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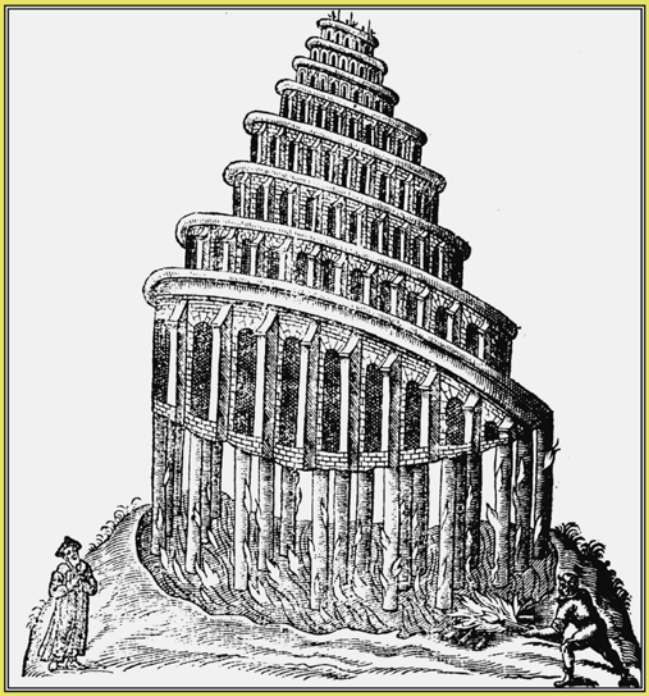

Joshua Rodda

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JOSHUA RODDA
University of Nottingham, UK

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List of Abbreviations

BL	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
EHR	*The English Historical Review*
HJ	*The Historical Journal*
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
JEH	*The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
ODNB	*The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
RH	*Recusant History*
SCJ	*The Sixteenth Century Journal*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

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Preface

This book is derived from my doctoral thesis, which was completed thanks to the generous support of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. I remain grateful to it, and hope that this volume fulfils the promise it saw in my initial proposal. I must also thank my supervisor, Dr Julia Merritt, for introducing me to Daniel Featley, and for shepherding my research with the perfect mixture of encouragement, advice, patience and oversight. In expanding upon that research for publication, I am further indebted to my examiners – to Professor Alan Ford for urging me towards the theological content and implications of the events considered here, and thus helping me turn a narrative exploration of public religious disputation into a study of its wider significance, and to Professor Alexandra Walsham, for prompting me to pursue the meaning behind these debates, and thus guiding my thoughts into the hypothesis for the book. What follows owes much to their suggestions.

I am also thankful to those who have taken an interest in the various aspects of this project presented at conferences, seminars and other gatherings, at Nottingham, Sheffield, Sussex, Oxford and the Institute for Historical Research, and at the 2012 Reformation Studies Colloquium at Durham and the Society for Renaissance Studies conference at Manchester. In particular, I must thank Professor Peter Lake, whose questions on the 1584 Lambeth conference have remained with me, and have at all times pushed me to consider the wider political significance of the topic. Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the continuing interest and advice of Professor Anthony Milton, who has been kind enough to show enthusiasm for my work from the beginning.

The postgraduate community at the University of Nottingham is also due thanks, for creating an academic environment that was both friendly and encouraging. To pick out a few gems among many, thanks to Marianne Wilson for reading early chapter drafts, and to Robbie Rudge for some assistance with source access in the final months.

Thanks to Ashgate for taking an interest in the initial proposal for this book, and to my commissioning editor, Tom Gray, for guiding me through the early stages of the process so smoothly, and for being so supportive throughout. Also to Professor Euan Cameron for his interest and questions at the Durham Colloquium, and to the rest of the editors on

the St Andrews Studies in Reformation History series for their enthusiasm and recommendations.

On a personal note, no expression of gratitude could be long or eloquent enough to thank my parents for all they have done to get me to this point. Their support has been so far beyond invaluable, and it continues to get me through each and every project and day. I must thank them, my sister and the rest of my family, for everything. Finally, there is one other I must thank and be thankful for, with all my love and all my heart, for being there at the beginning, and for being here now at the end.

This is for you – I always knew it would be.

Josh Rodda

Introduction

1612. In the presence of a lay audience, a Protestant chaplain and a Catholic priest face off across a chamber in Paris. Drawn together by the needs, and at the invitation, of an English gentlewoman, they are discoursing on the finer point of Christ's presence in the sacrament, and the dispute has gone on for some time. The chaplain has had an argument grounded in Aristotle rebuffed, and another based in natural reason, and now, frustrated, he declares: 'I perceive it will be to little purpose to reason with you by arguments drawne from reason, for you will make good any absurdity in reason by your faith'.[1] This exchange, recounted in a work by the chaplain, Daniel Featley, formed part of a unique type of controversial event: a formal disputation; a front line of reformation, where opposing divines met, face to face, to examine the questions of difference between them, by evidentiary and scholarly principles common to all. Spurred on by classical and Renaissance ideals, and by biblical imperatives, divines of all denominations through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries issued challenges to such debate, and the resulting events – which in England ranged from small, private encounters to such occasions as the Hampton Court conference of 1604 – formed milestones in controversy.

Disputation stood out for contemporaries because it adhered to a format applied in the universities for examination, teaching and – at times – experimentation with ideas. In this role, it had fuelled the Reformation itself, ever since Martin Luther had composed his theses for disputation in 1517.[2] Such challenges were an established feature of academic life and an accepted manner of controversial engagement, but the place of disputation in the early Reformation gave it immediate significance. In England, Protestant writers enthused about the connection: Sir Edwin Sandys described an inference of truth within challenges to dispute, which was of great help to the early reformers:

> their *Offers of disputation* to theyr adversaries in all places … greatly assured the multitude of theyr soundnesse, whom they saw so confident in abiding the hazard of tryall, being that whereof the want is the onely prejudice of truth,

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1 Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 257.

2 G.R. Evans, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 103–4.

> and the plentie the onely discoverie and ruine of falsehood … the effect of these disputations whether received or refused, was in most places such, as to draw with them an immediate alteration of Religion.[3]

In 1658, looking back across the period covered in the present volume, the clergyman John Ley would reiterate that this mode of encounter, along with challenges to such, had aided the advance of God's truth.[4] For these writers, their faith had reached so many so fast as much because of disputation as preaching, education or the translation of the Bible. Nor were Catholics ignorant of its significance. The Jesuit Robert Persons would, in 1602, reply to a citation of Luther's disputations by emphasizing the temporal and church judgements against him; but Persons himself was to produce a history of disputation during the English Reformation, claiming good practice for the Catholic cause.[5] Clerical conference also had a role for Catholics and Protestants both, in the determinations of church councils.

Disputation was thus a foundation stone of the Reformation *and* of vital concern to Catholics, grounded in an image of truth advanced through scholarly debate, and falsehood upheld by wilful ignorance, personal interpretation or tyranny. Its immediacy and academic form, moreover, meant that contemporaries saw it as distinct from written controversy, or other modes of interaction – as can be seen in the histories of the phenomenon produced into the seventeenth century: Persons's *Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), Protestant narratives by the likes of Sandys, Featley and Francis Savage, and then John Ley's *Discourse of Disputations* in 1658.[6] More so than any other form, disputation fuelled and shaped post-Reformation controversies. It is, therefore, surprising that such events have received short shrift in more recent histories.

Clerical disputations in and after the Reformation have not been neglected entirely, but they are often studied in isolation. Their subject matter and the nature of the surviving source material has generally

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[3] Sir Edwin Sandys, *Europæ Speculum* (1629), pp. 85–6.

[4] John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), pp. 18–19, 29. Further, see Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sig. I*$^{r-v}$; Francis Savage, *A Conference betwixt a Mother a Devout Recusant, and Her Sonne a Zealous Protestant* (1600), pp. 113–21; Joseph Puterbaugh, '"Your selfe be judge and answer your selfe": Formation of Protestant Identity in *A Conference Betwixt a Mother a Devout Recusant and Her Sonne a Zealous Protestant*', *SCJ*, 31/2 (2000): p. 423.

[5] N.D., *The Warn-word to Sir Francis Hastings Wast-word* (1602), sigs V^{v}–V5^{v}; Sir Francis Hastings, *An Apologie or Defence of the Watch-word* (1600), pp. 37–9; N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), *passim*.

[6] N.D., *Review*, *passim*; Hastings, *Apologie*, pp. 37–9; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*$^{r-v}$; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 18–21; Savage, *Conference*, pp. 113–21; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 31–57.

led them to be treated as but one aspect of that great mass of pamphlet controversy to which, even in contemporaries' eyes, there seemed to be 'no end'.[7] In addition, the format of disputation has held back a dedicated study. These events unite the structures and expectations of academic debate with the more charged realm of clerical controversy, and have thus fallen between two areas of inquiry. In works on controversy, a disputant's arguments are often noted, without reference to the fact or process of the event itself – Patrick Collinson's *Elizabethan Puritan Movement* cited a number of 1590s encounters to highlight the contradictions experienced by conforming puritans and Michael Questier's work on conversion examines numerous semi-public disputations, but neither concentrates wholly on the process.[8] Intellectual and educational studies, meanwhile, detail the disputation form as used in the universities, but these too are tied to their field: rarely have their observations on practice and performance been applied to controversial cases.[9] Recently, Debora Shuger has examined those university disputations which ventured into controversial matters, but her work does not incorporate clerical debate outside of these institutions. Keith Stanglin has similarly detailed the origins of disputation, while compiling Arminius's disputational material for the University of Leiden, and although the emphasis here is again on university procedures, he laments the marginalization of the practice, and that of 'academic theology in comparison to popular theology'.[10]

Instances of 'public' or professional disputation of controversial religion – that is, formal debate beyond the purview of the universities – have since the early 1990s begun to be reconsidered, but such efforts remain particular in focus, especially for Elizabethan and Jacobean England. In the 1990s, Ann Hughes called for greater attention to the format and its procedures, as a means to understanding the tools for religious writing; but her focus in this was set on the 1640s and 1650s.[11] At the time of writing, her study

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[7] Humphrey Leech, *A Triumph of Truth* (1609), sig. †3^{r}; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{v}; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 13.

[8] Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 336; Questier, *Conversion*, esp. pp. 28, 33–5, 159.

[9] Chapter 1 below.

