:

for Satan, 'tis not every man can deale with him; ther's no resisting him without an holy heart, there is no getting that without a pardon...where there is no righteousness, that is, no pardon, the grace of Christ beares no sway in that soule; and then that man who is still in the bond of iniquity, however for the present he may in a manner, be engaged for God, what ever is that way pretended, hee will be found at last to be of Satans party; and though he goe exceeding far in a good cause, he'l not be through in the work, and when it comes to the main principall, he'l faile, and that is as much as Satan wishes or desires...

But Carter was concerned that unregeneracy not only weakened God's cause, but that it was a source of profoundly damaging *de facto* diabolic subversion. 'If a man be unregenerate', he noted, 'Satan then hath something in him, nay all that's in him, is his own, and what ever the mans design is now, Satan knows the man is his, and that in time it will be seen, yea that such a man shall doe him better service than another can, and so much the more, by how much he seemed at the first to be against him.' As Julian the Apostate had damaged Christianity more than the persecuting emperors that preceded him, unregenerates in God's army constituted a diabolic potential that must inevitably be activated, and so damage the cause from the inside.³² 'Doe not the work of God negligently, or to halves', was Carter's conclusion, which Christopher Hill cites as parliament being assured it was engaged in a holy war. But Carter's choice of text was far more complex, providing a salient example of the consequences of failing to be spiritually prepared for God's call, and of the importance of always keeping the Devil in sight.³³

³⁰ Carter, *Israel's peace with God Beniamines Overthrow*, pp. 1-3.

³¹ Ibid, p. 18. Ephesians 6:12—'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'.

³² Ibid, pp. 21-22.

³³ Ibid, p. 44; Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution*, p. 90.

Thus the picture which emerges out of the demonism of the fast sermons is somewhat different to that advanced by Trevor-Roper. Whilst they expressed an opposition between parliament and the forces of Satan, the fast sermons tended to be more cautious than he has suggested, even after *Meroz Cursed*. They called for commitment and stigmatised moderates, but they also tended to demand rigorous introspection and self-awareness on the part of those who were to take up God's cause. In its effects this might appear paradoxical. Those employed to trumpet the call to engagement in reformation might at the same time be planting seeds of doubt in their auditors by highlighting the diabolic consequences of being wrong. In fact far from simply providing an explanatory gloss, diabolism greatly complicated the issue. Every member of parliament was in effect a potential satanic agent, and was being told so. But this makes an important point about the place of religion in the political discourse of the 1640s. Historians have tended to see religion as a more or less malleable tool of political expression, and the fast sermons as an example of religion being very consciously put to work to advance the ideas of certain parliamentary leaders in the months before the outbreak of war. But religious messages were too complex and too nuanced to be the simple tool of political polemic. The rhetoric of reformation, and of its enemy diabolic temptation and false doctrine, was simply too well established by the 1640s not to bring inherently introspective overtones to calls to a war against the Devil. The parliamentary leaders who controlled the fast sermons' content either could not, or, more likely, did not wish to separate calls for action from the spiritual demands they implicitly made on the audience. As we might expect, the populist pamphlets which spread parliament's message after the outbreak of hostilities were far less cautious, but members of parliament themselves were expected to be able to assimilate the connections being made between the everyday spiritual troubles of the godly and the preparations for macro-political conflict.

* * *

The notion of parliament's special role in combating diabolic false doctrine also had the potential for populist appeal. The campaign of demonization began not, as is often assumed, as a reaction to the outbreak of the war, but in the polemical manoeuvring of 1640-1642. A mixture of the dynamic of false doctrine, satire and the sensationalist devices of the pulp press provided a number of anonymous pamphlets with supposed exposes on the diabolism of the Laudian regime. Whilst providing satisfying propaganda, these works introduced complex ideas about human interaction with the Devil into the political crisis. Most notably the concept of diabolic patronage found a central, and subsequently consistent place in parliament's populist campaign. Through the printing of letters from, and

petitions to Satan, and articles of agreement signed by the Devil and his agents, the pope and his subjects in England were presented as diabolic clients. Rather than being the Devil's slaves, they subverted the commonwealth because their own personal interest was synonymous with their patron's. The device was by no means as trite as it might at first appear. It introduced into pamphlet propaganda both political and religious considerations which were astute and complex. The notion of diabolic patronage and reward has an obvious place in the oppositional rhetoric of corruption identified at the centre of Caroline political discourse by Linda Levy Peck.³⁴ A relocation of the origin of preferment from the king to the Devil provided a satirical exposé of the corruption of Caroline patronage, which, we may suspect, smarted particularly strongly with Charles' pretensions to theocracy. The accusations of corruption that had surfaced in the 1620s had centred on abuses by individuals, motivated by self-serving and avarice. But in the polemic of the early 1640s venality was given a central diabolic rationale; corruption was conceived, not as a selfish abuse of a benign system of patronage, but as an act of clientage in itself, carried out in the interest of a diabolic patron. Again we are in the realm of 'incarnate devils', humans whose inherent demonic potential was seen to be fully activated.

Fighting against the forces of satanism before August 1642, parliament was of course seeking to redress the consequences of Catholic infiltration and the propagation of false doctrine. The Catholics, and especially the Jesuits were Satan's vanguard polluting the body politic in preparation for his rule. The satirical pamphlet, *News from Hell, Rome, and the Inns of Court* (1641), purported to provide an historical exposé of Satan's involvement in the events surrounding the war with Scotland, and his attempts in September 1640 to prevent the calling of parliament. The pamphlet opened with a letter from the Devil to the pope, supposedly written on 1 September 1640 (or as it is given, in the 5661st year of Satan's reign on earth) in which he congratulated the pontiff on his use of the Laudian episcopate to effect a war between Charles and his Scottish subjects.³⁵ Similarly a translation of a Latin pamphlet, printed as *Camilton's Discovery of the Devilsh Designs...of the Society of Jesuits* (1641) was dedicated to parliament. The original was produced in Germany in 1607, and its translation sought to impress on parliament that the present English political crisis was in fact a sequel to that which had produced the Thirty Years War. 'The same wheel of mischief, that wrought all the woes of Germany', the dedication declared, 'hath for some years

³⁴ Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, passim.

³⁵ Anon., *News From Hell, Rome, and the Innes of Court. Wherein is set forth the copy of a letter written from the Devill to the Pope* (London, 1641), pp. 1-6.

past been also set to work in England, Scotland, and Ireland; witness all the factions and fractions in church and state, the disturbances and discontents between prince and people...all which received their birth and breeding from the devilish designs of those sons of division, the society of Jesuits'.³⁶

According to these pamphlets false doctrine had profound political consequences. It was a central tenet of a satanic strategy of divide and rule, since in a country aspiring to reformation it bred disharmony and confusion. For *News from Hell*, Laudianism's great success lay in 'sowing discord among the English hereticks [Protestants], as also in provoking the Scotch hereticks to an apparent opposition against their king, yea so far as to an invasion of the territories of England'.³⁷ Camilton drew a detailed picture of how the Jesuits had played on differences in religion among the German princes. Desire for innovation in religion, he observed, had allowed the Jesuits to set the emperor against his subjects, amplifying the scope for their influence in the divided empire. Thirty-four years later the pamphlet's translator spelled out the English parallels for any who had failed to catch them:

As [in Germany] the foundation of their work was laid in working upon their diversities in opinions, and seconded by advantage, taken upon the several humours of the princes, propounding to each one some such ends, as his nature most affected; so I may truly say, they have done here also. To what other end was the pestilent doctrine of Arminius introduced, whereby to make a party, that might prove strong enough in time to oppose the Puritan faction, as they stiled it?

By the diabolic work of the Jesuits Charles had been brought to an evil opinion of his subjects, the common people were discontented with their government and two opposing armies were present in England.³⁸

Parliament's attempts at reformation could be presented as a providential attack on this policy of subversion by false doctrine. In *News from Hell* Satan congratulated the bishops for working the dissolution of the Short parliament in May 1640, 'by which means nothing was effected for the good of hereticks, either concerning church of commonwealth; so as the success of this design of ours was in no way hindered.'³⁹ The Petition of the Twelve Peers provided another focus of

³⁶ W.F.X.B., *Camilton's Discovery of the Devilish Designs, and Killing Projects, Of the Society of Jesuits...intended, but graciously prevented, in England. Translated out of the Latin Copy. Dedicated to the High-court of Parliament* (London, 1641), reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany*, vol. V (London, 1810), p. 104.

³⁷ *News from Hell*, p. 2.

³⁸ W.F.X.B., *Camilton's Discovery of the Devilish Designs*, pp. 116-117.

³⁹ Anon, *News from Hell*, p. 2.

this polemic. On the 5 September 1640 a petition drawn up by John Pym and Oliver St. John was presented to the king by twelve peers at York. Prominent amongst the 'evils and dangers' it listed as threatening the kingdom were innovations in religion, the increase in popery and the employment of recusants in positions of power. Satan's letter in *News from Hell* contained a postscript in which he claimed to have just heard of this 'most scandalous petition...which doth not a little touch our honour, and the discovery of this our present stratagem'. 'Our express will and pleasure is', the Devil continued, 'that there be some speedy course taken for the suppressing of the same, and the authors thereof severely punished'.⁴⁰ Thus the pamphlet indicated retrospectively that the summoning of the Long Parliament, which would take place on the 3 November, was a significant blow to the Devil's plans to keep the nation in confusion and division. The Petition of the Twelve Peers had been met only with a promise to summon the Great Council, and Pym had in his frustration circulated the petition in print. *News from Hell* now repeated this propagandist device, reprinting the text of the petition under the Devil's letter, and in doing so re-emphasised that parliament had not been called at Charles' behest, but as the result of agitation to redress the demonic chaos of the nation's government and religion.⁴¹ *Camilton's Discovery* was less detailed, but it also explicitly identified the Petition of the Twelve Peers as a providential set-back for the forces of Satan, an eleventh hour reprieve from chaos, by which God had shown more mercy to England than he had to Germany.⁴² But equating petitioning with a divinely ordained policy of reformation had inherent problems since it was device open to those of any political persuasion. As with all godly efforts, petitioning was prey to diabolic subversion, a concern made explicit in the pamphlet of 1642, *A Discoverie of the Ivglings and Deceitfull Impostores of a Slanderous Libell against the Parliament*. Describing the petition from the inhabitants of London, Westminster and Southwark it noted, 'the avthor of the libellovs paper...like the deuill disguises himselfe in Samuels mantle, and takes vpon him the forme of an angell of light,

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁴¹ For the text of the petition see Ibid., pp. 8-9. It is also reprinted in S.R. Gardiner (ed.), *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660* (3rd edition, Oxford, 1906), pp. 134-136. *News from Hell* is confused as to the date on which the petition was presented to Charles. Gardiner dates the composition of the petition in London on 28 August, and its presentation at York on the 5 September. *News from Hell* gives the date of its presentation as the 12 September, however, a petition was prepared at York on this date, demanding a parliament, but it was from the Yorkshire gentlemen who were concerned at Charles' expectation that they maintain their own trained bands. Through the efforts of Strafford the petition was never presented. On the efforts to secure a parliament see Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War 1603-1642*, vol. IX (London, 1884), pp. 198-208.

