

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Gospel and Henry VIII

During the last decade of Henry VIII's life, his Protestant subjects struggled to reconcile two loyalties: to their Gospel and to their king. This book tells the story of that struggle and describes how a radicalised English Protestantism emerged from it.

Focusing on the critical but neglected period 1539–47, Dr Ryrie argues that these years were not the 'conservative reaction' of conventional historiography, but a time of political fluidity and ambiguity. Most evangelicals continued to hope that the king would favour their cause, and remained doctrinally moderate and politically conformist. The author examines this moderate reformism in a range of settings – in the book trade, in the universities, at court and in underground congregations. He also describes its gradual eclipse, as shifting royal policy and the dynamics of the evangelical movement itself pushed reformers towards the more radical, confrontational Protestantism which was to shape the English identity for centuries.

ALEC RYRIE is Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Birmingham.

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History

Series editors

ANTHONY FLETCHER

Professor of Social History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London

JOHN GUY

Visiting Research Fellow, Clare College, Cambridge

JOHN MORRILL

Professor of British and Irish History, University of Cambridge,

and Vice-Master of Selwyn College

This is a series of monographs and studies covering many aspects of the history of the

British Isles between the late fifteenth century and the early eighteenth century. It includes the work of established scholars and pioneering work by a new generation of scholars. It includes both reviews and revisions of major topics and books, which open up new historical terrain or which reveal startling new perspectives on familiar subjects.

All the volumes set detailed research into our broader perspectives and the books are intended for the use of students as well as of their teachers.

For a list of titles in the series, see end of book.

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE GOSPEL AND
HENRY VIII
*Evangelicals in the Early English
Reformation*

ALEC RYRIE
University of Birmingham



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Alec Ryrie 2003

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and
to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Sabon 10/12pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Ryrie, Alec.

The Gospel and Henry VIII : evangelicals in the early English Reformation / Alec Ryrie
p. cm. – (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 82343 9

1. Reformation – England. 2. Protestantism – England – History – 16th century.
3. Henry VIII, King of England, 1491–1547. 4. Great Britain – History – Henry VIII, 1509–1547.

I. Title. II. Series.

BR377.R97 2003

274.2'06 – dc21 2003046118

ISBN 0 521 82343 9 hardback

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For Victoria

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*No man can serue two masters. For ether he shall hate the one and love the other,
or elles leane to the one, and despise the other.*

Matthew 6:24

Feare God. Honoure the kynge.

I Peter 2:17

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>List of tables</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Notes on the text</i>	xv
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xviii
Introduction	1
The woman on the rock	1
The nature of the problem	5
Part I: The regime and the reformers	
1 A Counter-Reformation?	13
Interpreting the ‘Henrician reaction’	13
The whip with six strings	23
Religious policy in the 1540s	39
2 Fearing God and honouring the king	58
The obedience of a Christian man	58
‘Walke soberly’: defiance, dishonesty and discretion	69
Part II: The faces of reform	
3 The exiles	93
4 Pulpit and printshop	113
A loyal opposition	113
Polemicists and their audiences	121
Justification and the Mass	134
The commonwealth	145
5 The universities	157
Godliness and good learning	157

x	<i>Contents</i>	
	‘The corruption of the realme’	170
	Pronunciation and authority	183
6	The court	194
	In the shadow of the king	194
	‘A madding tyme’: poets and reformers	205
	The road back to Rome	213
7	The evangelical underground	223
	The unacceptable face of reformism	223
	Radical conventicles and respectable patrons	237
	Conclusion	248
	Appendixes	259
	<i>Appendix I:</i> Reformers executed or exiled between the passage of the Act of Six Articles and the death of Henry VIII	261
	<i>Appendix II:</i> Controversial religious printing in English, 1541–6	271
	<i>Bibliography</i>	274
	<i>Index</i>	293

FIGURES

A1	Controversial religious imprints in English, 1541–6	<i>page</i> 271
A2	English-language imprints by type, 1541–6	273

TABLES

5.1	Works by Protestant authors owned by Cambridge testators, 1535–47	<i>page</i> 172
7.1	Accusations of heresy against Kentish clergy, 1543	224
7.2	Accusations of heresy against Kentish laity, 1543	225
7.3	Accusations of heresy against London laity, July 1540	225

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A book may have one name on the cover, but behind it stands a cast of thousands. My debt to my teachers is lasting, especially Gardiner Thompson, Sandra Raban and Jonathan Steinberg. Andrew Pettegree introduced me to Reformation studies, and he continues to remind me that the Reformation's proper stage is Europe as a whole. I am particularly grateful to John Jackson, for his scholarship as well as for his and his family's unfailing hospitality and friendship. Craig D'Alton's uncanny understanding of the Bodleian Library, and Chris Chapman's principle of photocopying everything, saved me a great deal of time; both of them also helped me to waste time very agreeably. Tom Freeman initiated me into the mysteries of John Foxe; Michael Riordan allowed me to use his invaluable register of court reformers. I am also indebted to the late John Fines for giving me a copy of his register of early English Protestants. Helen Parish and Tim Watson helped me to understand a few of Oxford's foibles, and Vicky Leat showed me that the research process is survivable. Richard Hall and everyone from Saltford, Corston and Newton St Loe supported me more than they know.