[10] Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): pp. 313–36; Keith D. Stanglin, *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden, 2010), esp. pp. 8–9.

[11] Ann Hughes, 'The Pulpit Guarded: Confrontations between Orthodox and Radicals in Revolutionary England', in Anne Laurence, W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim (eds), *John Bunyan and his England, 1628–88* (London, 1990), pp. 31–50; Ann Hughes, 'Public Disputations, Pamphlets and Polemic', *History Today*, 41/2 (1991): p. 33.

of mid-seventeenth-century disputation is about to be enhanced by the efforts of Professor Bernard Capp. But no comparable work for an earlier period exists. Thomas McCoog has discussed the role of disputation in the Jesuit mission of the 1580s, with an emphasis on Edmund Campion and reference to the format and perception of such encounters, and there have been studies of prominent events like Hampton Court. But these are invariably tied to specific individuals, locations or points in time.[12] The division between form and content, between educational and religious history, has yet to be fully bridged, and the story of these encounters for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England remains untold. There have, however, been several recent developments that call for public religious disputation to be revisited. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a growing interest in the 'mechanics' of controversial religion, espoused by Peter Lake and Anthony Milton, and this, with more recent calls to an integration of religious and intellectual history, has meant that clerical disputation, in and outside of the universities, is of immediate, necessary concern.[13] The continuing search for an early modern 'public sphere', into which Shuger has introduced university disputations, is a further imperative to consider the structures and reception of public religious debate.[14] Finally, the interest of literary scholars in the period's devotional writings, with a gradual acceptance of literary techniques on the part of historians, has begun to uncover the form's influence in literary and polemical constructs.[15]

The central body of material for this study itself remains relatively untouched. The chapters below draw from printed and manuscript reports of disputation – documents that in the past have been seen as but a type of pamphlet polemic, and a number of which have been overlooked entirely. These works are not unproblematic: they are polemical narratives with pretensions to faithful reporting. While for a great many of these

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12 Thomas M. McCoog, '"Playing the Champion": The Role of Disputation in the Jesuit Mission', in Thomas M. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 119–39; Chapter 5 below. An exception is Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 60–61.

13 Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 4; Peter Lake, 'Anti-Puritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (eds), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 89–90; John Coffey and Alister Chapman, 'Introduction: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion', in Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad S. Gregory (eds), *Seeing Things their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, 2009), *passim*.

14 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', esp. p. 333.

15 Chapter 1 below.

encounters there are factual details that can be affirmed with reference to other sources, the reports themselves, often produced by one of the disputants, cannot be taken as reliable. Hughes, for the mid-seventeenth century, has ruled out any chance of fully reconstructing such an encounter, and examples will be cited below of editing and inconsistency in the most basic of details.[16] Thus the accounts providing the backbone for this book need to be braced with additional material: letter exchanges reference individual events, and the most prestigious – performed before monarchs and their civil or ecclesiastical counsellors – are reported in state papers. Other types of polemical work have also proven useful, where they make reference to the disputation practice and gesture towards shared assumptions or expectations regarding it. In terms of the disputation accounts themselves, this is the most important point to make: they stage a process of communication. In making arguments and assigning victory they are partial, but the means by which this is achieved – the *conditions* of victory, perceptions of the practice and assumptions as to its force and efficacy – were common to all. If we study such accounts not for narrative details, but for mechanics, ideals and expectations, we can achieve the bridge needed between theological content and intellectual format, *without* being lost in a wilderness of polemical claim and counterclaim. Indeed, as will become apparent, the writers themselves were dealing as much in expectation as in fact.

The problem of narrative accuracy is not an issue here, therefore, because it is not the intention of the present volume to provide a retelling of individual events. What we are concerned with is the history of public religious disputation, as a practice and phenomenon that shaped religious controversy, and was ultimately broken down by it. The arguments offered in disputation are of less interest here than the force they were seen to have, on an audience or an adversary. The fact that a particular minister refused disputation is of less significance than what this meant about the authority of disputation itself – in this case, the implications of a challenge unanswered.

The working thesis for this volume is the following, taken from a puritan challenge: 'Christe promised to be where Christians in his name should … assemble & conferre togeither to finde out the truth'.[17] It will be argued here that contemporary clergymen took part in disputation with fundamentally opposing divines because they knew beyond doubt that their truth would be confirmed by formal and rational argument. The assumption of Thomas Aquinas, that reason would necessarily uphold God's truth, can be seen

16 Hughes, 'Public Disputations', p. 29.

17 Anon., *An Epistle, or Apologie of a True, and Charitable Brother of the Reformed Church* ([1605?]), fol. 11^{v}.

resurgent in the attitude of Protestant and Catholic disputants.[18] If we are concerned with recapturing contemporaries' rationality from such works and events, and with grasping the expectations behind controversy as a whole, therefore, we must hold with Protestant divines that logic – grounded in scripture, interpreted by learned ministers – was a route to the truth, and with Catholics that logic – founded in traditions, interpreted by the church – offered that same path.

Attention to the phenomenon of public religious disputation gives us access to that shared manner of learning and expression which underpinned all controversy, and it offers not only a new perspective on oft-studied theological disputes, but also an opportunity for a cross-confessional narrative; a story not of one movement or another, but of the methods of communication and understanding between them.[19] A disputation was a unique mode of interaction, founded on shared ideals and informing those partial and divisive expressions of controversy that have hitherto proven problematic. The final goal of the present volume is, therefore, to highlight these unique aspects: the intellectual foundations of disputation, its customs and its role as a shared form and arena for controversial discourse. In the initial chapters, the category of events considered is defined and distinguished – first in a cultural context, then by the unique procedural aspects of disputation itself. Subsequent chapters follow the application and perception of public religious disputation through Elizabethan and Jacobean England: its use in maintaining the national church, its inherent weight and role in personal assurance, the conditions and limitations imposed by royal authority and ideas of 'Christian conference', and finally the objections against the practice that appeared into the seventeenth century.

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[18] John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 41.

[19] Peter Lake calls for a cross-confessional approach in 'A Tale of Two Episcopal Surveys: The Strange Fates of Edmund Grindal and Cuthbert Mayne Revisited', *TRHS*, 18 (2008): esp. p. 153. See Peter Lake and Michael Questier (eds), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. xvi–xvii.

CHAPTER 1

The Culture of Controversy

> But sanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, & *be* ready alwayes to give an answere to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekenesse and feare:[1]

A disputation of any sort was a manifestation of scholarship and scholarly interaction. It stood on a foundation of logical testing, and on the implied consequent of an intellectual community whose members had the mental equipment to understand one another. It was for this reason that disputation was so often invoked in post-Reformation debate, and it was for this reason also that theological controversy would ultimately become a test for the practice itself. At the commencement of a disputation, it was necessary to lay the ground, by defining terms and setting out the needs of the question, and these opening chapters will follow in that tradition.[2] This first will chart the mindscape of the post-Reformation clerical disputant, through an analysis of the intellectual and cultural climate of the period and a corresponding synthesis of public religious disputation from the ideas that shaped it. This will be done with reference to several related phenomena: university disputations, counsel, legal training and puritan exercises. The relationship between accounts of disputation and fictional polemical dialogues will also be discussed, along with the wider role of disputation in pamphlet controversy.

The word 'disputation' had a variety of uses in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. In addition to its academic ties, it was (after the manner of Cardinal Bellarmine) applied to written works presenting singular arguments, and as a blanket term for argument itself, regardless of structure.[3] Despite offering clear definitions, John Ley's 1658 *Discourse of Disputations* would include the temptation of Christ in Matthew 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13 in its history – a position that dramatically broadens

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1 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Peter 3:15.

2 John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sig. P.ii^{v}; A.C., *An Answer to a Pamphlet* (1623), pp. 9–10; Daniel Featley, *An Appendix to the Fishers Net* (1624), pp. 53–5; Daniel Featley, *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), pp. 288–9; S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), pp. 84–5.

3 John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), pp. 31–3; Francis White, *A Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere to Certain Questions Propounded by His Most Gratious Ma[jesty] King James* (1624), sig. b4^{v}.

the word's contemporary definition in terms of form and duration.[4] Thus, 'disputation' cannot be applied on its own, and requires clarification, and this will be undertaken primarily through the academic form, and the ideals this conjured in the minds of educated writers and disputants.

There was also, as there continues to be, some linguistic imprecision in describing those events which we might legitimately term 'disputations': accounts of public religious debate often use the word 'conference' and, in this, there is some evidence to suggest that a deliberate distinction was being drawn. A 'disputation' was formal, public and oppositional; 'conference' implied private entreaty, edification or a peaceable debate between those in agreement.[5] But the words do, at times, seem interchangeable. The word 'conference' itself was not a simple one: beyond this overlap with 'disputation', it was applied to political and academic events without formal debate, but also to private conversation. Complicating the issue still further are those 'conferences' which included, but did not equal, disputation – the 1604 Hampton Court conference being the prime example.[6] If, then, we seek a term to describe structured debate between opposing divines, neither 'conference' nor 'disputation' exhibits the required precision. But thanks to its academic role, the latter can be developed with reference to form and function. What is required, in fine scholastic tradition, is a series of careful distinctions, to clarify hitherto confused ideas without (one hopes) affecting the argument.[7] The limits of 'disputation', and of the phrase 'public religious disputation', will thus be laid out in the present chapter, to be more firmly established in the next.

In the meantime, these overlapping words and definitions can be taken as a sign of the period's discursive climate, which was enhanced in contemporary minds by new forms of social and political engagement, by the revival of classical traditions and by the ideals of Renaissance thought and literature.[8] Use of 'disputation' in this period is highly reminiscent of the term 'counsel', which could denote abstract ideals as often as it did institutional or personal interactions.[9] On close inspection, the two were

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[4] Ley, *Discourse*, p. 34.

[5] For example, Alexander Nowell and William Day, *A True Report of the Disputation or Rather Private Conference had in the Tower of London, with Ed. Campion Jesuite, the Last of August. 1581* (1583).

[6] Chapter 5 below.

[7] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2000), p. 42.

[8] David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. pp. 2–3.