⁴² W.F.X.B., *Camilton's Discovery*, pp. 104-105.

pretending conscience, and falsley personating the honest inhabitants of those cities'. In citing scripture the petition followed the Devil's temptation of Christ, in which divine truth was made a lie.⁴³

In *A Disputation betwixt the Deuill and the Pope* (1642), the two bemoan the state of England and the failure of the Catholic party to work its subversion. This triumphalist pamphlet, 'written by the author to content his friend', delights in the imprisonment of Laud and the execution of the Earl of Strafford. The Devil's concern that 'mitres ar banisht' from England, and that all popish 'bookes and beads are accounted toys', is to be read as an indication of the progress being made by parliamentary moves toward reform. The satire is hardly sophisticated, but the pamphlet was able to give a more populist voice to the message that engagement required spiritual purity:

The World doth know we live in dangerous times
Let every good man then purge his owne crimes

and that diabolic subversion was inherent to the problems experienced in English politics:

For my owne part I wish a generall health
To our most gracious King and Common-wealth
If each true Protestant wish thus I hope
They'le shunne the Deuill as they slight the Pope.⁴⁴

Another example of the genre was *The Papists Petition in England* (1642). This purported to contain the petition of the English Catholic subversives to the Pope ('Grand Pluto his ensigne bearer here upon earth'), and the pontiff's subsequent conference with Satan. Again the calling of parliament is presented as a profound blow against the Devil's work in England, and the pope bemoans the execution of Strafford 'for proceeding in our faith to the inlarging of our demonically government'. As the Devil's primate, the pope excommunicates the entire Protestant population of England (perhaps a reference to the excommunication of Elizabeth I), and the pamphlet also publishes the Devil's council to the English

⁴³ Anon., *A Discouery of the Ivglings and Deceitful Impostores of a Slanderous Libell against the Parliament* (London, 1642), p. 1.

⁴⁴ Anon., *A Disputation betwixt the Deuill and the Pope. Being a breife dialogue between Urbanus, 5. Pope of Rome, and Pluto Prince of Hell. Concerning the Estate of Five Kingdomes, Spaine, England, France, Ireland. and Scotland* (London, 1642), sigs. A2-A4, quotes at A3v & A4.

Catholics. Again demonic Catholicism's only hope lies in destroying parliament and so the Devil advises:

Provide means to cut them off by some damnable plot; by your adherents amongst them, confiscate their pernicious parliament, destroy and put to the sword the principall men thereof...

The satire of diabolic patronage was enhanced by the notion of reward, specifically chthonian preferment. The rewards given to Satan's conscientious clients were detailed as positions of influence in the kingdom of hell. In *A Disputation betwixt the Deuill and the Pope*, the issue arises over the Devil's literal possession of Irish Catholics:

[Devil]

Their onset did beginn tragick and black
The English Protestant went first to Wrack.
Women they kill'd, young infants they did smother
As if each man forgot he had a mother
Brave work for me though I prompt them to it
They had almost as good as be damned as do it.

Pope

But in these spoiles sharn't I a sharer bee.

Devil

Oh yes my Lord, when you are damned like me.
But whilst this Fleшы substance thus ...
Your spirit, yoo can haue no share in soules
But when the happy time comes you shall dye
Thou Shalt be made as great a deuill as I.

In *The Papists Petition in England* the Devil's servants, Strafford and Laud, are to be honoured as the pope's chthonian emissaries. Strafford's journey through purgatory has been cut short that he may immediately take up his position in hell; as for Laud and other prisoners, 'in respect of their dutiful labours' the Devil promises to spirit them out of prison and straight to hell, 'where their entertainment shall be according as they have deserved'.

This was a smugly satisfying depiction of the enemies of Protestantism getting their just deserts and, as we will see, the notion was to be used against

Prince Rupert and, in 1660, against Cromwell. But it also rendered political corruption and diabolic subversion comprehensible by an appeal to a wide understanding of the most fundamental of hierarchical relationships. As in devotional works and crime pamphlets, political demonism was most effective when situated in the commonplace, where the audience's very identification with the subject of corruption might illustrate the insidious dynamic of diabolic activity. In highlighting the shared interest between the Devil and his human clients, the propaganda of the 1640s infused demonism with the same logic that pervaded political discourse and action. Satire was particularly adept at depicting diabolic patronage in practice, but we should not assume from this that the notion was not taken seriously. Satire did not invent diabolic patronage, it only reflected a common understanding that informed conceptions of witchcraft and murder, and applied it to the politicised print culture emerging out of the conflicts of the 1640s.

* * *

The notion that the royalist cause was ultimately directed from Hell persisted in parliament's wartime propaganda. A pamphlet of 1644, *The Devils White Boyes*, an exposé of the wantonness of the royal court, drew a picture of a chthonian council of war:

They [English malignants] and the deuill haue been in covnsell a great while, to deuise a plot how to destroy all the honest Religiovs Protestants in England, and the Earl of Strafford, hee sits in Covnsell euery day abovt it with Plvto, Astaroth, and the other infernall covnsellers, bvt this deuillish table, cannot yet, nor neuer shall be able to worke the rvn of the Protestants.⁴⁵

But the coming of war focused propagandist attention more specifically on the military conduct of the royalists, and on the figure of the godless Cavalier in particular. It was a novel expression of the long established belief that the Devil was most active when threatened by reformation. Where Laudianism had been Satan's attempt to reduce the nation to idolatry by stealth, the demonic Cavaliers, mustered to counter the actions of a proactive reforming parliament, proposed to do so by force. A pamphlet of 1642, *The Debauched Cavalleer*, found Old Testament precedent to demonstrate the idolatrous agency of the royalist forces. It promised to describe 'their diabolicall, and hyperdiabolicall blasphemies, execrations, rebellions, cruelties, rapes and robberies', and illustrated their motives by

⁴⁵ Anon., *The Deuil's White Boyes. Or, A mixture of Malicious Malignants with their much Evill, and manifold practices against the Kingdom and Parliament* (London, 1644), p. 3; Francis Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum* (London, 1643), p. 14.

comparing them to the Midianites of the Book of Judges. 'They were full of Rage and Blasphemy when the Altar of Baal was thrown downe', the author explained, 'so are the Cavalleers, what makes them rage, but that the Priests, and Altars of Baal are thrown down amongst us?'⁴⁶ The same year the separatist John Goodwin published *Anti-Cavalierisme*, arguing for 'as well the Necessity, as the Lawfulness of this present War'. The nation, he commented, suffered under a regime that acted 'after the manner of devils', seeking to turn back the advance of Christianity, overturning all progress in reformation. They sought 'to build up the walls of Jericho, to put Lucifer againe in to heaven, I meane, to advance the tyrannicall Thrones of the Heirarchie to their former height, or higher, if they know how'.⁴⁷ 'Do they know who is the Lord?', Goodwin asked of these policies, 'or doe they not thinke rather, that Baal, or Belial is he?'⁴⁸ Thus parliamentarians could be assured they were waging war on Satan and his human servants. 'We stand up like men', Goodwin declared, 'and quit our selves with all our might, and all our strength, against those assacinates, and sworne Sword-men of the devill, who have conspired the death and ruine of all that feareth God in the Land'.⁴⁹

The identification of Cavalierism with the Devil was in keeping the millenarian nature of parliament's rhetoric, as exemplified in the fast sermons.⁵⁰ Apocalypticism, argues Christopher Hill, provided the emotional 'revolutionary energy' which would, at the end of the 1640s, make conceivable the unprecedented changes that would follow the execution of Charles I. The identification of the royalist army with the Dragon of the Apocalypse sharpened the perception of the conflict as a holy war. Thomas Hill, preaching to the Commons on the 21 July 1643, furnished his audience with a description of the 'two potent Armies, under two Generals, Michael and the Dragon'. 'Betwixt these

⁴⁶ Anon., *The Debauched Cavalleer: ot the English Midianite* (London, 1642), p. 4; William Sedgwick, *Zions Deliverance*, p. 9; John Ellis, *The Sole Path to a Sound Peace* (London, 1643), p. 11; Matthew Newcomen, *The Craft and Crvelty of the Churches Adversaries* (London, 1643), pp. 3-9; Thomas Case, *Gods Rising His Enemies Scattering* (London, 1644), pp. 34-35.

⁴⁷ John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme, or, truth pleading As well the Necessity, as the Lawfulness of this present War* (London, 1642), p. 2; Thomas Wilson preached a sermons to the Commons using the analogy of Jericho and its worship of Baal in September 1643, see, *Jerichoes Down-fall, As it was Presented in a Sermon preached at St. Margarets Westminster before the Honourable House of Commons* (London, 1643).

⁴⁸ Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, p. 2; John Lightfoote, *Elias Redivivus: A Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons* (London, 1643), pp. 40-41.

⁴⁹ Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, p36; Thomas Temple, *Christ's Government In and over his People* (London, 1642), pp. 34-35; Cheynall, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum*, pp. 13-14; William Prynne, *Romes Master-peece: or, the Grand Conspiracy of the Pope and his Iesuited Instruments* (London, 1644), sig A2.

⁵⁰ The millenarian character of the fast sermons is well recognised by historians, see Bernard Capp, 'The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought', in C.A. Patrides & J. Wittrech (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature; Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester, 1984), p. 109; Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution*, pp. 98-99.

two parties there will be irreconcilable warres', Hill continued, associating the hostilities with the holy conflicts appointed by God, described in 1 Thessalonians 3:3.⁵¹

As bringers of violence and chaos the royalists were an incarnation of the roaring lion of I Peter 5:8. They were predatory and malicious, taking delight in destruction for its own sake, qualities which marked them out as servants of Satan. The Puritan divine, George Lawrence, used the image of the roaring lion to characterise the Laudian clergy as '*Dens Caninus Diaboli*, the Great Dogge tooth of the Deuill'. 'The corrupt clergy', he noted in *Laurentius Lutherans* (1642), go about 'snarling, shewing their teeth like so may dogges, and byting, yea tearing in peeces, were they able, everyone, who thwarts them in their way, and contradicts them in their unwarrantable insolencies, and illegal proceedings'.⁵² When applied to the military the roaring lion was possessed of a potential duality which sat particularly comfortably with parliamentary saintly self-conception. The image portrayed well the rapacious and all-consuming nature of the Civil War armies, who exacted a heavy toll from the localities through which they passed.⁵³ David Underdown has demonstrated that an ability to constrain plunder paid dividends in popular support, and that although the difference should not be exaggerated, parliament's commanders showed a greater awareness of this than the king's.⁵⁴ At the same time the roaring lion had immediate 'confessional' connotations. It had been employed through the reformation to portray the persecution of the saints, and it pervaded the devotional literature which encouraged more zealous Protestants to look for evidence of their salvation in the personal attention showed to them by the Devil.⁵⁵ Aimed at Charles' army it, at a stroke, characterised royalist violence as an implicitly Laudian tyranny, and Laudian tyranny as explicitly diabolic.

