PROTESTANTISM AND DRAMA IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Containing detailed readings of plays by Shakespeare, Marlowe and Middleton, as well as poetry and prose, this book provides a major historical and critical reassessment of the relationship between early modern Protestantism and drama. Examining the complex and painful shift from late medieval religious culture to a society dominated by the ideas of the Reformers, Adrian Streete presents a fresh understanding of Reformed theology and the representation of early modern subjectivity. Through close analysis of major thinkers such as Augustine, William of Ockham, Erasmus, Luther and Calvin, the book argues for the profoundly Christological focus of Reformed theology and explores how this manifests itself in early modern drama. Moving beyond questions of authorial 'belief', Streete assesses Elizabethan and Jacobean drama's engagement with the challenges of the Reformation.

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PROTESTANTISM AND
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ADRIAN STREETE
For my parents, with love
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There is a wonderful book by Bill Duncan called *The Wee Book of Calvin: Air-Kissing in the North-East*. It is a parody of those small texts that are found in self-help sections or in card shops and that promise calmness, confidence, or whatever. But it is much more astringent, sceptical and canny than those mass-produced placebos, offering a beautifully written interchange of aphorisms and short essays on the Calvinist heritage of north-east Scotland, while also conveying a grudging respect for that tradition. In the final section, ‘Are You a Calvinist?’, Duncan writes this: ‘You shiver with a sudden thrill when, after days of the sun’s grinding dazzle, the trembling static of blue sky and the distant blur of altocumulus, a car passes the open window, its tyres hissing across the dusk as you turn from your book to the silent billow of the curtain rising like a ghost as you close your eyes and inhale the scent of rain.’ I am not a Calvinist; I am not even religious. But I think I understand this. Duncan also observes: ‘Your favourite confectionary product is “Fisherman’s Friend – Extra Strong”’. For those friends and family who know of my devotion to the Calvinist sweetie par excellence, this too might go some way to explaining my fascination with this complex religion, its adherents and opponents. And although this present book has taken much longer to complete than it should have, as Duncan wisely notes: ‘If it didnae hurt it wiznae worth daein.’

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