[9] John Guy, 'The Rhetoric of Counsel in Early Modern England', in Dale Hoak (ed.), *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 292–3, 294, 299; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 303–4; Linda Levy Peck, 'Kingship, Counsel and Law in Early Stuart Britain', in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.), *The Varieties of British*

related – polar ideals of discourse, drawing upon the same philosophical melting pot: Aristotle's notion of collective wisdom, the humanist conception of speech as action in the world, and *exempla* in scripture and the church fathers.[10] Both could be used to describe a disputation's purpose or significance: in accounts of Hampton Court, the 1559 Westminster conference and private events in the 1620s, calling for a disputation on matters of controversial religion is presented as seeking counsel – from the disputants, the church and, ultimately, God – and thus demonstrating sovereign wisdom.[11] The relationship (and occasional dichotomy) between disputation and counsel highlights the markedly personal character of early modern public discourse, which had implications for the written presentation of disputations.[12] But the most immediate point is that, in the idea of counsel, theological and other areas of dispute shared something beyond the post-Reformation climate, and the same is true for the process and imagery of disputation. Religious and other interactions shared underlying modes of expression: they were as influenced by – and are as illustrative of – broader cultural and linguistic trends as by the questions discussed. The first distinction required, therefore, is a procedural one.

Academic Disputation

Disputation, formally defined, was the tool and province of university men. Its procedures had developed across Europe through the medieval period and, although its precise origin remains subject to debate, it was a supplement to the *lectio*, intended for the discussion of complex or controverted questions.[13] By the end of the thirteenth century, it was a mode of teaching unto itself, but this relationship with the lecture remained an

Political Thought, 1500–1800 (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 98–9, 100; Jacqueline Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England', *HJ*, 54/1 (2011): pp. 47–71.

10 Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel', esp. pp. 51–2, 71.

11 Guy, 'Rhetoric of Counsel', p. 292. See Anon., *The Declaracyon of the Procedynge of a Conference, Begon at Westminster the Laste of Marche, 1559* (1560), fols 1^{v}, 3^{v}; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 4; Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sig. ¶4^{r}, p. 4; White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, esp. sigs a2^{r}–b2^{v}; A.C., *True Relations of Sundry Conferences* (1626), p. 41.

12 Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 40; Chapter 2 below.

13 An invaluable overview is contained in Keith D. Stanglin, *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 9–12. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 209–12; A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization* (London, 1975), pp. 214–15; G.R. Evans, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 99–100; Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): pp. 314, 316.

indicator of purpose; a forerunner to the weight of disputation as it would be described through the seventeenth century. A disputation was aimed at reaching solutions. In its pure form, it was a search for truth through the clash of divergent viewpoints, within the mechanisms of formal argument.[14] In this regard, the most important influence was, and remained, Aristotle.[15]

The formula for disputation was informed by dialectics, and partly derived from the *Topics*. Here, Aristotle had laid down rules for questioning or defending a thesis, along with the means of framing arguments.[16] Disputation in the universities centred upon three roles: the *respondent*, tasked with defending his answer to a given question; one or more *opponents*, who brought arguments to disprove his position; and the *moderator*, who would then offer a determination at the close.[17] Whether the disputation dealt in controversial questions or in accepted truths, the benefit of this process for students was that it allowed them to think through complex problems, to take in and adjust to new information, and to perfect their skills: the disputation at once served as lesson, experiment and test.[18] In the period after the Reformation, these abilities were central to clerical training, as polemic, the *defence* of truth, was expected to be part of every divine's career.[19] This need can also be found in the Douai seminary established by William Allen – here, as Thomas M. McCoog has found, students were

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[14] John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150–1350): An Introduction* (London, 1991), p. 19; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, p. 11; see Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*v.

[15] Alan B. Cobban, *English University Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1999), p. 174; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 100; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, p. 11.

[16] Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 96–7; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, p. 11n.

[17] On the medieval process, see Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: An Institutional and Intellectual History* (New York, 1968), p. 168; Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy*, p. 19; Cobban, *English University Life*, p. 174; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 100–101. On later disputations, William T. Costello, *The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-century Cambridge* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), pp. 14–31; Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558–1642* (Oxford, 1959), p. 88; Ann Hughes, 'The Pulpit Guarded: Confrontations between Orthodox and Radicals in Revolutionary England', in Anne Laurence, W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim (eds), *John Bunyan and his England, 1628–88* (London, 1990), p. 35; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 58–9, 60–61; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 102; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 316–20; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, p. 12; Chapter 2 below.

[18] Costello, *Scholastic Curriculum*, p. 24; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, pp. 11–12; Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, p. 172; Lawrence D. Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Newark, NJ, 1986), p. 27.

[19] James McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle in Tudor Oxford', *EHR*, 94/371 (1979): p. 313; S.L. Greenslade, 'The Faculty of Theology', in T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of The University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000), vol. 3, pp. 295, 324. James McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford: The Collegiate Society', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, pp. 730–32.

trained in disputation, to prepare them for missionary efforts and to help them respond to Protestant controversialists.[20] But in the universities, disputation was an established and constant presence: college teaching centred on preparation for these events, and the format was also a means of private interaction between students: its influence has been identified in student notebooks and in the structure of teaching materials.[21] At Oxford and Cambridge, the public Act or Commencement debates – 'public' in that they were performed before a wider audience – marked both time and progress for BA and MA candidates, and for those taking higher degrees.[22] Thus, despite the objections against disputation that would appear into the seventeenth century, the overwhelming presence of the process in the universities meant that its tools and techniques were ingrained into educated divines.[23] It was the means by which they were taught to face their adversaries and confirm the truth, and as long as it maintained its academic standing, it would continue to be a vital part of controversy.[24]

The Reformation provoked two developments in the questions defended in divinity disputations. On the one hand, theologians were being taught key points of controversial religion and, from Elizabeth's reign, were being trained for anti-Catholic argument. On the other, the use of academic disputation to handle genuinely controverted matters was being scaled back, as the universities came under increasing scrutiny.[25] In the medieval period, a type of disputation had developed specifically to deal in controversial questions, and those outside of the curriculum: disputations *de quodlibet* (literally, 'of anything'). In these debates, open to wider audiences, topical issues and points of genuine contention could be disputed without prior approval. Though adopted by all faculties, the *de quodlibet* debates were most often taken up by theologians.[26] There

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[20] Thomas M. McCoog, '"Playing the Champion": The Role of Disputation in the Jesuit Mission', in Thomas M. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Oxford, 1996), p. 122.

[21] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 62, 67, 295–6; McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', pp. 683, 709, 710; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 315–16.

[22] Mordechai Feingold, 'The Humanities', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4, p. 300. On the universities' disputation requirements, see Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 58; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 27–8; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', pp. 296–8, 308–10.

[23] Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 300; Chapter 6 below.

[24] Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 313; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 110–11.

[25] Ann Moss, 'Humanist Education', in H.B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* (9 vols, Cambridge, 1989–2005), vol. 3, p. 153; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', p. 325.

[26] Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, pp. 171–3; Cobban, *Medieval Universities*, p. 214; Cobban, *English University Life*, pp. 175–6.

was, therefore, a precedent for academic disputants handling difficult questions and generating new ideas, and although these events declined in the face of increasing organization and control, the *image* of disputation as a solution, a trial of truth, continued through the Reformation.[27] Questions of controversy *were* being tackled by disputants in the early modern universities: Debora Shuger has described such events as a nascent public sphere.[28] But the state now needed a greater degree of control. Dangerous questions – of known heresy or opposition to successive settlements – were closed.[29] These points must, of course, be distinguished from intra-Protestant controversies, in which the universities took a prominent, often troublesome role, and we must also remember that in the students' private rooms a disputation could pass unchecked (and sadly unrecorded); but victory in disputation was not – and could not be – received as a threat to accepted truths.[30] Where these were contested, debate was unwise and unnecessary: such disputes were often settled by authority.[31] The Reformation, then, hardened divisions as it opened them, and this is reflected in the points being tackled and determinations made, and in the sporadic restriction of academic debate from the reign of Edward.[32] And yet, although a disputation *de quodlibet* on a question of theology was increasingly unthinkable in the post-Reformation universities, the concept of disputation as a route to the truth remained.

The central question raised by Shuger's article is why university disputations were allowed to venture into controversial matters at all, and Shuger suggests that they took a role in setting the university's position, then proofing it against error.[33] In supporting this, I would argue more strongly that it was the *ideal* of disputation, its Aristotelian-medieval role in determining or confirming truth, combined with control

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27 Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, pp. 172–3; Cobban, *English University Life*, p. 176; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 102. For later changes in *de quodlibet* debates, see Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, pp. 17–18.

28 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', esp. pp. 318–19, 320–22, 325–35; see Henry Jacob, *A Christian and Modest Offer of a Most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation* (1606), p. 26; Henry Barrow, *The Pollution of Universitie-Learning* (London, 1642), esp. p. 5; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', pp. 308, 331; Nicholas Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4, p. 585.

29 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 318, 320–23, 324, 326, 331; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', p. 331; Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 301.

30 Nicholas Tyacke, 'Introduction', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4, pp. 9–10; Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 301. See Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', pp. 569–620; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 323–4.

31 Humphrey Leech, *A Triumph of Truth* (1609), pp. 30–71.

32 Jennifer Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, p. 372; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 121.

33 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 327.

and – crucially – certainty, that granted them a measure of safety; indeed, that added to imperatives *for* disputation.[34] If a disputation on a point fundamental bred doubt, it must surely have been performed badly; if a disputant was arguing against such a truth, he would ultimately be confuted, and truth's defence would affirm the faith of the hearers.[35] Silence by force was a damaging response.[36] John Bereblock would confirm this in recounting an Oxford disputation before Elizabeth in 1566: 'But this controversy was not only a verbal contest but also a search for truth. Hence therefore, although the *opponentes* tried one tactic after another, the *respondens* scored time and again against them'.[37] This is more often voiced in relation to religious disputation beyond the universities, but it is grounded in the same principle: the demonstrative efficacy of open, scholarly interaction. Thus, disputation was not a threat after the Reformation, but a necessity. Shuger also concludes that the 'mask' of the procedure, in its academic sphere, lessened the danger to orthodoxy, and thus to a disputant's neck.[38] As will be discussed in the next chapter, while a controversial encounter beyond the universities might be termed a 'disputation' because of its academic structure, an academic debate was not necessarily, or so obviously, controversial. This goes to the heart of the distinction drawn here between a disputation that was 'academic' in every sense, and those I have described as 'public': in the debates covered here, no mask was available; the disputants' beliefs were not ambiguous. These events are unmistakeably controversial; public in intention, as well as performance.