The dynamic of temptation was central to the understanding of royalist violence. Natural evil in man, or the 'energy of Satan', might turn men against the church, the Essex Minister, Matthew Newcomen, told the Commons in November 1642. 'But when both meet' he explained, 'a strong propension of nature in themselves, and a mighty energeticall power of Satan over them, needs must they with most impetuous violence be carried on by any craft or cruelty, no matter

⁵¹ Thomas Hill, *The Militant Church Triumphant over the Dragon and his Angels* (London, 1643), pp. 5-6.

⁵² George Lawrence, *Laurentius Lutherens. Or the Protestation of George Lawrence* (London, 1642), sig. A3v; John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, p. 2.

⁵³ On the excesses of the Civil War armies see, David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 148-153.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁵⁵ See above chapters 2 & 3.

what or how to hinder all that tends to the church'.⁵⁶ A pamphlet of 1643, *The Bloody Prince*, juxtaposed temptation and the roaring lion to show how Satan moulded the individualised corruption of royalist soldiers and churchmen into a collective predatory force aimed at the destruction of the saints. The bishops and Cavaliers, it declared, 'are now gathered together into an Army, under the command of the grand capitaine of wickednesse, the Divell'. Like its captain this army 'goes about daily to see how many of the Saints of God he can devour'.⁵⁷ In their barbarity the Cavaliers revealed their corruption—'wicked men doe wickedly because they loue it...there is a suitableness between sin and their soules'. But their sin allowed the Devil to take hold of their wills, acting as a 'second' to their evil intents. 'The diuell dothe instigate and stirre them up thereunto', the pamphlet continued, 'he rules their hearts...he carries them with all swiftenesse and violence to accomplish his owne will'.⁵⁸ Satan's agency focused the evil of corrupted men, turning them into diabolic instruments of his malice against the godly commonwealth. 'Feeding the senses withe the delight of wickednesse' clouded the royalists' perception, ensuring they continued 'killing the people of God when your diuelish pawes can fasten upon them'.⁵⁹

A number of pamphlets sought to make the point by recounting individual cases of demonic temptation amongst the Cavaliers. They appropriated the conventions of the contemporary murder pamphlet to equate Cavalier activity with diabolically inspired criminality. An example of 1642, *A Blazing Starre seene in the West*, told of how a 'devout cavalier', Ralph Ashley, had been providentially struck down after he had attempted to rape a young woman in Devonshire. This carefully constructed narrative highlighted the diabolism of the Cavaliers whose driving emotion was malice towards the servants of God. On the night of 14 November the daughter of one Adam Fisher set off home from town against the wishes of her friends who were concerned for her safety. Fisher was unfazed, claiming, 'God was aboue the deuill, and that she feared not, but that God which she trusted in, could, and would defend her from all enemies'. Thus in setting the scene, the narrative intimated that the crime to be described would be a crime against God, practised in the face of divine providence. Ashley met the woman on the road and offered to escort her home. The author appealed to a dynamic of

⁵⁶ Matthew Newcomen, *The Craft and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries* (London, 1643), pp. 17-18.

⁵⁷ Anon., *The Bloody Prince, or a declaration of the most cruell Practices of Prince Rupert, and the rest of the Cavaliers* (London, 1643), p. 18; Case, *Gods Rising, His Enemies Scattering*, pp. 3-8.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 4; Gregory Thims, *The Protestant Informer or Information to all Protestants* (London, 1643), p. 2; John Ley, *The Fory of Warre, and the Folly of Sinne, (As an Incentive to it) declared and applyed* (London, 1643), p. 22; for a similar point made in pre-war anti-catholic literature see, Anon, *A Bloody Plot, Practices by some Papists in Darbyshire* (London, 1641), sig. A2.

⁵⁹ *The Bloody Prince*, p. 10; Case, *Gods Rising His Enemies Scattering*, p. 34.

diabolic temptation commonly employed in murder pamphlets when he described how Ashley's lust, the symptom of his Cavalier corrupted morality, had allowed the Devil to take hold and drive him to rape.⁶⁰ 'With that he called to mind her beauty', the pamphlet related, 'the Deuill strait furnished him with a devise to obtaine his purpose'. Ashley persuaded his intended victim to leave the road in order to avoid the soldiers that were known to be about and, when he attempted to rape her, a comet appeared stunning Fisher. When he continued swearing 'God-damne-him, alive or dead he would enjoy her', a flame in the shape of a sword issued from the comet, striking him down. The narrative was intended to provide a timely warning as to the nature of the demonic Cavaliers 'which esteem murder & rapine the chiefe principalls of their religion'.⁶¹

The juxtaposition of images of tyranny and martyrdom provided further support to the perception of royalist diabolism. Self-sacrifice in the face of the synagogue of Satan was of course deeply ingrained in an English Protestant consciousness which encouraged identification with the martyrs of John Fox's *Acts and monuments*. The recent 'martyrdom' of William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick was also fresh in the memory for those who wished to see it as an example of Laudian tyranny.⁶² In John Goodwin's *Anti-Cavalierisme* martyrdom was presented as one of the opportunities offered by a just war against the forces of the Devil. The enmity of the Cavaliers was an inverted barometer of personal godliness. These 'men of Belial' were 'as thornes in our eyes, and scourges in our sides, only or chiefly because we will be that in open and constant profession, which by the grace of God we are inwardly and in the truth of our soules; because we will not prostitute our consciences to the lusts of their Father the devill'. Martyrdom was active, it 'doth not consist of lying down and suffering proud and wicked men to ride over our heads'. Instead it was a stance taken against Belial where God provided no means of escape, an opportunity 'for expressing our love and faithfulness unto Christ and his Gospell in wayes of suffering'. Martyrdom associated the parliamentary cause with the struggle depicted in Revelations and thus intimated victory. The opportunities for martyrdom were diminishing, Goodwin cautioned, since God 'will turne the wheele of his providence and dispensations, between his Church, and the Synagogue of Satan'.⁶³

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⁶⁰ For a full discussion of diabolic temptation in crime narratives see chapter 5.

⁶¹ Anon., *A Blazing Starre seene in the West at Totnets in Devonshire* (London, 1642), quotes at sigs. A2v, A3 & A4v.

⁶² For a contemporary description of their punishment highlighting their martyrdom, very much in the Fox tradition, see *A brief relation of certain special and most material passages and speeches in the Star-Chamber*, pp. 233-238.

⁶³ John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, pp. 34-36, William Sedgwick, *Zions Deliverance*, p. 16.

How far did this parliamentary demonism touch Charles I himself? Throughout the war parliamentary polemic adopted the commonplace notion that the King was essentially misguided and manipulated by a number of 'evil councillors', who forced a separation between him and his subjects. Wartime demonism could allow this to be more dynamically expressed as a form of diabolic temptation by proxy. Matthew Newcomen, preaching to the Commons in 1642, noted that 'all visible enemies of the church of God, are but the Emissaries of Satan his agents: and therefore they observe his methods'. This might involve violence or subtlety, but a favoured method was 'to ingratiate themselves to Kings and Princes, with much officiousnesse and pretended care for their profit and honour, that so being potent with the Potentates of the earth, they may have the more power to doe the Church a mischief.' Susceptibility to flattery/temptation rendered princes subjects of the Devil, and to drive home the point Newcomen cited the example of the crucifixion, procured by the Jews through a pretended loyalty to Caesar. This age-old ploy of the Devil had been taught to the Arminians by the Jesuits, and now 'all of them have made it their master-piece'.⁶⁴ Again pastoral and devotional understanding informed the depiction of the 'tempted King'. For Francis Cheynell, Charles was the epitome of the beleaguered Christian, beset on all sides by the Devil's influence. 'His throne is compassed about with snares', he explained to the Commons in May 1643, 'and he is even wedded to a temptation, his very Counsellours are, too many of them, Seducers, or flatterers...& therefore it is no marvaile if our King be misled.'⁶⁵

Temptation of course did not make Charles' actions any less diabolic or any less culpable, and indeed this in itself could provide a meaningful justification for conflict. Cheynell noted that were parliament to attempt to avoid confrontation by flattering Charles, it would merely be adding to his temptations, and that it too would become an agent of Satan. Instead it was their duty to make a stand whilst praying for the King's deliverance from the satanic forces that surrounded him.⁶⁶ Thus demonism allowed for the expectation of a settlement. Unlike diabolic clientage, susceptibility to temptation, as the universal sin, was one for which it was possible to atone. If the consequences of the King's languishing under satanic influence were greater than ordinary men's, it did not make his sin qualitatively greater than anyone else's who had listened too readily to the Devil's voice. Thus the notion of the Charles' temptation did not merely pay lip service to an

⁶⁴ Newcomen, *The Craft and Cruelty of the Churches Adversaries*, pp. 3 & 11-12.

⁶⁵ Cheynell, *Sions Memento, and Gods Alarum*, p. 37.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

opponent's continuing regard for his king. It made a meaningful equation between resistance to the monarch and the exorcism of the body politic.

But a far less forgiving attitude towards the King's diabolism was in evidence in January 1649. His intransigence after 1646, and the outbreak of the Second Civil War in 1648 produced a hardening of attitudes among the army leadership. He was executed on the will of a tiny minority of those who had taken up arms against him, his show trial a forgone conclusion by which the most radicalised of the army prepared the way for their revenge on 'the man of blood'. But if this was, as many historians have characterised it, an act of judicial murder, Patricia Crawford and Christopher Hill have demonstrated the intense commitment to a scriptural millenarianism that at least convinced the regicides that their revenge was just.⁶⁷ Similarly parliament's polemical use of demonism had paved the way to the concerted repudiation of Charles' pretensions to theocracy which his trial would represent. No longer willing to entertain the notion of temptation and the evil councillor, this radical minority was finally prepared to openly declare Charles himself to be an incarnate devil, wittingly employed in Satan's campaign against the faith. Had Charles made a plea at his trial the Solicitor-General John Cook stood ready with a lengthy speech in which he compared Charles to the fallen Lucifer. The King's refusal to recognise the court's authority denied him the chance, but rather than lose this propagandist opportunity, the speech was printed ten days after Charles' execution to explain the justice of the act.⁶⁸

It was now Charles who was directly responsible for the Civil War, and who, from the first slaughters at Edgehill, had shown scant concern for the Protestant blood that had been shed. A beloved prince who might have had parliament's complete co-operation but for his intransigence, had instead resorted to bloody tyranny. Thus Charles had betrayed the trust placed in him as God's chosen and his position was analogous with the first rebellion. 'I can say no less', Cook declared, 'but "O Lucifer, whence art thou fal'n and what hereticks are they in politicks that would have such a man to live?"'⁶⁹ Fallen from ordained kingship to tyranny Charles further approximated Satan, to whom God permitted only a temporary corrupted reign on the earth. 'For a king to rule by lust and not law is a creature that was never of Gods making, not of Gods approbation but of his permission', Cook continued, 'and though such men are said to be Gods on Earth,

⁶⁷ Patricia Crawford, "'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood'", *Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1977; Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution*, pp. 324-331.