Since I began the work on which this book is based in 1996, a great many long-suffering friends and colleagues have heard or read more than they might ever have wished to about 1540s evangelicalism. The European Reformation Research Group's conferences have been a valuable source of intellectual and other refreshment. The book has benefited in numerous ways from Peter Marshall's shrewd insights, as I have from his friendship. In particular, he read portions of the text and made valuable comments, as did Craig D'Alton, Tom Freeman, Felicity Heal and Michael Riordan. Susan Brigden and Ralph Houlbrooke, who examined the doctoral thesis on which this book is based, were generous in their support and perceptive in their criticism; I am grateful to them for both. I have also benefited from conversations with – among others – Caroline Campbell, Louise Campbell, Eric Carlson, Catharine Davies, Martin Dotterweich, Eamon Duffy, Carrie Euler, Christopher Haigh, Elisabeth Leedham-Green, Caroline Litzenberger, Graeme Murdock, Judith Pollmann, Richard Rex, Ethan Shagan, Brett

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

Acknowledgements

Usher, Alexandra Walsham, Bill Wizeman and Margaret Yates. None of these people will agree with everything I have said; nor should they be blamed for the errors which have survived despite them.

One of the greatest debts which the researcher incurs is to the patience, courtesy and efficiency of librarians and archivists. I am grateful to the staff of the following institutions for their assistance, as I am to the institutions for allowing me the use of their collections: the Bodleian Library in Oxford; in Cambridge, the University Library, and the libraries of Corpus Christi, Emmanuel and Trinity Colleges; the British Library; the Public Record Office; the Corporation of London Records Office; the Guildhall Library; Lambeth Palace Library; the Library of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple; the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine; the Folger Shakespeare Library; the county record offices of Devon, Gloucestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire; the Library of Shrewsbury School; St. Andrews University Library; Birmingham University Library; and perhaps most of all, Bristol University Library. During 1996–9 I held a postgraduate studentship from the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy, and the text of the book was completed during a period of study leave granted by the University of Birmingham in 2002: I am grateful for both. The benefits I have derived from belonging to the scholarly communities at Birmingham and at St Cross College, Oxford are less tangible but no less important.

Three thanks in particular need to be underlined. To Diarmaid MacCulloch, who was a model doctoral supervisor; much of what merit this book may have is due to him. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with him. To my parents, who first sparked my love for history, and who supported me throughout the process even to the extent of reading the entire text; but in truth my debt to them both cannot be calculated. And finally, to Victoria, who makes it worthwhile.

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON THE TEXT

A PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY

This book is about the religious conflicts in England in the last decade or so of Henry VIII's life (c. 1538–47). Those conflicts were bitter, but they were also ill-defined. The religious controversialists of the Reformation had not yet sorted themselves out into clear parties. This was true across Europe, but sharp divisions were particularly slow to form in England. The religious confusion and fluidity which resulted is one of the central themes of this book. It also gives rise to a problem of terminology, for by the 1540s, no generally accepted terms had as yet been coined for the emerging religious factions.

The obvious labels – ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ – are problematic. All sides claimed to be Catholic Christians. The claim was made with particular energy by those (like Henry VIII) who rejected the papacy but remained opposed to further doctrinal change. From Rome's perspective, however, these people were no more Catholic than Martin Luther.¹ The least inadequate description of these people is as ‘conservative’ or ‘traditionalist’, and these are the usages I have adopted. However, they come with a health warning, since many of these people were in their own terms energetic reformers. Their ‘conservatism’ consists of their rejection of the doctrinal claims of Protestantism – and some ‘conservatives’ were open to a degree of compromise even on this.

To speak of ‘Protestantism’, however, is to imply a much more firmly defined identity than as yet existed. When the word was used at all in 1540s England, it referred to the German states which had embraced Luther's doctrines and had formed a military alliance against the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Only after Henry VIII's death in 1547 do we find it being applied to religious reformers in England. In this book, ‘Protestant’ is used – with

¹ Peter Marshall, ‘Is the Pope a Catholic? Henry VIII and the semantics of schism’, in *Catholics and the Protestant Nation: English Catholicism in Context 1534–1640*, ed. M. Sena and Ethan Shagan (Manchester, forthcoming 2004).