In the post-Reformation universities, we find disputation tied to its original purpose and rhetoric, and to the influence of *quodlibetal* disputing, but it had to be guarded against abuse and encouraged by a protective 'mask' of hypotheticals. Thus, while the universities gave public religious disputation a process to follow, grounded in Aristotelian forms and ideals, its academic application does not reflect the purpose of clerical, and explicitly controversial, debate – or its consequences. A disputation of religion beyond the universities was a more extraordinary affair – in these encounters, compelled by academic ideals while increasingly unrestrained by academic safeguards, Shuger's '*larval*' public sphere could show its face and take flight.

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34 Ibid., pp. 329–30, 332–3, 335.

35 Ibid., pp. 327–8.

36 Ibid., pp. 332–3; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 49; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 103.

37 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 340.

38 Ibid., pp. 334–6.

The Wider Influence of the Universities

While the universities shaped the technicalities of religious controversy, they also formed part of its immediate context. These institutions were not passive: John Case suggested in 1596 that Oxford and Cambridge should serve as a hub of counsel to the monarch, and a line of defence against heresy.[39] This would require careful control. The means of influence available to these institutions' governors, and to the state, went beyond statutory changes – royal counsellors were frequently appointed chancellor to one of the universities, and this included the earl of Leicester and Sir Christopher Hatton at Oxford, and William Cecil at Cambridge.[40] There were also frequent instances of the monarch and those on the Privy Council exerting direct control over one or both institutions.[41] This need to keep watch over the universities is reflective of their dual role in religious discourse. They were, first, a training ground for officials, educators and clergymen: the Privy Council, in the context of the Edmund Campion affair, lamented that 'most of the seminarie Priests which at this present disturbe this Churche have ben heretofore schollers of [Oxford]'.[42] In the schools, students picked up the linguistic and textual, as well as the dialectic, tools for controversy, but it was here too that they came into contact with a great many controverted points.[43] Second, then, they were a dynamic intellectual environment; a semi-public amphitheatre, in which the central questions and disputes of the day were being controlled and played out.[44] Those in authority were, however, still concerned that disputations be performed regularly and properly; a fact that speaks to

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[39] McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', p. 312.

[40] Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', pp. 325, 331; Penry Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford: State, Church and University', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, pp. 401, 423–39; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, p. 30.

[41] Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', pp. 368, 381; Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford', pp. 404–5, 413, 440; Stephen Porter, 'University and Society', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4, pp. 48–9; Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', esp. pp. 572, 581; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 36–7; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 230; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 48–9.

[42] Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (2 vols, Oxford, 1792–96), vol. 2, pp. 212–13; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', p. 295; Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', pp. 378, 381–3, 389, 393; Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford', pp. 405, 413–15, 439; McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 730; Porter, 'University and Society', p. 48; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 220–21, 239; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 253.

[43] McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 732.

[44] Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 325; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 229; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 107.

a received faith in their purpose and outcome.[45] It was, on occasion, the weight of disputation itself that brought state authority together with the universities, as the format and setting were taken up to display truth and fair dealing. The universities' influence was not, therefore, wholly academic. They gave public disputation of religion structures and techniques, but also imbued it with life. The rooms in which John Rainolds worked and disputed still harboured memories of the Marian trials.

The Role and Utility of Scholastic Logic

Though disputation was a constant presence, the curriculum for the universities was not static – throughout the period, there were developments in the manner in which knowledge and learning were structured, with corresponding changes in how reason and the tools for disputation were perceived.[46] The mid-sixteenth century had been marked across Europe by a reaction against medieval thought and teaching practices, fuelled by the advance of Renaissance humanism; but subsequent developments were more complex. Humanism was a response to the medieval schools' use of Aristotle: following classical texts, the humanists attempted to distance themselves from the myriad distinctions and circuitous arguments of formal, scholastic logic, turning instead to the techniques of literature. In debate, this meant an emphasis on rhetoric, on persuasion, and the pursuit of truth through fluid discussion.[47] 'Discourse' was the ideal: the humanists' programme consolidated language, rhetoric *and* logic form within a unified 'art of discourse', with persuasion as their principal function.[48] By the mid-Tudor period, this movement had a firm hold in the universities, as has been traced in their use of particular classical works and commentaries by Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives and Rudolph Agricola.[49] A revival of rhetoric, and a new focus on the utility of language, thus refined a disputation process grown from the structured dialectics of Aristotle and Peter Abelard. Disputation

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45 Wood, *History and Antiquities*, vol. 2, p. 242; Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford', pp. 425, 427, 432.

46 Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge*, p. 93.

47 Ibid., esp. pp. 1–2, 94–5; McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', p. 294; Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, pp. 62, 102; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 92; David Marsh, 'Dialogue and Discussion in the Renaissance', in Nisbet and Rawson, *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 3, p. 266; Martin Elsky, 'Reorganizing the Encyclopaedia: Vives and Ramus on Aristotle and the Scholastics', in Nisbet and Rawson, *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 3, pp. 402–4. See Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 214–15.

48 Feingold, 'Humanities', pp. 276, 281.

49 McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 702; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 227.

was now to be a positive action in the world, directed to persuasion, and aimed at probable – not absolute – truth.[50]

In post-Reformation controversy, however, this last proved a problem: it was not a foundation for the necessary 'science' of divinity.[51] Educated clergymen were required to *demonstrate* the truth of God and the validity of their church to those who opposed them; to satisfy the doubtful and answer the challenges of the adversary. For many theologians and disputants, this problem was addressed through a parallel development – a retention and simplification of Aristotelian and scholastic techniques, which worked to bypass wrangling and self-perpetuating debate by removing the human element altogether and focusing on clear, self-evident categories. The 'art of discourse' concept, drawn from Cicero, informed the work of a less pivotal figure: the educational reformer (and erstwhile Protestant martyr) Pierre de la Ramée.[52] Like the wider humanist movement, Ramus was concerned to make education, and its subjects, simpler, and to tie them to the world. But while he also tried to restrict the technical aspects of logic, he remained closer to medieval scholasticism.[53] As a result, his reforms did not take firm root: Ramus's conversion from Catholicism, his death in the massacre at Paris and his incorporation of scripture with classical works all held a fascination for English Protestants, but a number of the period's more prominent divines had reservations.[54] John Rainolds, that paragon of Christian humanism, voiced concerns, though he praised Ramus's faith and the benefit of his ideas in preaching.[55] Rainolds's pupil Daniel Featley, a student at Corpus Christi as the disputes on Ramism were dying away in the 1600s, attacked its advocates with a metaphor worthy of any of his later anti-Catholic disputations: they hid in their master's shadow, he

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[50] Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), p. 101; Peter Burke, 'The Renaissance Dialogue', *Renaissance Studies*. 3/1 (1989): p. 3n; Elsky, 'Reorganizing the Encyclopaedia', p. 403; Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, p. 44; Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, pp. 10–11, 24.

[51] R.B., *An Answere to Mr Fishers Relation of a Third Conference betweene a Certaine B. (as he Styles him) and Himselfe* (1624), pp. 20–23, at p. 23; A.C., *True Relations*, p. 51; William Alabaster, *Unpublished Works by William Alabaster (1568–1640)*, ed. Dana F. Sutton (Salzburg, 1997), p. 126.

[52] Ong, *Ramus*, esp. pp. 178–9; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 92–3.

[53] Ibid., pp. 4, 53; Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (New York, 1961), pp. 147–8; Elsky, 'Reorganizing the Encyclopaedia', p. 405; Donald K. McKim, 'The Function of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology', *SCJ*, 16/4 (1985): pp. 504, 506, 509; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 106–7.

[54] McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', pp. 299–300; Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 289; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 108–9, 111.

[55] McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', pp. 304–8, 309; Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 291; McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 713; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 109.

argued, for 'they could not bear the clear sunlight of science'.[56] Others disapproved of Ramus's stark dichotomies and his habitual abridgement.[57] Ramism was an attempt to improve scholastic formulae at a moment when there was a new reliance on open discourse; to clarify them in competition to the idea that truth could be defended – or probable truth obtained – through free and rational debate.[58] But the movement was a symptom, nonetheless, of an intellectual climate that looked for resolution, as well as simple 'discourse'.[59]

To puritan and forward Protestant divines in particular, the appeal of Ramism was that it reflected the workings of the world. It removed human invention – not just from the interpretation of scripture, but (by extension) from disputes over right doctrine and belief.[60] Formal disputation had a lasting connection to this need – it had been cited by Vives, and Ramus himself, as the one remaining use for scholastic logic.[61] Despite the shifting climate, logic form retained its place in the universities as a means of structuring material and a tool for debate, and Walter Ong suggests that it was buoyed in this regard by the predominance of disputation: Aristotelianism thrived – and, to an extent, Ramist method developed – to assist in this process.[62] To take the example of the syllogism, a cornerstone of scholastic logic (and a key part of the disputation form), it has been argued that, despite its inelegance as a manner of 'discourse', it had the benefit of providing an adversary and audience with a clear description of one's point in disputation.[63] But this relationship might also be turned on its head: Mark Curtis argued that disputation retained its role because of the survival of logic form, itself necessitated by Reformation

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56 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.47, fol. 100, in Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 292.

57 Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, pp. 200–203; Ong, *Ramus*, p. 188.

58 Feingold, 'Humanities', pp. 289–93; Ong, *Ramus*, ch. xiii. Morgan notes the integration of Ramism with Aristotelianism: Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 235.

59 Ong, *Ramus*, p. 6.

60 Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 101; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 107, 111; McKim, 'Function of Ramism', pp. 513–14, 515; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 16n.

61 Elsky, 'Reorganizing the Encyclopaedia', pp. 402, 405; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 99; Willem J. Van Asselt, 'Scholasticism Revisited: Methodological Reflections on the Study of Seventeenth-century Reformed Thought', in Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad S. Gregory (eds), *Seeing Things their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, 2009), p. 157.

62 Walter J. Ong, in John Milton, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe (8 vols, New Haven, 1953–82), vol. 8, p. 161.

63 Quirinus Breen, 'John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition', *Church History*, 26/1 (1957): pp. 4, 14.

disputes.[64] Applied well, scholastic logic had an undeniable precision, but it also carried a persuasive *force*. The questions, then, are these: why did disputation continue in the universities, how were its structures received in *public* religious debate, and what can we thus infer about their perceived authority in controversy more generally?