⁶⁸ John Cook, *King Charls, his Case, or, and Appeal To all rational men Concerning his Tryal at the High Court of Justice* (London, 1649).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

'tis in no other sense then the Devil is called the God of this world.'⁷⁰ Cook's speech openly repudiated the notion of the evil councillor, noting that this had appeared to be the case when the Duke of Buckingham was alive, but that Charles' conduct during the war had made it obvious that he was 'principle in all transactions'. Rather than being misled by Laud or Strafford, Charles had been at the centre of a religious policy that sought to make an idol of himself. Again the parallels with Satan were clear. 'It cannot be denied but that he hath spent all his days in unmeasurable pride', Cook declared, 'that during his whole reign, he hath deputed himself as a God, been depended on and adored as a God'.⁷¹ In another pamphlet justifying the execution, John Milton also over-turned Charles' claims to theocracy. Theocratic power was, by definition, exercised for God or for the Devil. Royal power that was not exercised to the 'terror' of evil was not of God 'but of the Devill, and by consequence to be resisted'.⁷²

The effect of this demonization cannot be judged, but, as we will see, it seems that the majority of people were more likely to see diabolism in Charles' execution than in the man himself. But this should not overshadow the fundamental congruity with which Cook's depiction of the diabolic Charles fitted into the wider parliamentary polemic of the struggle with Satan. Christopher Hill has noted that the intense biblicism of the parliamentary party had made regicide conceivable by 1649. If the army leadership believed the Bible's absolute demands justified Charles' beheading as a step towards the rule of the saints, this was an extreme form of a far more widely held belief about the need for violent reformation.⁷³ Similarly the willingness to perceive Charles as an incarnate devil extended belief in the royalist promotion of idolatry and demonic false doctrine to its most extreme point.

'Hell's Black Parliament': Demonism, Rebellion and Diabolic Government in Royalist Propaganda

The royalist party was as quick as parliament to exploit the power of the press in putting its message across. Charles established printers in the main regions of the country within weeks of the outbreak of war, and some continued to operate

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 34-38, quotes at p. 35, 37.

⁷² John Milton, *the Tenure of kings and Magistrates: Proving that it is Lawfull, and hath been held so through all Ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or Wicked King* (London, 1649), pp. 15-16.

⁷³ Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-century Revolution*, p. 329.

throughout the war in London itself.⁷⁴ Indeed the royalists were the first to fully exploit the potential of the newly burgeoning newsbook genre, printing the official *Mercurius Aulicus* whilst parliament was tolerating a 'bewildering host of short-lived newspapers'.⁷⁵ But as Joyce Lee Malcolm has demonstrated, royalist propagandists paid attention only to the opinions of the gentry in the early stages of the war, and sneered at the supposedly plebeian origins of the parliamentary officers. Pamphlets, newsbooks and ballads peddled the official line that the parliamentary cause was populated by lower class upstarts whose programme aimed only at anarchy and the levelling of all degrees, and appealed only to the ignorance of the rabble and, worse still, to women.⁷⁶

Demonism could fit as comfortably in educated royalist polemic as it could in the more populist providentialist pamphlets of the pulp press. After all royalist propagandists could still refer to the argument of 1 Samuel 15: 23, that rebellion was the sin of witchcraft. Loyalist clergymen preached to the Oxford parliament on this text in 1644 and the royalist jurist Sir Robert Heath composed a private meditation arguing that rebellion was better understood through a clearer comprehension of the nature of witchcraft.⁷⁷ If by Charles' trial the Rump was willing to employ the imagery of Lucifer and his fall from heaven, it informed royalist perception of demonism from the earliest stages of the war. In 1643 the pamphlet *The Rebels Catechism* provided a discussion of the nature and practice of rebellion that incorporated general theories, historical examples and precedents, and contemporary parallels. Clearly aimed at an educated audience it cited ancient Roman authorities such as Tertullian and Cyprian, as well as respected medieval jurists such as Henry de Bracton. At the same time it aimed to engage in detail with the arguments of parliament's apologist, William Prynne, and with contentious issues such as the attempted arrest of the five members of parliament, and the meaning of the battle of Edgehill. It was informed generally by the understanding that rebellion against an anointed monarch was damnable, and it cited on its frontispiece Romans 8: 2—'Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation'.

The pamphlet opened by considering the origins of the practice of rebellion, which of course came from Satan. 'The first author of rebellion', it noted in answer to the first question of the catechism, 'the root of all vices and the mother of all mischief (saith the book of homilies) was Lucifer'. This was more than a simple

⁷⁴ Joyce Lee Malcolm, *Cesar's Due: Loyalty and King Charles 1642-1646* (London, 1983), pp. 124-131.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

⁷⁶ Underdown, *A Freeborn people*, pp. 71-72.

⁷⁷ Cited in Elmer, 'Saints or Sorcerers', p. 165.

theological commonplace, since the ordering of catechisms was of course fundamental to their understanding.⁷⁸ All ordinary catechisms opened with the catechumen's rehearsal of his fundamental beliefs, in God the creator and the Holy Trinity, from which Christian understanding emanated. Similarly, in the *Rebels Catechism* all understanding of rebellion was to be informed by the central knowledge that it was fundamentally diabolic. It was a device which, by implication, pre-empted and undermined any arguments for lawful resistance. The story of Lucifer provided other useful parallels. He was, at first, 'God's most excellent creature, and most bounden subject, who, by rebelling against the majesty of God, of the brightest and most glorious angel, became the blackest and foulest fiend and devil; and, from the height of heaven, is fallen into the pit and bottom of hell.' The implication was clear in the light of royalist emphasis on divine right. The king created parliament in a quasi-deific act to be his own 'most excellent creature, and most bounden subject', and by rebellion parliament had turned itself into an incarnate devil.⁷⁹

Royalists employed many of the same satirical devices as their parliamentary counterparts, and laid a similar stress on the concept of diabolic patronage and hellish preferment. In 1646 parliamentary propaganda was personified in the pamphlet *Mercurius Britanicus his Welcome to Hell* which catalogued the Devil's delight at the slanderous activities of parliament's newsbook. 'I joy to think', hell declared to the personified Mercurius Britanicus, 'what bone-fires shall be made when thou shalt come'. The pamphlet ended with an epitaph to the newsbook, which emphasised the same reward/punishment paradox that informed parliamentary notions of diabolic patronage:

Here lies Britanicus, hell's barking cur,
That son of Beliall, who kept damned stir;
And every munday spent his stolke of spleen,
In venemous railing on the King and Queen.
Who, though they bothe in goodenesse may forgive him,
Yet (for his safety) wee'l in hell receive him.⁸⁰

As the parliamentary press had gleefully speculated on the eternal fate of Strafford and Laud, royalists were sure of an equally fiery end for their most

⁷⁸ Ian Green, *The Christians ABC*, pp. 280-289.

⁷⁹ Anon., *The Rebels Catechism: Composed in an easy and familiar way, to let them see the heinousness of their offence, the weakness of their strongest subterfuges, and to recall them to their duties to God and man*, (1643), p. 2.

⁸⁰ Anon., *Mercurius Britanicus His welcome to Hell: with the Devils blessing to Britanicus* (1646).

despised enemies. The arrested Cornish M.P., Anthony Nichols, was, according to one ballad of 1647, bound 'for Pluto's court, / In inquest of his father', and it predicted he would there meet John Pym, John Hampden and William Strode. From there they would still be directing the parliamentary cause.⁸¹

The vindictiveness of parliament's 'levelling' of royalists and their families appeared especially diabolic. Sequestration and the humiliating appearance of royalists before the Goldsmiths' Hall Committee after 1644 became a prominent example of Satan's tyranny enthroned in London. A ballad of 1647, *I Thank you Twice*, noted: 'The gentry are sequestered all; / Our wives you find at Goldsmith Hall, / For there they meet with the devil and all'. Thus, as a place of torment, Goldsmiths' Hall became a hell on earth, as the ballad *Prattle your Pleasure (under the Rose)* declared:

there's a damn'd committe,
Sits in hell (Goldsmith's Hall) in the midst of the City,
Only to sequester the poor Cavaliers—
The Devil take their souls, and the hangman their ears.⁸²

A pamphlet of 1647, *Grand Pluto's Progresse through Great Britaine*, reprinted the Devil's 'observations' as he gleefully surveyed the upheavals of the nation, which, he noted, had sprung from the Luciferian envy of 'dull swaines'.⁸³ London is singled out for attention as a chaotic centre of libertinism and self-indulgence. In a cacophony of levelling and unnatural opinions, all law and government is denied as tyrannical, and the total freedom in avarice, whoring and murder is asserted as the means to restore the 'Golden Age'. Thus the seat of parliamentary government is an earthly approximation of the chaos of hell, and the Devil declares that these indulgent rebels are his 'dearest sonnes'.⁸⁴

But again there was nothing automatic or simplistic about the demonization of parliament. Instead royalist recourse to diabolic patronage was a pointed attack on parliament's reforming pretensions. *The New Litany*, another ballad of 1647, was deliberately constructed to bait Puritan and Presbyterian hatred of established forms. It cited several of the religious hardships endured by the people under parliament's rule - such as the *Directory of Public Worship* and 'an ignoramus that

⁸¹ Anon., *The Members' Justification* (1647), reprinted in Wilkins, *Political Ballads*, vol. I, p. 42.

⁸² Anon., *I Thank you Twice; or the city courting their own ruin, thank the parliament twice for their treble undoing* (1647); Anon., *Prattle your Pleasure (under the Rose)* (1647); both in *Political Ballads*, pp. 55, 58.

⁸³ Anon., *Grand Pluto's Progresse through Great Britaine And Ireland* (1647), p. 2 (irregular pagination).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

writes, and a woman that teaches - and accompanied them with the plea '*Libera nos, Domine*'. The Devil the ballad associated with Parliament's policy of deceit, slander and masquerade, declaring:

From being taken in a disguise,
 From believing of the printed lies,
 From the Devil and from the Excise,
*Libera nos, Domine.*⁸⁵

A similar ballad of 1647 specifically associated diabolism with the parliamentary subversion of well-loved ceremonies:

That the ring in marriage, the cross at the font,
 Which the Devil and the Roundheads so much affront
 May be us'd again, as before they were wont;
*Te rogamus audi nos.*⁸⁶

When, in 1646, the parliamentary religious consensus fragmented, royalist polemicists delighted in hearing Satan's voice in the cacophany of divisive opinion aired in reformation's name:

Take Prynne and his clubs, or Say and his tubs,
 Or, any sect, old or new;
 The Devil's i' th' pack, if choice you can lack,
 We're fourscore religions strong,
 Take your choice, the major voice
 Shall carry it, right or wrong.⁸⁷

These accusations of diabolism struck at the heart of parliament's central claim to be itself taking effective action against the temptation of the body politic. John Cleveland in *The Parliament* (1647), noted that for such a godly cause, parliamentary success against the forces of Satan in Ireland was conspicuous by its absence. 'Tis Strange your power and holiness', Cleveland noted, 'Can't the Irish devils dispossess'. Cleveland repudiated the careful Protestant compromise of exorcism by prayer as a Puritan sham as discredited as popery's exorcism by

⁸⁵ Anon., *The New Litany* (1646), in *Political Ballads*, I, p. 25.