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

only mild anachronism – to refer to the theologies of Luther, Zwingli and other leading Continental reformers (as well as to the broader Protestant movement as it was later to become established in England). Several recent studies have described the English reformers who were influenced by those theologies as ‘evangelicals’ or ‘gospellers’, and I have followed this usage.² These were at least terms which contemporaries would have recognised, although they are not without difficulties. The reformers’ claim that the Gospel was their exclusive property is as questionable as their opponents’ claim to be the only Catholic Christians. Moreover, ‘evangelical’ suggests an experiential and emotional form of Christianity which belongs more to the eighteenth century than the sixteenth.

Other terms are more straightforward. I have used ‘reformer’ and ‘reformist’ to refer to all those who wished for a thorough reform of Christian doctrine – principally evangelicals, but also those influenced by the indigenous English tradition of Lollardy. Terms such as ‘Lutheran’ and ‘Reformed’³ are intended to carry at least a degree of doctrinal precision, although those positions were themselves very loosely defined in this period. The contemporary terms ‘sacramentary’ and ‘sacramentarian’ refer to those who *denied* that Christ was really, objectively and bodily present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Reformed Protestants were sacramentaries; Lutherans, however, were not, and affirmed Christ’s bodily presence without embracing the full-blown Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. This issue was a key fault line in 1540s English evangelicalism.

Such vague terminology is regrettable, and an annoyance both to writer and reader. But it is not an accident. It reflects the reality that religious divisions and religious communities were themselves vague and ill-defined during this early period of the Reformation. If ambiguous terminology reminds us that the religious conflicts of this period were beset with ambiguity, it has served its purpose.

SOURCES AND CONVENTIONS

In quoting from contemporary texts all abbreviations have been silently expanded. Some punctuation and capitalisation has been amended for clarity. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. All Biblical quotations

² Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, ‘Protestantisms and their beginnings’, in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Marshall and Ryrie (Cambridge, 2002), 5; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Crammer: A Life* (New Haven and London, 1996), 2–3. For a different approach to the same question, see Catharine Davies, *A Religion of the Word: The Defence of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester, 2002), xx.

³ ‘Reformed’ Protestantism is the tradition arising from Switzerland and the Rhineland, whose founding father was Huldrych Zwingli but which was later identified with Jean Calvin.

Cambridge University Press

0521823439 - The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation

Alec Ryrie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on the text

xvii

are taken from the Great Bible of 1539. The year is reckoned to begin on 1 January throughout.

Much of chapter 4, and sections of chapter 7 and of the conclusion, draw on my article ‘The strange death of Lutheran England’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002), 64–92.

ABBREVIATIONS

AM	John Foxe, <i>Actes and monuments of matters most speciall in the church</i> (RSTC 11225: 1583)
AM (1563)	John Foxe, <i>Actes and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes</i> (RSTC 11222: 1563)
APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. John R. Dasent, vol. I (1890)
BL	British Library
Bonner Register	Guildhall Library, London, MS 9531/12
CCCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
ECL	Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge
Emden	A. B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford A.D. 1501 to 1540</i> (Oxford, 1974)
ET	<i>Epistolae Tigurinae de rebus potissimum ad ecclesiae Anglicanae reformationem</i> (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1848)
HJ	<i>The Historical Journal</i>
HPT	<i>The House of Commons 1509–58</i> , ed. S. T. Bindoff, 3 vols. (History of Parliament Trust, 1982)
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
LJ	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i> , vol. I
LP	<i>Letters & Papers, Foreign & Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , ed. James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, 21 vols. (1862–1932)
OL	<i>Original Letters relative to the English Reformation</i> , ed. Hastings Robinson (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846)
P&O	<i>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. Harris Nicolas, vol. VII (1837)
PRO	Public Record Office

List of abbreviations xix

RSTC	W. A. Jackson, F. J. Ferguson and K. F. Pantzer, A <i>Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed . . . 1475–1640 . . .</i> <i>revised</i> (1986)
TCC	Trinity College, Cambridge
TRP	<i>Tudor Royal Proclamations 1485–1553</i> , ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (New Haven and London, 1964)
WCRO	Worcestershire County Record Office
Wriothesley	Charles Wriothesley, <i>A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors</i> , ed. William D. Hamilton, vol. I, Camden Society new series 11 (1875)

The place of publication for all works is London unless otherwise noted.