The continuation of logic form in academic disputation presents evidence of what James McConica has described as an 'eclectic' culture in the early modern universities, fuelled by competing public, theological and intellectual pressures.[65] Aristotelianism was integrated into the humanists' model: it was refined, not replaced by it; and the wrangling for which formal scholasticism was condemned was, it was generally agreed, the fault of the user.[66] A conflict between scholastic logic and its practical application can be traced in disputations beyond the universities' walls and purview, particularly those before mixed audiences: into the seventeenth century, a growing emphasis on open discourse, and the changing purpose of disputation, meant that its retention of scholastic forms left it open to criticism.[67] And yet, formal logic maintained a role in controversy, including face-to-face, public debate, and had taken a role in shaping Protestant theology.[68] Disputation, with all its formal trappings, was used in public, on controversial questions, into the 1640s and 1650s. Its survival can be explained partly through the universities' influence: it was, as we have seen, ingrained into graduates as the accepted form of argument.[69] But there was more to this than custom, and again we can turn this picture on its head. In all post-Reformation debate, we find a need for certainty, a need to avoid human invention and error.[70] For Protestants, this fought off accusations of private interpretation and played a natural role in anti-Catholic polemic, in opposition to papal authority.[71] But the need was as true for priests urging tradition as for puritan Ramists trying to understand scripture. Though Ramism

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64 Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge*, p. 96.

65 McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', esp. pp. 296–8, 309; Ong, *Ramus*, p. 180; Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge*, p. 2; Van Asselt, 'Scholasticism Revisited', p. 161.

66 Feingold, 'Humanities', pp. 276–7; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 48–9, 228, 235–6; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 87, 88; Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, pp. 42, 44; Van Asselt, 'Scholasticism Revisited', pp. 162–3, 167; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, p. 24.

67 Chapter 6 below.

68 Breen, 'John Calvin', pp. 6, 14; Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 277; Van Asselt, 'Scholasticism Revisited', pp. 154–5, 159–60.

69 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 49.

70 See Feingold, 'Humanities', pp. 281, 285.

71 Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, p. 211; John White, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church* (1614), sig. **5^{v}.

fell from favour, the need it tried to fill was universal.[72] A Thomist view of theology, as a science set in unshakeable principles, persisted in disputation, partly driven by controversial pressures and aided (to define a spectrum via its extremes) by the possibility of 'regenerate reason' for puritans, and by the authority of the church for Catholics.[73] An assumption is made in most disputation accounts that, if one starts with firm grounds and categories, and draws these into a logical process, the human capacity for error will be minimized. Thus, certainty can be approached, and truth communicated. It will be argued here that in a disputation the use of scholastic logic (or Ramist dialectic), framed within the full, academic format, was an attempt both to establish common ground *and* to compensate for the human element.[74] By no leap of the imagination was this a simple process, and it relied not just on the mechanics of the form, but on careful use of authorities and a precise construction of arguments.[75] It might thus be seen as a goal; a standard that true religion *ought* to reach. But the assumption was necessary to engage in faith-based debate.

The Purpose and Artifice of Renaissance Rhetoric

Critiques and changes were also affecting the role of rhetoric in disputation. Alongside the humanist focus on persuasion, there was a movement towards plain speech. In the 1540s, John Jewel, praelector for humanities and rhetoric at Corpus Christi, delivered an oration against what he saw to be the new meaning of rhetoric – that speech be constructed in an unrepresentative manner:

> For if in speaking we seek … that we may be understood by others with whom we deal, who can discover a better mode of speech than to speak intelligibly, simply, and clearly? What need of art? … Truth, indeed, is clear and simple; it has small need of the armament of the tongue or of eloquence. If it is perspicuous and plain, it has enough support in itself;[76]

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72 Feingold, 'Humanities', pp. 290–91.

73 Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 98–9; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 56–7; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, p. 259.

74 See McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', p. 313; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, pp. 25–8.

75 Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 89; Chapter 2 below.

76 John Jewel, *Oratio contra rhetoricam*, in Hoyt H. Hudson, 'Jewel's Oration against Rhetoric: A Translation', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 14 (1928): pp. 381–2; Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, p. 123.

This represented a minority opinion, and with the advance of humanism it would for some time.[77] But Jewel was not alone, and humanism itself was not concerned exclusively with style – its focus on rhetoric above logic already showed a desire to return to 'the rhythms of speech'.[78] The humanists' rediscovery of many classical texts had placed new emphasis on stylized rhetorical figures, but with this came an increased focus on practical application, the role of rhetoric in society, and its propriety for specific *forms* of discourse.[79] Thus, John Rainolds apologizes in one disputation report: 'if you thinke I *cast colours*, and use *wordes* too *smooth*: I can amend that faulte with speaking more roughly'.[80] As a counterpoint to Jewel, Vives had it that nothing is 'more advantageous to human society than well-formed and well-developed language'.[81] The disjunction in this period was on what, precisely, 'well-formed' meant.

While the use of formal logic in disputation was directed towards the truth, the role of rhetoric – where it was allowed one at all – was to work a positive effect in the minds of the audience, or that of an opponent. Lending immediacy to the moral imperatives of the humanists was a new awareness of the will, and of the emotional and inspirational power a skilled rhetorician might wield. As Vives put it in the 1530s:

> In man the highest law and government are at the disposal of will. To the will, reason and judgement are assigned as counsellors, and the emotions are its torches. Moreover, the emotions of the mind are enflamed by the sparks of speech. So, too, the reason is impelled and moved by speech. Hence it comes to pass that, in the whole kingdom of the activities of man, speech holds in its possession a mighty strength which it continually manifests.[82]

This offers more than a simple justification of the humanist emphasis on rhetoric: it gives an explanation for the period's culture of discourse, drawn from classical ideas and filtered through political, cultural and religious conditions. Vives here depicts personal judgement as a microcosm of discourse – 'the whole kingdom of the activities of man' – and does so in terms as familiar to students of religious and political history as to those

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77 Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1988), p. 255.

78 Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 102.

79 Vickers, *In Defence*, pp. 254–5, 270–71.

80 John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584), pp. 158, 271.

81 Vickers, *In Defence*, pp. 274–5.

82 Juan Luis Vives, *On Education: A Translation of the* De Tradendis Disciplinis, ed. F. Watson (Totowa, NJ, 1971), p. 180; Vickers, *In Defence*, p. 277; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 46.

of Renaissance oratory. In this period, rhetoric was adapting through use, and its application in debate was changing along similar lines: simplicity (aimed at truth), and persuasion (at the will).[83] But this cut both ways: in public religious debate in particular we find a trade off between plain demonstration and persuasive artifice. Each well-turned argument could provoke a warning against human invention. Ley, in his history of religious disputation, was to cite Cicero's caution as to the effect eloquence might have on the unlearned.[84]

The Moot

While the universities were the home of formal disputation, and were the training ground for clerical disputants, other institutions were developing models of debate along different, but recognizable, lines. The Inns of Court, where a growing number of young gentlemen were taught legal skills, are one example. Their programmes included training in techniques of argument, and their central exercise – a form of mock trial called the 'moot' – was strikingly reminiscent of disputation. The questions were carefully framed, and the arguments were formally set out, though the structure varied between institutions. These events have been described using the terminology of disputation in historical accounts.[85] In this, as we have already seen with counsel, public religious disputation shared as much with secular models of discourse as with pamphlet controversy: the practice was more than simply a variety of polemic, or a spread of academic formulae into a hostile, 'public' sphere. The connection with the moot is most important, however, in terms of audience: the inns' role in training the gentry carried an awareness of formal disputing far further than the universities alone could manage, and this has clear implications for lay participation in – and reception of – disputation.[86] The significance of legal forms is also clear in disputants' use of legal terminology and similitudes in disputation reports.[87] A 'disputation' can be distinguished by its academic format, and this distinction is a precise one; but the primacy of the question, the framing of arguments, the pattern of opposition and reply, and an expectation that objections would be answered, were all being

[83] Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, p. 65.

[84] Ley, *Discourse*, p. 3.

[85] Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts, 1590–1640* (London, 1972), pp. 116–19.

[86] Ibid., pp. 176–7, 178, 188, 203.

[87] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 468–71; Anon., *A Discourse of the Conference Holden before the French King at Fontain-bleau* (1600), p. 3; N.D., *A Relation of the Triall Made before the King of France, upon the Yeare 1600 betweene the Bishop of Evereux and the L. Plessis Mornay* (1604), *passim*.

taught and popularized elsewhere. The procedural aspects are, however, only half of the story. It remains to locate public religious disputation in the style and world with which it has most often been associated.

Religious Controversy

Imperatives for Controversy

In the wake of the Reformation, controversy was a central part of the religious landscape – the driving force in clerical education, and an exploration of questions crucial to personal, political and geopolitical identity. Every divine, regardless of standpoint, was ready for it to be part of his career, and a large and increasing number of works in the field were produced through the seventeenth century.[88] The responsibilities of holding truth and the need for competing churches and individuals to respond against devoted opposition were the central motivating factors; but, in addition, the prevalence of controversy can be attributed to the intellectual and cultural world in which clergymen worked and were trained. The disputation process in particular shaped controversial methods and further added to the imperatives for engagement.

Controversy was integral to the identity of the reformed churches, who had defined themselves against Catholicism. But, as Professor Lake has emphasized, this stemmed not just from the Reformation or opposition to Catholic doctrine, but from the dichotomies of the Renaissance. The humanists' moral focus, combined with new forms of argument and the divisions inherent to post-Reformation theology, encouraged a mindset in which merit was expressed against one's adversaries. In literature, the epideictic model had developed, applying the language of praise and blame – Renaissance imagery was preoccupied with the position of humanity between stark positive and negative ideas. Hence the emphasis on discourse, and on discourse as an active endeavour; and thus 'every negative characteristic imputed to Rome implied a positive … value which Protestants claimed as their own exclusive property'.[89] This was the framework upon which controversy was built: when a society united by

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[88] Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', pp. 324–5; McConica, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 732; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 32.