⁸⁶ Anon., *The Old Protestant's Litany. Against all Sectaries and their Defendants, both Presbyterians and Independants*, in *Political Ballads*, I, p. 61.

⁸⁷ Anon., *The Anarchie, or the Blessed Reformation since 1640*, in *Political Ballads*, I, p. 34.

miracle. 'Tho' you do so often pray', he continued, 'And ev'ry month keep fasting day, / You cannot cast them out.'⁸⁸ For royalists, parliament's trumpeting of its ability to separate Christ and Belial lent a delicious irony to the pulp press exposure of their diabolic patronage. Those who liked to present themselves as God's champions against Satan were in fact dependant on satanic patronage for any victories they might achieve. Given the state of the royalist cause by 1648, this was a comforting notion, as the pamphlet *The Devill and the Parliament* makes clear. Written after the re-capture of Charles this dialogue revealed that Satan had helped parliament as much as God would allow and that he was now abandoning them to their inevitable destruction. According to Satan, parliament had 'deluded the people with a vaine hope of Reformation, when your intentions even from the beginning, were for the ruine of the King, Church and Kingdome'. 'By me it was that you were prevalent against your Sovereigne', he continued, emphasising that parliament's success was simply part of a providential scheme by which God was temporarily afflicting the commonwealth. 'He that threw me downe from Heaven for conspiring against him', the Devil noted, 'permitted me to be the Patron and Protector of your Rebellion'.⁸⁹ This was a brand of the familiar baiting of Puritan self-reverence that had long been a popular past-time of the London stage and pulp press. Attacks on Puritan moral hypocrisy are generally understood to express a dislocation between the culture of the godly and their neighbours at the point at which they most commonly met. But as this polemic suggests, there may also have been a place for popular resentment at Puritanism's religio-political reforming rhetoric. But if so it indicates a comprehension and engagement with the dynamic of temptation and *de facto* satanism which formed the centre of Puritanism's attack on the established church.

The Devill and the Parliament brought together the various strands of the royalist understanding of diabolism to draw a picture of a personified parliament addicted to rebellion for its own sake. Diabolic patronage and Luciferian rebellion exposed the sham of parliament's supposed combat with Satan as the rebels in fact attempted to subvert the Devil's own place as the principle of evil in the cosmos. 'I tell thee brother', 'Mr Parliament' tells the Devil, 'I am now as potent, and can without thee be as devillish, as when thy selfe wert most my friend'. 'I can out-doe thee Lucifer', he declares.⁹⁰ Thus behind the supposed policy of reformation lay rebellion as a self-perpetuating sin. Having, with the aid

⁸⁸ John Cleveland, *The Parliament*, in *Political Ballads*, I, p. 31.

⁸⁹ Anon., *The Devill and the Parliament: or, the Parliament and the Devill. A Contestation between them for the precedencie* (1648), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5, compare this to John Lilburne's similar boast to the Devil (disguised as John Penry) in *Grand Pluto's Progresse through Great Britain*, p. 8.

of Satan, rebelled from Charles, its earthly creator, parliament now rebelled against its chthonian patron. In both spheres of activity parliament's actions mirrored Lucifer's attempt to make himself equal to God. But as Lucifer's ambition was destined to fail because he was God's creation and so could never be his equal, parliament was doomed to be inherently subordinate to the monarch, and now to the principle of evil. At the end of the pamphlet the Devil castigates Mr Parliament for believing he might escape hell. 'God will no longer let the English Nation bee slave to thy Command', he warns, 'their ancient Discipline must be restored'. All Mr Parliament's sham and pretension avails him nothing as, like Dr Faustus, he is carried bodily off to perdition.⁹¹

* * *

Diabolism dominated the royalist press's reaction to the execution of Charles I. The cult of martyrdom that grew up was, unsurprisingly, fertile ground for the perception of demonic action. A sermon preached by the bishop of Rochester on the 4 February 1649 was soon in print under the title, *The Devilish Conspiracy, Hellish Treason, Heathenish Condemnation and Damnable Murder, Committed, and Executed by the Iewes; against the Anoynted of Lord Christ their King*. This detailed and unwieldy sermon drew parallels between the beheading of Charles and the crucifixion. Regicide was deicide, a reliving of Satan's empty triumph at Golgotha.⁹² A less academic version clearly had wide appeal. A verse pamphlet of the same year, *The Insecuritie of Princes*, sarcastically derided parliament's claims that Charles' execution had been necessary:

Necessitie? O Heavens! Curs'd be that need,
That makes a sinner in his sin proceed!
If these be saints, if this their doctrine be,
From it and them good God deliver me!
If saints be understood in this large sense,
Twixt Saints and Devils what's the difference?
If these be saints this their divintie,
A sinner rather than a saint for me!
This seems more like the voice of Hell or Room [sic],
Into whose secrets let not my soul come!⁹³

⁹¹ *The Devil and the Parliament*, pp. 5-6.

⁹² [Bishop of Rochester], *The Devilish Conspiracy, Hellish Treason, Heathenish Condemnation, and Damnable Murder, Comitted, and Executed by the Iewes; against the Anoynted of the Lord Christ their King* (London, 1649), passim.

⁹³ Anon., *The Insecuritie of Princes, Considered in an occasional meditation upon the Kings late sufferings* (1649), p. 4.

The regicide was the final act of parliament's Luciferian transformation, after which it lost any vestige of the image of its quasi-divine creator, Charles. 'Abandoning their head', a pamphlet, *The Cuckows Nest at Westminster*, declared, they 'are no more a parliament, but the body of a parliament, without a head...far different from the nature of a parliament (By reason of their Luciferian pride, to be flung down to hell) and to be deserted by all loyal subjects'. In the wake of the regicide, parliament's claims to be separating Christ from Belial in the body politic beggared belief. 'These instead of expelling out papacy, but one faction', the pamphlet continued, 'have brought in five hundred damnable sects, and set them all to devour episcopacy...by which means they have advanced their hypocritical, diabolical, and pernicious treasons to this very day.'⁹⁴ In the early years of the Interregnum, before the regime finally managed to stamp out the last subversive presses, it was a more populist version of the royalist newsbooks which carried this message most forcefully.

That a royalist post-regicide appeal to a plebeian culture of conservatism might be effective has recently been demonstrated by David Underdown. Examining the short-lived royalist newsbooks which circulated in 1649 and 1650, he argues that they are illustrations of a very different mental world from that which produced the forward-thinking radical ideas of the Levellers and the sects. The men behind this propaganda, such as Marchmont Nedham and John Crouch, had learned the lesson of the Civil War, and now consciously aimed their work at a more populist audience. Whilst they were lurid, sensationalist, libellous and often pornographic, newbooks such as *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, *Mercurius Democritus*, *The Laughing Mercury* and *The Man in the Moon* railed against the revolutionary regime's over-turning of a divinely ordained political order which had protected a value-system in which social and sexual hierarchy were enshrined for the better preservation of order.⁹⁵ Charles' execution had plunged the nation into political and religious chaos, and only Satan could be behind such a calamity.⁹⁶ 'Hell's Black Parliament' now ruled in England, populated by 'sonnes of Night and Darkness', under the direct leadership 'Grand Pluto'.⁹⁷ The 'hell-bred vipers' of parliament looked only to their own preferment, 'never reflecting upon

⁹⁴ *Mercurius Melancholicus*, *The Cuckows Nest at Westminster: or, The parliament between two lady-birds, Queen Fairfax and Lady Cromwell* (1649), in *The Harleian Miscellany*, vol. VI, p. 138-139; see also in the same volume, Anon., *The British Bellman. Printed in the year of the saints fear* (1649), pp. 182-183

⁹⁵ Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, pp. 95-111.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁹⁷ *The Royal Diurnall*, no. 1, 25 February, 1650, sigs. A, A4; *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, no. 44, 27 February-5 March, 1649, sig. Hhhv.

the dangerous consequences of their desperate Diabolicall proceedings'.⁹⁸ As Underdown demonstrates, England's satanic government in the eyes of the newsbooks was an inversion that traded order for chaos, social and political responsibility for libertinism and self-indulgence.

Yet amidst their horrified and violent reaction to the republic, the royalist press never lost sight of complexities of the theocratic political understanding of diabolic subversion. Their nightmare vision of satanic Westminster was not a simplistic recourse to knee-jerk inversion, it maintained always its pointed attack on Puritan reforming pretensions. According to Marchemont Nedham's *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, dated four weeks after the King's execution, the court which tried Charles was not so much a meeting of reformers as a 'conventicle of treason'. The 'Westminster Furies', it noted the following week, were infused with 'many hellish eroneus opinions meerely tending to the advancement of Satans kingdome, by building tabernacles for Deuills'.⁹⁹ *The Royal Diurnall* provided its readers with a geneology of rebellion that ran through (among many others) Cromwell, Bradshaw, Marten and Fairfax. 'These are Plutoes black List of Saints', the newsbook commented, 'chosen for the tormentors of the Common-wealth'. They made 'idolls' of themselves to be worshipped before God or the Word.¹⁰⁰ For Richard Crouch's *Man in the Moon* the regime inaugurated a new religious calendar given over to the observance of diabolism, and the most holy day was to be 30 January, or 'St. Traytors Day', around which parliament would be given a week's recess to 'solemnize that bloody festivall, and sing infernall dirges to King Oliver'. Similarly *Mercurius Philo-monarchus* described the Devil's parliament as 'canonising' its victory against divine government.¹⁰¹

These newsbooks, and the more populist royalist pamphlets that now accompanied them, contained the fullest incorporation of the variety of concepts of demonism, and they produced some of the most striking imagery of the entire polemic of the conflict. Far from being the guardhouse of the nation's freedom, parliament was 'Plutoes Independant Kitchen', from which his greed for suffering and evil was fed. Bradshaw, Cooke and Prideaux were 'the Devils scullions and turnspits', whilst Marten and Cromwell delivered hypocritical lectures in preparation for this latest take on the image of the Devil's feast. 'The seven deadly

⁹⁸ *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, no. 45, 6-13 March, 1649, sig. Iiiv.

⁹⁹ *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, no. 44, 27 February-5 March, 1649, sig. Hhhv; no. 45, 6-13 March, sig. Iiiv.

¹⁰⁰ *The Royal Diurnall*, no 1, 25 February, 1650, sig. A3v.

¹⁰¹ *The Man in the Moon, discovering a World of Knavery vnder the Sunne; Both in Parliament, the Counsell of State, the Army, the City, and the Country*, no. 43, 6-14 February, 1650, p330; *Mercurius Philo-monarchus*, no 1, 10-17 April, 1649, p. 2; *Mercurius Melancolicus, The Cuckows Nest at Westminster*, pp. 138-139.

sinnes become new cook'd for the Devils breakfast', flavoured with 'Independants sauce, made of blood royall', and accompanied by a sycophantic demonic grace at the lips of Hugh Peters.¹⁰² The paradox of diabolic reward/punishment mingled with Satan's familiar role as God's Hangman to provide a satisfying explanation for the rash of tormented consciences and suicides that seemed to plague the regicides. Regicide/deicide would of course reserve for its perpetrators a special place in the hellish kingdom. Charles' holy blood was white, according to *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, it would thus make a check-work on the regicides' 'black-soules' for devils to play chess on.¹⁰³ Hellish preferment was the reward for republican diabolism. 'Their almighty General Jones', noted *The Man in the Moon*, 'is gone on an Embassie to Pluto, to provide lodgings for the rest, who as soon as they have finished the Great Work of their double Damnation, are to march after him'.¹⁰⁴ Apparently Cromwell and Fairfax were so haunted with evil spirits that they could no longer sleep, and a drum-maker from Houndsditch, named Tench, who had provided the ropes to bind Charles to the block, was tormented by devils.¹⁰⁵ Unable to tolerate his 'Hell upon Earth', and given a helping hand by Satan, Alderman Thomas Hoyle hanged himself on the first anniversary of Charles' execution, to the delight of *The Man in the Moon*.¹⁰⁶ The Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Philip Herbert, apparently died screaming that the Devil was leading him to hell, a fit place for his traitor's soul.¹⁰⁷ But it was sorry end of the executioner, Richard Brandon, that was most lovingly retold in the newsbooks and pamphlets. In the hands of the royalist press Brandon was a profligate who squandered the money he was paid for beheading Charles (significantly £30) on whoring and drinking, and contracted a variety of venereal diseases. Soon after the execution he became convinced that he was damned, and that his house was infested by devils. When his friends called on him to repent, he told them that Satan stood at the end of his bed to prevent him, and he died 'crying out the Devill, the Devill'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² *The Man in the Moon*, no. 43, p. 330.

¹⁰³ *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, no. 44, 27 Feb-March 5, 1649, sig. Hhhv.

¹⁰⁴ *The Man in the Moon*, no 37, 2-9 January, 1650, p. 296.

¹⁰⁵ *The Man in the Moon*, no 2, 16-23 April, 1649, p. 16; no 7, 20-27 June, 1649, p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ *Man in the Moon*, No 44, 20-27 February, p. 350; Anon., *The Rebels Warning-piece: Being Certaine Rules and Instructions left by Alderman Hoyle* (1650), which gave a supposedly first person account of his torment by Satan, and commented that he hanged himself 'by the help of the Devil', see pp. 4-5, 6; Underdown, *A Freeborn People*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁷ Anon., *The Last Will and Testament of Philip Herbert, Burgess of Bark-shire, Vulgarly called Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery* (London, 1649), p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Anon., *The Last Will and Testament of Richard Brandon esquire; Heads-man, and Hang-man to the pretended Parliament* (1649), p. 8; *The Man in the Moon*, no 43, p. 335.

This polemic was shaped by the opportunistic requirement of pulp press publishing, with its need to provide entertainment as much as news and comment. But as Professor Underdown has suggested, it tapped into a widely shared value-system, and demonism allowed it to make important, and all-too serious points about the republican regime. Richard Crouch, in *The Man in the Moon*, encouraged his readers to laugh at Fairfax's fear of the Devil. The general was apparently so tormented with guilt that when he got into his coach standing on the spot in Whitehall where Charles' scaffold had been erected, and being approached by a parliament man who happened to be dressed in black, he mistook the man, Miles Corbet, for Satan. In a panic Fairfax abandoned his coach and ran home on foot.¹⁰⁹ The story told a moral tale about the consequences of an afflicted conscience, and held Fairfax's distracted state up to ridicule. But it was also made a fundamental point about the religio-political state of the nation's republican government. Born of the usurpation of divine authority, the regime was prey at any moment to the providential retribution of God through his agent the Devil. Britain was now ruled on a knife-edge over damnation. Other important religio-political points might be made with equal force. When, in January 1650 parliament ordered all adult males to swear the Engagement Oath to the new Commonwealth, *The Man in the Moon* declared that to do so was to enter into a pact with Satan and sign away one's soul. It was an appeal to the familiar narrative of the diabolic seduction of witches, a favourite of the pulp press. But it succinctly introduced into popular discourse the notion that to take the Engagement was to embrace a very real diabolic apostasy.¹¹⁰

Again post-regicide pulp press polemic is suggestive of the potential for demonism to encourage an informed engagement with politics. Whilst the image of satanic Westminster appears hugely exaggerated to the modern reader, we must be careful not to dismiss it on account of its use of libel, metaphor and fiction. With, of course, the notable exception of Marchmont Nedham, it was not an allegation that was lightly made or quickly abandoned. In the wake of the defeat of Prince Charles at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, Cromwell persuaded the Rump Parliament to offer a general pardon for political offences committed up to that date. A ballad of 1652, *Upon the General Pardon pass'd by the Rump*, noted that parliament was more prepared to be forgiving with the royalist sentiments of journalists and poets, who had no money to take, than with the sequestered gentry. It specifically listed the accusation that parliament was diabolic as one which might be forgiven under the general pardon. But to accept the pardon was

¹⁰⁹ *The Man in the Moon*, no. 2, 16-23 April, 1649, p. 16.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 37, 2-9 January, 1650, p. 294.

to accept the goodwill of that very devilish regime, and to declare oneself 'a rebel to eternity'.¹¹¹ Parliament, it seemed, was mistaken to think that the words of impoverished journalists carried any less conviction than the actions of the royalist gentry.

The events of 1553 produced further criticism of Cromwell, and not only from royalists. The broadside *A Charge of High Treason exhibited against Oliver Cromwell* criticised the establishment of the Nominated Assembly. Appealing to the language of murder indictments it noted, 'Oliver Cromwell having not the fear of God before his eyes, and being instigated by the Deuill, did contriue...a certain book called A Copy of Draughts of Acts of Parliament, out of which this mock parliament are to take their lessons'.¹¹² In June 1654 the book-dealer, George Thomason, copied out a verse libel entitled 'The Character of a Protector', which noted that Cromwell was 'an outside saint with a Diuell within'.¹¹³ But as John Morrill has pointed out, criticism of Cromwell after 1653 came as a steady stream rather than a flood¹¹⁴, and the relative absence of accusations of diabolism against the regime in the second half of the 1650s is striking. In part this is explained by the effective suppression of all but the 'official' newsbooks after 1655, which cut off the most regular source of expressions of anti-parliament demonism. At the same time the pulp press found a new focus for fears of diabolism in the emergence of religious radicalism, and the Ranters and Quakers in particular. A myriad of agendas contributed to the publicising of the Ranter sensation and Quaker witchcraft, and royalists, the government, presbyterians and sectarians alike used examples of diabolism to highlight the dangers of antinomian extremism.¹¹⁵ Whilst the resentments harboured by those who had read *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and *The Man in the Moon* were unlikely to be easily dispelled, there is no reason to suppose they were unable to assimilate stories of radical diabolism on their own terms, as the fulfilment of the newsbooks' direst prophesies.

Political demonism resurfaced forcefully in 1660 as a means of engaging with the events which lead up to the Restoration. As the notion of the tempted King had kept open an avenue to compromise with Charles I, it was now used to persuade supporters of the regime to let go of the discredited republican experiment as an act of repentance. In *The Plotters Unmasked*, John Clarke offered 'a word in season', to republicans, exhorting, 'Oh let not the Deuil thus deceiue

¹¹¹ Anon., *Upon the General Pardon pass'd by the Rump*, in *Political Ballads*, I, pp. 96-99.

¹¹² Anon., *Sedition Scourg'd, or a view of that Rascally & Venemous Paper Entitled A Charge of High Treason exhibited against Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1653), p. 10.

¹¹³ British Library, Thomason Tracts, E. 743 (2).

¹¹⁴ John Morrill, 'Cromwell and his contemporaries', in Morrill (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (London, 1990), p. 268.

¹¹⁵ Davis, *Fear, Myth and History*, pp. 107-113.

you, by perswading you that you are Saints..., what a snare hath the Deuil got into you?' The anonymous author of *The Army's Declaration* rejected calls for the continued support of the Engagement Oath, noting, 'we cannot be so stupid and sencelessly bewitched, not to thinke it better seriously to crave the pardon of God for this our Engagement, and the nation for the wrong we have hitherto done them, then by our obstinate persisting in such Engagements, sell our selves to the Devill, and the Kingdom to ruin'.¹¹⁶ In seeking to prepare the way for the return of Charles II, some authors offered the prospect of a renewed royal harrowing of the Devil's kingdom. *Policy no Policy* purported to reprint the reply from Brussels to an objective enquiry as to the Prince's character. 'In him that prophesy seems to be fulfil'd', it noted, 'The lyon shall lye down with the Lamb and the all-Ruling. Providence wil in due time make Vertue Glorious, when Machiavil and the Devil himself shall be Confuted in the politicks to the joy of all honest men'.¹¹⁷

Demonism was also used to reflect on and explain what had happened since 1642. Cromwell's post-mortem in the pulp press in the early 1660s concluded that he was a devil incarnate, the nearest human approximation to Lucifer the world had seen in modern times. A pamphlet of 1660, entitled *The English Devil: or, Cromwell and his monstrous witch discover'd at White-hall*, reprinted an eighty-year-old woodcut of a witch holding a winged devil to bring home the point.¹¹⁸ Cromwell, it related, was 'that hellish monster, and damnable Machiavellian that first gave rise to our new-fangled Models of Government'. He was 'the Devil of later times'.¹¹⁹ A five act play, *Cromwell's Conspiracy*, was also printed in 1660 which again sought to undermine Puritan reforming pretensions. Cromwell was shown addressing Hugh Peter as 'my fine facetious Devil, who wear'st the Livery of the Stygian God, as the white emblem of innocence'.¹²⁰ In the final scene Cromwell on his death-bed was tormented by demons in the shape of black human figures. His last words were an anguished prediction as to his eternal fate—'Blood-thirsty tyrants have their places in hell! / Thither go I.'¹²¹ In 1661 another printed play, *Hells Higher Court of Justice* (which was probably too short to

¹¹⁶ John Clarke, *The Plotters Unmasked, murderers no Saints* (London, 1660), pp. 1-3, quote at p. 2; Anon., *The Army's Declaration: being a True Alarum in answer to a False and Fiery one made lately, by a Member of that detestable Rump* (? London, 1660), p. 6; on the diabolic hypocrisy of the Rump see also Anon., *A Word for All: or, the Rump's Funerall Sermon* (? London, 1660), p. 24 (irregular pagination).