[89] Peter Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642* (London, 1989), pp. 73–4; Baxter Hathaway, *The Age of Criticism: The Late Renaissance in Italy* (Ithaca, NY, 1963), p. 337n; Brian Vickers, 'Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance', *New Literary History*, 14/3 (1983): pp. 509; Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions:*

this mode of thought was divided on religious matters, a storm of attack and counter-attack became inevitable. But, as we have already seen in their invocations of disputation, Protestants in particular came to value, if not idealize, confrontation. Though reformed theology did look beyond Catholic abuses to find self-definition, for defenders of the English Church in particular there was a need to establish, then justify, their doctrinal position – they sat in a 'no man's land' between extremes, and this led them to experience in a real sense what Paul, Tertullian and Luther had all identified as the 'function' of heresy: a test of their faith.[90] For puritans, a greater effect was produced by the notion of the godly minority, tested by those around them. For all sides, the universities' discursive climate and persistent Aristotelianism perpetuated the arguments produced – the shared understanding that no opposing work should go unanswered was drawn from the evidentiary and logical requirements of disputation. Silence equated to defeat; an idea that was still more damaging when challenges to debate were visibly turned down.[91]

There was also a scriptural imperative. When the prolific anti-Catholic disputant Featley produced a justification of such encounters in 1624, he cited 1 Peter 3:15 above both canon law and the instructions of King James: '*be* ready alwayes to give an answere to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you'.[92] Nicholas Ridley is said to have cited this passage when approached by Mary's commissioners at Oxford in 1554.[93] In Ireland in 1641, Joshua Hoyle would use the verse to describe all controversy as a necessary 'disease', and Ley's 1658 history of disputation would invoke it in defence of the practice.[94] Such discussions further give evidence that controversial debate, written and in person, was believed to perform a spiritual function: though directed against religious adversaries, the role of controversy was equally one of confirmation. It was not just a requirement of office, but an expression of one's own faith. The resulting

Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England (Oxford, 2011), p. 15. Brian Vickers again ties this to the prevalence of disputation (p. 507).

[90] *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Corinthians 11:19; N.D., *Relation of the Triall*, p. 42; Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 102; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 3; R.R. McCutcheon, 'Heresy and Dialogue: The Humanist Approaches of Erasmus and More', *Viator*, 24 (1993): p. 364.

[91] A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 42–3; A.C., *True Relations*, p. 31; Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 17; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 29.

[92] *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Peter 3:15; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 53.

[93] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition*, ed. Stephen Reed Catterly (8 vols, London, 1837–41), vol. 6, p. 470.

[94] Joshua Hoyle, *A Rejoynder to Master Malone's Reply Concerning Reall Presence* (Dublin, 1641), sig. a^{r}; Declan Gaffney, 'The Practice of Religious Controversy in Dublin, 1600–1641', in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish* (Oxford, 1989), p. 145; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 27.

works were then thought to be a means of inspiration and reflection by Protestants, and a guide, for Catholics, back to the Church of Rome.[95] In this, the effects of controversial writing can again be compared to those of disputation: the impact of these arguments was amplified in the mouths of trained orators, especially when presented as direct opposition or as personal counsel – active discourse, infused with Christian profession.

It is also possible to follow the influence of specific academic formulae in written controversy, and this, too, suggests that the procedures of the universities had an impact not just in shaping, but in *driving* controversial debate. Criticism of an opponent's logical errors was a common feature. In examining the written clash between John Whitgift and Thomas Cartwright in the 1590s, Lake identifies 'logic and learning' as a point of agreement: both men were defending their reputations as scholars, and logical inconsistencies were as open to attack as 'incorrect' doctrine. In Lake's estimation, this stemmed from the prevalence of academic disputation (the two had been rivals at Cambridge), with a quasi-Thomist reliance on the consent between reason and biblical truth.[96] As the disputations' evidence confirms, a measure of intellectual competition fuelled controversy. John Morgan places the dispute between Whitgift and Cartwright in this context, as puritan attitudes towards learning were taken to signify scholarly ineptitude.[97] Pamphlet polemic also exhibited the structural elements of disputation. Answers to opposing tracts were often laid out dialectically, reproducing an opponent's arguments in full for refutation – a method that has again been traced to the authority of the academic form, in this case by Alexandra Walsham.[98] The forms and ideals of disputation thus infiltrated *all* controversial engagement, and its requirements inspired the philosophical imperatives behind controversy as a whole: an equitable hearing; agreed standards of argument; logical proficiency as the signpost of truth.[99]

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[95] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 37. In addition to Professor Milton's examples, see Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 118; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 19, sigs H4*^{v}–I*^{r}; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 27.

[96] Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London, 1988), pp. 14–15; see Questier, *Conversion*, p. 16.

[97] This is qualified by Cartwright through the separation of learning from godliness: Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 67–9, 74. See below; Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, esp. p. 22; Chapter 6 below.

[98] Alexandra Walsham, 'The Spider and the Bee: The Perils of Printing for Refutation in Tudor England', in John N. King (ed.), *Tudor Books and Readers: Materiality and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 165. See Ley, *Discourse*, p. 10; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 255, 270.

[99] Ann Hughes, 'Public Disputations, Pamphlets and Polemic', *History Today*, 41/2 (1991): p. 28.

The Reception and Efficacy of Controversy

Polemicists and divines were thus compelled to produce controversial works and to engage their adversaries in debate, by their training, as well as their faith; by intellectual, as well as religious, ideals. This can be seen in the education of seminary priests, in royal commands and in Calvinist citations of scripture, and it was no simple duty to custom: spiritual and scholarly imperatives were grounded in the certainty that such efforts *would have an impact*. Controversial disputes were an active, effective form of devotional practice. They were not undertaken through intellectual vanity. The belief that allowing an opponent's arguments to go unanswered might risk conversions away from one's own cause suggests a genuine faith in their efficacy – the force of truth, and the dangers of error.[100] Though it remains the task of Sisyphus to recover what the post-Reformation climate meant for the faith of the wider population, the state, the church and polemicists of every stripe were aware of the dangers, and all reacted accordingly. The question that has arisen is how far this reflected personal religious experience; and thus how significant controversial efforts can truly be said to have been. This point has been raised directly by Michael Questier, who compares the assertions of controversialists 'that truth could be grasped in its entirety' by their efforts to the natural limitations of their material – its inherent partiality, the circuitous arguments on display and the impenetrability or 'monotony' of doctrinal debate.[101] Though he agrees that the writers themselves believed that their works had both an audience and an impact, Questier argues that polemic was naturally forced to avoid shared ideas, and to offer only 'impressions' or 'parodies' of opposing churches, and that it was necessarily – and, which is more troubling, *self-evidently* – distant from contemporaries' understanding of faith and conversion.[102]

But some did convert upon contact with controversial actions, and any criticism of doctrinal polemic stands in contrast to the volume of such works produced (and disputes undertaken), and to contemporary opinions, whether clerical or lay.[103] Public disputations, more than any other manifestation of controversy, offer clear examples: these events were organized and reported in a manner intended to appeal to a wide audience

100 Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 13–14, 17–18.

101 Ibid., pp. 12, 13, 19, 186.

102 Ibid., pp. 13–23, 35–9.

103 In the disputation accounts, see William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sig. B2^{v}; Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. A.ii^{r}; Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, p. 41; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 61; White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. b5r; A.C., *True Relations*, sig. *2^{r}; S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 4–5, 24.

– in public, in English and in dialogue form.[104] More importantly, the time and political capital that went into the debates staged with Edmund Campion in 1581, or the prison conference between John Rainolds and John Hart in 1582, not to mention the preparation of the corresponding printed accounts, does not suggest detachment from doctrinal argument and shows little awareness of flaws in the material. On the contrary, accounts of sanctioned debate imply a considerable measure of credibility and lay interest: *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584) is a partial, sensational work, building parodies and trying to exploit a captive and (by other reports) unwilling priest; but it is also packed to the gunnels with complex doctrinal questions, and was printed in English *before* the first Latin edition was produced.[105] Meanwhile, private conferences – known to have taken place in noble and gentry houses – demonstrate considerable lay interest in doctrinal controversy.[106] In addition, while faith is certainly a more elusive beast, a church, as a source of authority and an institution, lives and dies by its doctrine.[107] A controversialist's 'sleights of hand' may not have been a firm basis for conversion, but they were nonetheless important: to show merit in a moralistic and epideictic culture, confidence in the face of insecurity and certainty at a moment of contention and doubt.[108] For those in power, there was a continuing need to defend national doctrine after the twists of the Reformation, and opponents felt a genuine compulsion to examine it. These actions, however awkwardly presented, must surely have had some impact on personal assurance.

There can be little doubt, in a society as polemically charged and saturated as the circles in which post-Reformation controversy thrived, that a specific action or work might have planted the seeds of doubt in one or two minds, as Questier allows – and, indeed, as critics of public religious disputation feared.[109] But that was all disputants and writers were concerned with. Claims of comprehensive truth were a matter of expectation and certainty, an expression of the authors' own faith, and what was actually on offer was an initial step. Conversion was seen as an experience independent of reason; a process that required close spiritual

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104 As Questier states of polemic more generally: *Conversion*, pp. 13–14.

105 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*; John Rainolds, *Summa Colloquii Johannis Rainoldi cum Johanne Harto de Capite & Fide Ecclesia* (1610).

106 For direct examples, see Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 237–9, 240; A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 42–3. Reports of disputation also appeared in private letter exchanges among the laity – see, for example, John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure (2 vols, Philadelphia, 1939), vol. 2, p. 507.

107 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Ii^{v}.

108 Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 12, 36.

109 Ibid., pp. 36–7; Chapter 6 below.

counsel, self-reflection and, ultimately, an illumination or grace that was the gift of God, little of which could be obtained from controversy.[110] But that was not the point. The point was to show that the attempt, in looking to the true faith, was justified and necessary, to give the example of one's own devotion, and to compete against the false churches that were all working to do the same. Daniel Featley argued that 'the Truth is honoured, in that shee hath Advocates to plead her cause'.[111] John White, a decade earlier, prefaced a work of controversy with this similar defence:

> I intreate, even those that cleave most to the Church of Rome, to perswade themselves that whatsoever I have written is for their sakes, that if it were possible they might discerne the truth offered them … I hate none that is among them; but being called to be a Preacher of the Gospell, I am desirous to bestow my spare houres in maintenance of that I preach: and for the which I were ready to sacrifice my life, much more to bestow my time and travell;[112]

Religious controversy was an obligation to God and the *beginnings* of persuasion. It was not, indeed, controversy to those who believed, but a presentation of truth, to help prepare the intellect of a reader, listener or adversary, and move the will to conversion.

The role of disputation in this context will be examined below, but again this point is enhanced when we locate controversial undertakings within a broader mindset, and take the influence of disputation to signify the force and impact religious argument was believed to have. The tropes and misdirections inherent to pamphlet polemic might well make such efforts *appear* parodic and self-defeating, but they cannot be rejected as such. The methods and arguments used in a disputation, many of which appear as frequently in written tracts, represent accepted modes of understanding and expression, many of which can now seem altogether alien. Their style and manoeuvrability should not, with hindsight, be conflated with a lack of conviction; nor, by the disputations' evidence, should we dismiss doctrinal debate as monotonous, or alienating to an heterogeneous crowd or readership.[113] It should also be noted that where

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110 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 33–5.

111 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. H4*^{v}.

112 White, *Defence of the Way*, sig. **7^{r}.

113 Such arguments are approaching the crest of a wave, fuelled by studies of hitherto undervalued forms: compare Molly Murray, '"Now I ame a Catholique": William Alabaster and the Early Modern Catholic Conversion Narrative', in Ronald Corthell, Frances E. Dolan, Christopher Highley and Arthur F. Marotti (eds), *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2007), pp. 205–6.

a dangerous excess of controversy *was* perceived, a controversial, formal and reasoned *disputation* was the answer.[114]

Faith and Reason

Thus religious controversy and debate were encouraged. But how were they justified, and tied to the relationship between learning – particularly pre-Christian learning – and faith? Disputants' use of classical forms (and of classical authorities in handling points of religion) does suggest the potential for conflict, as the Renaissance gave way to the Protestant – then the further – Reformation, and a growing distrust of pagan culture.[115] But the debate ran deeper than this. John Morgan has traced it to the church fathers – Augustine urging the use of learning to defend the church, while Tertullian argued for its rejection in religious matters, as damaging to faith. To this, the medieval schoolmen added the dispute as to how far human reason would (or could) support God's truth.[116] Arguments against a reliance on reason continued to be played out through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and these contributed to disputes over the propriety of disputation. For the godly, reliance on human learning and ability was negated by a Calvinist emphasis on justification and the Fall: knowledge and understanding were necessary, but faith came by revelation.[117] When William Charke and Meredith Hanmer agreed (in principle) to dispute against Campion in 1580, they asserted that the arguments must eschew '*naturall and morall reason* … two great enemies of true religion, & two great nourses of Atheisme and heresie'.[118] William Whitaker, also in opposition to Campion, rejected reason as the basis for settling religious questions.[119] More radical Protestants tried to extract logic form entirely from discourse on religion, as detrimental to the rule of scripture. But Catholics were also chary of elevating reason above faith, or even placing the two in equal conversation.[120] Such views were not

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114 Leech, *Triumph of Truth*, sig. †3^{r}; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{v}; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 13.

115 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 60.

116 Ibid., pp. 41, 63.

117 Ibid. pp. 43–4; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Mm^{v}.

118 William Charke, *An Answere to a Seditious Pamphlet lately Cast Abroade by a Jesuite* (1580), sig. C.iiii^{r}; Meredith Hanmer, *The Great Bragge and Challenge of M. Champion a Jesuite* (1581), fols 19^{v}–20^{r}; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 130; James V. Holleran, *A Jesuit Challenge: Edmund Campion's Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, 1999), p. 180.

119 Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp. 94–5; see Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 53, 67.

120 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A7$^{r–v}$; George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), sig. F2$^{r–v}$; Thomas More, *The Complete Works of Thomas More* (15 vols, New Haven, 1963–97), vol. 6/1, pp. 345–6; McCutcheon, 'Heresy and Dialogue', esp. pp. 358, 362, 367.

universally held, and the use of formal reason in controversy, particularly in disputation, remained a philosophical and polemical necessity, but, still, an overreliance on pre-Christian authorities or logical dexterity always left itself open to attack.[121]

The influence of academic systems, with a focus on the defence of the church, and the role of the intellect and the will, was – as we have seen – enough to uphold the role of logic and reason in controversy. These were vital defensive weapons and preparatory tools for conversion, though their precise impact was contested.[122] John Case urged the necessity of reason in confronting opponents, as it was a means of communication with those unable to find the truth by grace, and divines who championed disputation frequently raise matters in which 'Logicians must judge by reason and the rules of Logicke'.[123] But the most direct endorsement in a debate account comes from William Laud, scarcely an advocate of such occasions: 'All that have not imbrutished themselves, and sunke below their *Species* and order of Nature, give even *Naturall Reason* leave to come in, and make some proofe, and give some approbation, upon the weighing and the consideration of other Arguments.'[124] By Laud's reckoning, grace enlightened reason but suggested nothing to 'blemish' it, and reason had been taken up by the fathers, again 'to make good the Authoritie of the Booke of God by such arguments, as unbeleevers themselves could not but thinke reasonable, if they weighed them with indifferencie'.[125] Once again, reason is necessary in defence of the truth, and it is here that Laud presents divinity as a 'science' of God, citing Augustine. For divines in this period, disputation was a given, and for this to be the case a connection had to be made between reasoned argument and religious certainty. John Morgan has tied the perception of reason in this period to educational influences, and again to disputation – even for puritans, reason was not rejected in religious questions, in part because of their training: they had an established set of tools for understanding and argument, and were not ready to abandon them.[126] Thus, in disputations into the seventeenth century, the matter of reason and learning in controversy was one of nuance and polemic, grounded in certainty. The puritans 'hammered at those who (they believed) had attempted to reduce religion to mere intellectual

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121 Chapter 2 below.

122 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 57.

123 McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle', p. 313; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 232; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. R4*^{v}; George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), pp. 23, 43.

124 R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 17.

125 Ibid., pp. 20–23.

126 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 49.

endeavour'; Catholics held that such could only be used securely by the learned, in defence of the church. Reason must serve faith; faith was not to be manipulated (and could not itself be stirred) by reason.[127] Logic and learning were valued defensive tools when used to show the truth of one's cause, but dangerous artifice in the hands of heretics. Rainolds made this clear in 1584: 'humane artes, wherein the *Philosophers* have seene many sparkles of the truth of God by the light of reason, are profitable instruments to set forth the truth, so farre as they have peace, not warre, with Gods worde'.[128] Further to this was the danger of interaction with heretics, and this will be examined with reference to the reaction against public religious disputation in Chapter 6. But while a comparison of such outward caution with the prevalence of cross-confessional debate paints a contradictory picture, the consensus was one of intelligent moderation, in works and debates we have established to be a necessity. Care and learning were required, with an awareness of one's adversaries and the danger they presented, and – above all else – certitude in faith.

Controversial Dialogues

Accounts of religious disputation from this period are often written in a dialogue form, and in this they are related to another prominent mode of theological controversy. Varieties of dialogue had been produced through the medieval period, its principal religious application being the catechism.[129] But the humanists latched on to the classical dialogue as the model for well-formed, effective discourse, a trend reflected in the increased variety and volume of such works produced through the sixteenth century.[130] The dialogue was, however, more than a humanist device. It formed part of the same philosophical matrix that encouraged disputation and counsel: collective wisdom; the search for truth through discourse. In this, disputation, printing for refutation and the polemical dialogue represent the controversial branches of a single family tree. To these ideals, we can add generic and contextual needs: Virginia Cox, in considering the popularity of the Renaissance dialogue, has suggested that 'whenever any age adopts on a wide scale a form which so explicitly "stages" the act of communication, it is because that act has, for some reason, come to be perceived as problematic', and this can be applied to

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127 Ibid., pp. 50, 64–5; Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 155, 179.

128 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 255.

129 Burke, 'Renaissance Dialogue', p. 2; Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England, c. 1530–1740* (Oxford, 1996), p. 8. Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 8.

130 McCutcheon, 'Heresy and Dialogue', p. 357; Burke, 'Renaissance Dialogue', pp. 2–3, 8; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, pp. 4–5; Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 2.

content as well as form.[131] The role of the dialogue in this period suggests – if Cox's thesis is extended – a specific need for *religious* discourse in the face of contested, starkly theoretical, ideas. A growing number and range of religious works, not always controversial, were being presented in this manner, to clarify, resolve and emphasize post-Reformation divisions.[132] While there is a structural and authorial division between a fictional dialogue and a disputation, both forms express these needs and work to produce similar effects. Reports of disputation are closer still.[133] Dialogue was championed by humanists and disputation was a monument to scholasticism, but the line between them was as fluid as the culture at large, and their roles were markedly similar.[134] In controversial religion, they were fuelled by the same oppositional and communicative needs.

This separate mode of discourse has again been considered through the language of disputation.[135] The popularity of the dialogue form, its mechanics and its use for more than just religious instruction after the Reformation are all of great interest here, as the format does for disputation reports what other types of interaction – counsel, academic debate and the moot – have for the debates themselves: calling attention to language and methods, and tying them to something more fundamental than pamphlet polemic. Disputation accounts and fictional dialogues share technique, as well as inspiration: disputants generally recount their own arguments in the third person, and so the triangular relationship between author, reader and disputants takes on a similar role to that between author, reader and *dramatis personae*, with the same intended effect.[136] Each was an effort to communicate concepts to a mixed audience, to showcase persuasive argument and to encourage action.[137] The benefits of this form will be noted below, in relation to the construction of accounts, but here the use of dialogue, alongside disputation, can again be taken as a sign of the intended audience for these endeavours.[138] Arthur Dent's *Plaine Mans*

131 Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 7; Burke, 'Renaissance Dialogue', p. 7.

132 Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 2.

133 McCutcheon separates fictional dialogues ('leisurely and amicable') from public disputation ('regulated and antagonistic'): McCutcheon, 'Heresy and Dialogue', p. 357; Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 9. Zlatar, however, places them in proximity: Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, pp. 7, 19, 27.

134 Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 4.

135 Burke, 'Renaissance Dialogue', pp. 3–4.

136 Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, p. 42.

137 Ibid., pp. 5–7; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 16.

138 Joseph Puterbaugh, '"Your selfe be judge and answer your selfe": Formation of Protestant Identity in *A Conference betwixt a Mother a Devout Recusant and Her Sonne a Zealous Protestant*', *SCJ*, 31/2 (2000): pp. 420–21; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, pp. 6, 23; Chapter 2 below.