¹¹⁷ Anon., *Policy no Policy, or, the Devil Himself confuted* (? London, 1660), pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁸ Anon., *The English Devil: or, Cromwell and his monstrous witch discover'd at White-hall* (London, 1660), frontispiece, the woodcut was taken from Anon., *A Rehearsall both straung and true, of...Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockingham*, (1579).

¹¹⁹ *The English Devil*, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Anon., *Cromwell's Conspiracy. A Tragi-comedy, relating to our Latter Times* (London, 1660), Act I, scene 1; on the diabolism of Hugh Peter see also Anon., *The History of the Life and Death of Hugh Peters* (London, 1660), pp. 6, 12.

¹²¹ *Cromwell's Conspiracy*, Act V, scene 1.

have actually been performed) was a detailed depiction of the hellish reward awaiting Cromwell as the Devil's most worthy client. Its centrepiece was the trial in hell of the souls of Cromwell, Gustavus Adolphus and Cardinal Mazarin, in which they bicker with each other over who had done the most to promote Satan's cause. 'Your services to Hell compared with mine', Cromwell tells the others, 'where thou hast sent one soul I have sent ten'.¹²² The soul of Machiavelli presides over the debate and, whilst recognising the valiant efforts of Adolphus and Mazarin, declares that Cromwell 'in wickedness is chiefest of the three'. He predicts that 'Oliver' will become a universal name for the treacherous, murderous, anti-Christian and regicidal.¹²³ Each expects rewards for his faithful service, but instead suitable punishments are handed down by the infernal court. Cromwell's case, however, is so unique—'his crimes...are so strange and new'—that the chthonian judges are troubled to find punishments severe enough. Pluto himself worries that without the most dire torments others will be inspired by Cromwell to usurp his own infernal throne. Cromwell is eventually sentenced to be bound forever to a red-hot throne, in burning regal dress, with a devil to perpetually recite his crimes, applying some 'fierie torment' as he names each one. This, notes Pluto as the play's conclusion, is the reality of infernal preferment. 'Fond small men' groomed in the service of hell, receive rewards, 'but such as scarce their flattering souls expect'.¹²⁴

Conclusion

The Civil War gave an entirely unprecedented tangibility to the workings of Satan within the commonwealth, as the concept of diabolic subversion was used to come to terms with the breakdown of government. In some respects this was a response to the sheer chaos of the situation, in which moral and social norms appeared to have been jettisoned, and God's hangman was kept especially busy. The use of demonization in propaganda offered to make the enemy identifiable. But diabolism was never simply employed as a gloss to make manageable a baffling political reality. As with narratives of crime, the demonization of the Civil War was far more complex process than functionalist projection. The force of the

¹²² Anon., *Hells Higher Court of Justice; or, the Trial of Three Politick Ghosts* (London, 1661), scene V, sig. C3; for a similar satire see Anon., *Cromwell's Complaint of Injustice: or, His Dispute with Pope Alexander the Sixth, for precedency in Hell* (no date), reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany*, vol. VI, pp. 529-531.

¹²³ *Hells Higher Court of Justice*, scene V, sigs. C4v-D.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, scene VI, sigs. D2-D2v.

concept of diabolic subversion lay its ability to encourage an engagement with the complexities of the conflict. The temptation of the body politic was well established in political discourse, and brought with it complex notions of 'national introspection' and the theocratic duty to separate Christ and Belial. It demanded that action be taken in the understanding that the balance between godly and satanic warfare was a subtle one. Implicit in the rhetoric of war against the Devil were demands for self-awareness that mitigated against a simplistic crusading zeal. Thus, whilst the political use of demonism was more widespread in the Civil War than it had ever been before, it had not changed qualitatively. The increasing willingness to recognise a need for a violent solution paved the way to see Charles eventually accused of being a Devil incarnate. But, as we saw in the last chapter, the potential had always been there.

Thus by 1660 the emphasis on internal temptation that had developed in the anti-Catholic polemic and theological writings of the Reformation had exercised a deep influence on the Protestant devotional outlook, and on ideas of morality more generally. It had become an important means for individuals to interpret their situations, and answered to their very real experiences and understanding of the potential for intimate demonic activity. The concept's potential to allow people to engage with religio-political realities had accorded it a significant place in the political rhetoric of Elizabethan and Stuart England, and it eventually came to occupy a central place in the nation's most cataclysmic internal conflict. Whilst the monopoly of interpretation of hidden diabolism which Protestant theologians attempted to establish never became entirely dominant in English culture, internal temptation did become the most widespread, consistent and (in comparison to witchcraft and possession) least contentious model of diabolic agency.

Conclusion

This study has sought to demonstrate that the Devil in early modern English culture was neither a left over of the medieval world, nor a half-way-house on the way to a purely human concept of evil. Rather it was a concept that embodied a very real experience of struggle within the conscience, and a fear of hidden demonic subversion. Whilst the Enlightenment would eventually challenge much of the thinking that supported belief in the Devil, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries did not see 'the Devil between two worlds', a concept living on borrowed time as its hold on the imagination became increasingly tenuous.¹ Stuart Clark has noted that within witchcraft the concept of the Devil did contain the seeds of its own downfall, as the emphasis on his power of illusion (a rejection of the preternatural powers of witches) brought into doubt the very identification of his 'real' agency, and undermined the ability to distinguish between wonder and miracle, in consequence 'subverting' preternature itself.² Whilst Clark is adamant that the decline of demonology was not a forgone conclusion, he notes that 'the category of preternature was sure to become unstable in early modern conditions'.³ But as this study has shown, witchcraft was unusual within early modern demonism. It was an area in which preternatural power came under unusually intense academic scrutiny, and was contested in a way that the Devil's wider power to influence human affairs was not. As we have seen, the broad demonism which emerged out of the Reformation was largely unconcerned with the theodician and preternatural considerations which characterised the unstable demonology identified by J. B. Russell and Keith Thomas.⁴ Instead it maintained a powerful hold on early modern minds because the reformed emphasis on internal temptation provided a means of engaging with diabolic agency in the commonplace, through the interpretation of very real personal experiences, and vicariously through an empathic understanding of the experience of others. Early modern English demonism must not, therefore, be seen as a jaded belief that survived only because rationalism had not yet exposed its fundamental weaknesses. Rather it was a powerful concept which not only answered to experiences that were felt profoundly, but drew people into an engagement with

¹ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, pp. 66-95.

² Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 172-178.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, chapters 2-4, *passim*; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 681-684

religious and political areas in which Satan's agency provided complex means of understanding.

The driving force behind the reform of demonism was this experiential sense of the Devil's power, which took precedence over abstract theories as to his cosmic significance. As Protestants felt the Devil intimately in their lives, and believed they faced a profound demonic threat in the Catholic church, they did not react by trying to come to terms with the ultimate origin of evil, but rather concentrated on discerning the earthly significance of diabolism. Thus the traditional theodicy of Lucifer's rebellion was accepted by Protestants, but largely as a background to a far less theoretical demonism that was ideally to be based on personal experience.

This experiential sense defined the emphases of Protestant demonism. The identification of the contrariety of religion embodied in the Catholic church was the result of a long process whereby Protestant polemicists addressed the question of why the Roman faith had such a profound hold over Christendom. The answer was that the Devil took advantage of the corruption of man's spiritual insight to hoodwink his half-formed instincts to piety and hold him within an apostasy disguised as Christianity. The consequence of this conclusion was to focus attention on the relationship of diabolism and human perception. The sense of the weakness of the physical senses, and the mental faculties, to provide adequate insight into the spiritual within the world, defined by extension the nature of the Devil's most formidable agency. Man's perceptual weakness was made the first principle of diabolic activity, the surest means by which the Devil exercised his power over humanity. Thus Satan's hidden influence on the conscience came to define his relationship with men over the external manifestations of his power which had traditionally comprised his remit of activity. Inherent in the identification of Catholic contrariety, therefore, were Protestant claims to a special insight into the workings of the demonic, which in turn contributed to the inverted self-definition which Peter Lake has argued characterised seventeenth-century anti-popery.⁵

But the emphasis on hidden demonic activity was more than a polemical device with which to attack the Catholic church. For popery appeared to reformers to be only the most insidious and widespread form of the diabolic agency which they felt to affect their lives and undermine their piety. Whilst their claims to special insight allowed Protestants to separate themselves from 'deluded' Catholics, it also provided a means of understanding very real experiences which profoundly affected their sense of self. The dislocation between the desire for godliness and impulses to sin or doubts as to election, was for many an experience which was striking in its perversity, and seemingly uncontrollable in its

⁵ Lake, 'Anti-popery', p. 73.

insidiousness. It was therefore unsurprising that Protestants should relate so strongly to the notion of internal diabolic temptation. But it is a testament to the importance that they placed on the experience that they not only elevated temptation to be the single most important aspect of the Devil's agency, but sought also to transmit it within the liturgy and mainstream religious culture as the norm of man's relationship with the demonic. Thus the reform of baptism between 1549 and 1552 undermined the notion that Christian initiation constituted a victory over the Devil, and replaced it with an understanding that to enter the faith was to enter into a lifelong battle with temptation. Personal engagement with the demonic not only reflected a reality of godly life, it became enshrined as part of a Christian's duty.

But Protestantism was in no way hostage to the concept of the Devil. Whilst, as historians such as Paul Seaver and John Stachniewski have illustrated, Calvinist emphasis on double predestination, and the faith's profound sense of the Devil, could produce obsessive and masochistic reactions in some individuals, this was neither the norm of Protestant demonological experience, nor an indication that the reformers had failed to provide effective measures by which Satan might be countered.⁶ Rather the Protestant focus sought to make the experience of demonic temptation manageable, since it denied the possibility of final victory. The characterisation of the experience of dislocation as a dialogue between the Devil and the conscience found its way into English Protestant devotional literature very early in its development, and in turn provided a programme for resistance which would continue to dominate demonological awareness into the late seventeenth-century.⁷ The soteriological fears that accompanied, and were part of the experience of dislocation, were used as the focus of the debate with the Devil, who was conceived as attempting to undermine assurance with threats of reprobation. Hence soteriological truths, and a sound understanding of the Devil's significance to the godly, became the most significant weapons an individual could employ against him. Temptation could be taken as a sign of election, an indication that the Christian had truly entered into the conflict with the diabolic. It was a test by which God allowed the individual to demonstrate his faith, and Satan would never be allowed to overwhelm the godly. Protestant prayer, which rehearsed these demonological truths rather than requested intercession, embodied the correct response to temptation. Whilst it was more rigorous than the traditional recourse to quasi-magical protectives had been, and held less appeal to less zealous Christians, we should not doubt that Protestant demonism answered the

⁶ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, pp. 14-44; Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, pp. 17-126, passim.

⁷ For example, Thomas Becon, *The Christen Knight* (no date), and *the Governance of Virtue* (1543); John Bradford, *Godlie Meditations* (1562).

needs of many of those who experienced temptation most profoundly, and that it was 'effective'. In placing such a heavy emphasis on the importance of religious knowledge and insight in resisting the Devil, the reforming clergy created a role for themselves as adepts and repositories of those skills. This new form of mediation replaced the traditional 'magical' role of the priest in which much of his kudos had been contained, and which had been stripped away by the Reformation.

Thus the culture of the zealous godly provided a natural setting for the emphasis on internal temptation. But the concept's ability to bring diabolic activity into the commonplace, and to encourage engagement with its possibilities, guaranteed Protestant demonism a far wider influence. The notion that a fragile subjectivity might be prey to satanic influence, and that the Devil's agency might be hidden within the commonplace, offered the potential for the extensive identification of diabolic activity. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonization was born, not out of the projection of alien qualities onto others, but again out of the monopolisation of the interpretation of the commonplace. Its force lay in persuading that the activities of others, whilst they might appear innocuous, effected a diabolic subversion of the commonwealth. Thus popular pastimes, such as the theatre or dancing, drinking or smoking, hoodwinked the unwary into an unwitting apostasy, and consecrated the location at which the were performed as a 'school' or 'chapel' of the Devil. The effect of these activities might be catastrophic, as Satan's temptations could lead men progressively into every greater sins, culminating in murder. The stress on the commonplace encouraged an empathy with the experience of diabolic temptation which served to lessen the gap between ordinary people and 'Devil-worshippers' or the grotesque criminals of the pulp press. But for the grace of God, all men were potentially the tools of satanic agency, and the understanding encouraged an engagement with the experience of temptation and a sense of its importance.

The dynamic of internal temptation, and the notion that Satan maintained a composite kingdom, made up of all those who had succumbed to his influence, provided a powerful analogy with which to comprehend the political fortunes of the commonwealth. A concept of the temptation of the body politic emerged in parallel to that of the human body. Again it drew its authority from the monopolisation of interpretation, providing a means of expressing dissatisfaction with central aspects of the political and religious establishment. Thus whilst it did not constitute a language of opposition, and was employed by, as well as against the Elizabethan and Stuart regimes, it was an inherently politicised notion. It was believed for example, that the very existence of Catholic recusancy embedded in England a potential for demonic activity that might be activated at any time, and which was seen to have been so by Gunpowder plot and the papal breves which

proscribed subscription to the Oath of Allegiance. Equally the maintenance of popish 'remnants' within the English church constituted another such potential to those who believed the Reformation had not gone far enough. 1 Samuel 15: 23—'For Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft'—has been used by historians to demonstrate the way in which demonology was used to bolster theocratic notions of consensus. But as this study has shown, it was not an isolated text, but one of a number that kept theocratic ideas in balance. Most notably 2 Corinthians 6: 14–15—'What concord hath Christ with Belial?'—expressed the duty incumbent on theocracy to purify church and state, and established a powerful dichotomy which placed the potential for diabolism at the centre of political thinking. It justified criticism of the government, and, eventually, the taking up of arms against the King.

Thus, in contrast to the picture commonly presented by historians, it is apparent that demonism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England was not an outmoded concept. The emergence of scientific rationalism, with its consequences for Enlightenment thinking on evil, may have provided an ultimately fatal blow to the Devil's previously unassailed position in Christian thinking. But this was largely a sign that developments had overtaken the concept, rather than that it was no longer able to effectively embody men's sense of evil. For arguably the Protestant emphasis on internal temptation greatly sophisticated demonism with its demands for an engagement with demonic possibilities within the commonplace, and within the individual conscience. It brought the experience of diabolic activity more intimately into the lives of those who accepted its monopoly of interpretation. Satan's agency was no longer mediated through the alien and the 'other', where, if his power was taken to be very real, it was reassuringly easy to identify. Fears of the demonic might be focused on identifiable groups, such as Catholics, criminals or religious radicals, but (with the exception of witches) accepting their diabolism rested on the understanding that satanic temptation, an experience which *all* humanity shared, had subverted their consciences and led them into apostasy. Whilst for many such identification must have been unproblematic, the emphasis on internal temptation undermined more widely the certainty of contrariety. As this study has shown, in order to appeal to the fear of 'the world turned upside down', the contrariety of God's ape had often to be painstakingly constructed and argued for, and its identification could be highly contentious. As a result the perception of demonic agency was highly personalised, resting on not on a functionalist projection of evil onto marginalised figures, but on an informed engagement with the possibilities of diabolism within the conscience and the body politic. Hidden subversion was perhaps even more threatening than open contrariety.

If the reform of demonism was theologically driven, and involved a process of acculturation in the redrawing of liturgical, devotional and discursive norms, its success seems to have lain in the fact that it provided a demonological understanding as sophisticated as people's own experiences. For the experience of temptation was widely recognised and identified with, and it potentially provides insights into the contentious subject of 'inwardness' in the Renaissance. Literary critics, balancing textual evidence of self-speaking with a New Historicist suspicion of essentialist assumptions about timeless human nature and experience, have debated whether early modern culture had a sense of the privileged inner self.⁸ The criterion by which subjectivity is identified is whether evidence can be found for a discourse which privileges the interior self over outward presentation. Some, such as Francis Barker and Catherine Belsey, have been sceptical. More recently evidence has been shown for such a privileged interiority in early modern England – perhaps even that 'the sense of discrepancy between "inward disposition" and "outward appearance" seems unusually urgent and consequential for a very large number of people'.⁹ But the prevalence of internal temptation is suggestive of a potential for an even more complex concern over subjectivity. Since the Devil's intrusions into the mind were effectively disguised as ordinary thoughts, the individual could be hoodwinked into sin by believing it to be an expression of his inner nature. To the godly who felt temptation most keenly, and to the moralists who used it to construct didactic narratives of human frailty, the Devil threatened to turn the inner self into the traitor to the soul. If the logic of temptation was followed the internal self could no longer be trusted to be the true self. This was a quandary that found widespread expression in constant theological exhortations to vigilance over the inner self, in the despairing confusion of the aspiring godly struggling to decide whether their innermost thoughts indicated election or damnation, and in moralistic literature which sought to bring home the danger of the Devil's subversion by encouraging readers to empathise with the temptation of the criminals it depicted. Fear of the 'other' might be perennial in demonological beliefs, but perhaps the defining characteristic of the reformed demonism in early modern English culture was the fear of the subversion of oneself.

Thus the decline of belief in the Devil cannot be attributed to a fundamental weakness in the concept's ability to express men's sense of evil. The philosophes argued that Satan was a childish, animistic expression for evil, which shielded men from the need to engage with the darker potential in humanity. But, as this

⁸ Katherine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and the Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, 1995); Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body* (New York, 1984); Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London, 1985); Richard Hillman, *Self-speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (Houndsmills, 1997).

⁹ Maus, *Inwardness and the Theatre*, p. 13.

study has shown, this was a stereotype which barely reflected the reality of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonism. Such arguments were polemical rather than anthropological, but they have influenced the history of the emergence of rationalism. Whilst historians such as Russell and Thomas have been wary of taking the crusading self-presentation of the Enlightenment at face value, they have accepted that the Devil was 'the most vulnerable part of theology' which allowed an opening for the attack of the new philosophies.¹⁰ Rather than recognising that the concept maintained a powerful hold because it allowed people a sophisticated engagement with an experience of evil which they felt profoundly, historians still prefer to imply that mankind was 'freed' from the belief in the Devil.¹¹ But, moving beyond the areas of witchcraft and theodicy has identified important areas of demonism which should raise new questions as to the certainty of the picture of the Devil's demise. For whilst the political fortunes of witchcraft undermined its credibility, and the philosophical attack on the principle of evil forced Christian theologians onto the defensive, the Devil maintained a hold in many of the areas we have examined.¹² Far from being discredited by the Civil War, the concept of diabolic subversion was of central importance to the polemical reaction to the Popish Plot in 1678, as demonstrated by the enormous number of prints and ballads that were produced illustrating Catholic diabolism.¹³ Moreover, the notion of demonic Catholicism maintained a powerful hold throughout the eighteenth-century, with effigies and representations of the Devil being an important part of the pope-burning demonstrations which commonly accompanied national festivities.¹⁴ The wider danger of diabolic disguise and the satanic subversion of the commonplace continued to trouble the godly with the possibility that man's corrupted religiosity might be fatally distracted by Satan. Thus in the early decades of the eighteenth-century the polemical attack on the diabolic stage was renewed with all the vigour William Prynne had been able to muster in the 1630s.¹⁵ Finally, despite the

¹⁰ Russell, *Mephistopheles*, pp. 128-130.

¹¹ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 681, 692-694.

¹² On the decline of witchcraft see Ian Bostridge, 'Witchcraft repealed', in Barry, Hester & Roberts (eds.), *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 309-334.

¹³ See F. G. Stephens, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Volume I, 1320-1689* (London, 1978), pp. 603-622, 632-663; Anon., *London's Drollery: or, The Love and Kindness between the Pope and the Devil* (no date), Roxburghe Collection, II, 292; Anon., *A View of the Popish-plot; or, A Touch of the Cunning Contrivance of the Romish Faction* (1689); Anon., *The Downfall of Popery; or, the Distressed Jesuits in Flight* (no date), *Pepys Ballads*, II, pp. 281-282.

¹⁴ Colin Haydon, '"I love my King and my Country, but a Roman Catholic I hate": Anti-Catholicism, Xenophobia and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century England', in T. Claydon & I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-1850* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 42-43.

¹⁵ George Bedford, *The Evil and Danger of Stage-Plays: Shewing their natural tendency to destroy religion* (London, 1706), pp. 41-53, 195; *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian religion*,

challenge of rationalism, the notion of internal temptation continued to exercise a hold in the Protestant devotional scheme. It remained a significant aspect of the fundamentals of Christian knowledge, and continued to warn and edify from the pulpit.¹⁶

Similarly, the Protestant emphasis on the Devil's power to intrude into the consciousness, should not be interpreted, as Professor Russell would see it, as evidence of a greater concern with the purely human potential for evil, forced to rely on the Devil for its expression until the Enlightenment provided a new language more capable of encompassing conflicting psychological experiences. For internal temptation in early modern culture was not used as a metaphor but as the description of a real event. We should be wary of imposing psychological explanations on a culture that would not have recognised them. Whilst the inhabitants of early modern England were as capable of diagnosing delusion as diabolism, their inclination was to accept the possibility (if not always the certainty) that the experience of internal conflict or dislocation, or the sense that the commonwealth was being subverted by a hidden agency, *was* the experience of the Devil.

against the Horrid Blasphemies and Impieties which are still used in the English Play-Houses (London, 1719), pp. 1-98.

¹⁶ Samuel Clarke, *An Exposition of the Church-Catechism* (London, 1730), pp. 19-24, 266-272, esp. p. 269; George Whitefield, *Satan's Devices: A Sermon Preached at Great St. Helens* (London, 1739), *The Eternity of Hell Torments. A Sermon Preached at Savannah in Georgia* (London, 1738).

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