Path-way to Heaven (1601) was 'Set forth Dialoguewise, for the better understanding of the simple', and in 1612 Robert Hill rewrote William Perkins's *A Golden Chaine* as a catechism, in the hope of giving 'much light unto it & [causing] it to bee read with greater delight': here was a method for presenting doctrinal assertions in an engaging manner.[139] Dialogic accounts of disputation made the same effort with their scholarly and controversial subject matter. If we accept controversy to have been necessary and effective, the effective delivery of controversy was a necessity. Disputation was a means to this end.

Definitions and Distinctions

Public religious disputation will be defined here by form, purpose, audience and the clerical and educated status of the disputants. This was not simply a physical overflow of pamphlet controversy, nor were these events a flawed, unpopular adaptation of university procedures for a controversial sphere. More than an expression of religious divisions, they were a result of changing intellectual methods and ideals *responding* to religious divisions. The distinction is a subtle one, but vitally important: disputation was not a type of polemical interaction, but a driving force behind *all* such interactions, grounded in latent Aristotelianism and in Christian humanism. Collective wisdom was greater than that of the individual; arguments ought to be answered or admitted; truth would move the intellect, rhetoric the will, and an obstinate refusal of the former was an affront both to God and to reason, as reason was understood. This blend of assumptions and imperatives fuelled the twin ideals of 'counsel' (the relationship between disputant and audience) and 'disputation' (between opponent and respondent), and encouraged every dispute that occurred in this period. Post-Reformation thought required disputation to be squared with grace, the risk of human invention and the dangers of controversy, and this was a continuing struggle; but the need for certainty – and an evangelical need to voice that certainty – continued to triumph over these reservations. The chapters below will chart differences across decades, confessions and circumstances, and yet all disputants shared these beliefs: discourse was necessary, demonstration was imperative, arguments ought to be answered, and the truth would out.

For our first and principal distinction, we must turn to the disputation process, as it was taught to all clergymen in universities and seminaries,

[139] Arthur Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heaven* (1601); William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine, or the Description of Theologie* (1612), sig. ¶2^{v}; J.F. Merritt, 'The Pastoral Tightrope: A Puritan Pedagogue in Jacobean London', in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust and Peter Lake (eds), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 154; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 2.

and as it influenced other forms of discourse: a search for truth, which combined the experimentation of *de quodlibet* debate with the stubborn, but increasingly streamlined, mechanics of logic form. Disputation and its methods were used as frequently for closed questions and hypotheticals as for matters of controversy, and were at constant risk of poor performance, manipulation and rhetorical extravagance. But as with any difference engine, when contemporaries fed truth and error into these formulae, and used them correctly, they expected results. Thus, 'discourse' was not good enough, 'conference' was not good enough, and nothing had the weight or force of a formal disputation. Here, events have been selected and categorized, for the most part, by their proximity to the academic form.

'Disputations, or publike meetinges and conferences'

On its own, however, this can never be sufficient. Shuger's 'mask' of academic context has already set a boundary between disputation as performed in the universities and disputation between graduate clergymen, held in prisons and private houses, and this relationship will be explored below. But we must also be careful that close adherence to the formal structure does not lead us to omit too much that might prove useful. One further relation that must be kept in mind is the prophesying, with wider puritan notions of conference – their relationship with the practice of disputation must be considered before lines can be drawn. The form of the prophesyings could vary considerably, but it is worth noting this from John Scory, who as a Marian exile experienced these exercises on the Continent: 'I thought myself … to have been in the divinity disputations at the Commencement time in Cambridge'.[140] Though some were given to sermons or to formless discussion, prophesyings could take on a shape very similar to disputation, or could incorporate such debate, and they often concluded with a conference, sometimes – as could happen with private disputation – over dinner.[141] But we must also take into account the purpose and company at these events. Prior to the 1570s, prophesyings in England were entirely clerical, in a deliberate avoidance of debate 'before the unlearned'.[142] But, as this changed, a key difference emerged between these events and public religious disputation. While some disputations

[140] LPL, MS 2003, fol. 10^{v}; Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 169.

[141] Patrick Collinson, John Craig and Brett Usher (eds), *Conferences and Combination Lectures in the Elizabethan Church: Dedham and Bury St Edmunds, 1582–1690* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. xxvii; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 233.

[142] John Hooper, *Later Writings of Bishop Hooper: Together with his Letters and Other Pieces*, ed. Charles Nevinson (Cambridge, 1852), p. 132; Collinson, Craig and Usher, *Conferences*, p. xxix.

were sanctioned (or at least allowed) by the state, the prophesyings were considered subversive. As in the universities, a line was drawn between the maintenance of known truth and expressions of doubt or heterodoxy. Collinson has termed the 'popular' element 'the Achilles heel' of the prophesyings, but in public disputation – arranged to confute and edify, in the face of *certain* error – the popular element was, for those in authority, the point.[143] Scory recommended disputation – formal, moderated, contained – as a good alternative to the prophesyings in describing his European experiences to Grindal.[144] The perceptions of those advocating such events must also lead us to set a boundary. The prophesyings were not intended to be public disputes, but private instruction – their purpose was not a public one (other than the production of an educated ministry), and neither, for much of their development, was their performance.

However, the congregational debates spread with the advance of puritanism raise a more basic question of definition. If we hold disputation to have been a clerical pursuit, how do we classify those instances where a minister was questioned by a lay member of his congregation? Further to our concerns about adherence to the format, it could be argued that there is no great difference between the more spontaneous clerical disputations and debate with or between laymen. At a 1626 debate between Featley and the Jesuit Thomas Everard, the first objections were raised by their host, Viscountess Falkland. Learned conference with lay recusants was encouraged from Elizabeth's reign to the end of our period.[145] Ann Hughes, in her work on mid-seventeenth-century disputation, includes both clerical and lay encounters, though this reflects the time.[146] Many members of the higher gentry were equipped for controversy, and – through a range of training – for structured debate. Some, though by no means all, grasped the mechanics and authority of disputation. The imputation as to impact and understanding we must take from the role of controversy cuts both ways – disputation was not exclusively a clerical domain.

A Contemporary Phenomenon

'Public religious disputation' cannot be separated from comparable events, any more than its records can be extracted from the wider category of pamphlet polemic. But that caveat is pre-empted and minimized in contemporary histories of the practice. Though John Ley maintained a fluid

143 Collinson, Craig and Usher, *Conferences*, p. xxix.

144 LPL, MS 2003, fol. 10^{v}.

145 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 237–40; Puterbaugh, '"Your selfe be judge"', p. 424; Chapter 4 below.

146 Hughes, 'Pulpit Guarded', pp. 31–50.

definition in 1658, he was also certain of what was not to be included.[147] Robert Persons, in his history of the Reformation debates in 1604, used the blanket phrase 'disputations, or publike meetinges and conferences', but held close to the forms of academe, and to clerical debate.[148] Here, a spectrum of discourse is addressed, rather than a defined category, and ideals and presuppositions are considered alongside practice, but these events represent a phenomenon contemporaries saw to be unique: a particular blend of structure, purpose and participants. It is, therefore, worth taking a moment to return to the history of that phenomenon, as it was written across the contemporary confessional spectrum.[149] Ley's use of biblical examples to buttress classical imperatives was nothing new – the first debate in his history, a dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil, over the body of Moses, was also referenced in Rainolds's *Summe*.[150] Disputation was at times tied to Christ and his Apostles, and was in this presented in terms reminiscent of the academic procedure.[151] John Howson, in a sermon at Paul's Cross, declared: 'If [Christ] plaid the respondent in disputation, his answeres were admirable, and put the disputers to a *non plus* … If he undertooke the opposers part, and disputed with them, he utterly confounded the wisest of them'.[152] Here, a disputation is a distinct action for a particular effect. Ideals were further formalized with reference to the fathers, particularly Augustine, and where the disputes of the Reformation are recounted, it is with still greater specificity.[153] The lines are never clean, and the writers' terms must be approached with care and taken in context. But, while the debates examined here venture into counsel, conference, legal procedure and prophesying, and always stand with one foot in the universities and another in pamphlet polemic, they were recognized as distinct. These events were *public* in purpose, *religious* in content, and *disputations* in their use of the academic form. How far they adhered to that form will now be determined.

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147 Chapter 2 below.

148 N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), p. 33.

149 Including Francis Savage, *A Conference betwixt a Mother a Devout Recusant, and Her Sonne a Zealous Protestant* (1600), pp. 13–21; Gabriel Powel, *A Refutation of an Epistle Apologeticall Written by a Puritan-Papist to Perswade the Permission of the Promiscuous Use and Profession of all Sects and Heresies* (1605), pp. 73–5; N.D., *Review*, *passim*; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{r}; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 18–21; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 31–57.

150 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Jude 9; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 33–4, 53–4; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 474.

151 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. B2^{v}; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 34–5.

152 John Howson, *A Second Sermon, Preached at Paules Crosse* (1598), pp. 4–5.

153 On Augustine, see N.D., *Review*, esp. pp. 5–12; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{r}; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 14, 38, 55; John Jewel, *A Replie unto M. Hardinges Answeare* (1565), pp. 465–6. For public disputation in England prior to 1558, see Francis Godwin, *Annales of England* (1630), pp. 116–17, 163–6; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 42.

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CHAPTER 2

The Disputation Process

> Beloved, beleeve not every spirit, but trie the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.[1]

In 1658, Ley would affirm that: 'Though nothing be many times more rashly undertaken than a dispute of Religion, yet in nothing is more prudence and caution required … that it may be managed to the best advantage for victory on the Truths side.' To confirm this, he looked back to a time when the disputation process upheld the truth – as he perceived it – and misuse and poor performance allowed falsehood to win the day.[2] To those engaged in such debate, then, correct proceeding was everything, even beyond the universities' walls. It is therefore necessary to ask how clergymen and controversialists took up and adapted the process for different circumstances. If correct disputing meant the difference between truth and error, how was this defined? Were there confessional – even individual – discrepancies in that definition? And did an adaptation of the universities' process ever cross the line into its outright abandonment? The academic format has been explored in detail in histories of the universities, and so the following chapter will concentrate on its use as described in reports of public religious disputation, in references to such events and in recommendations from the disputants.[3] The intention is to reconstruct the process as envisaged and deployed in these events, and to further distinguish them from controversial disputing *within* university exercises.

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[1] *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 John 4:1.

[2] John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), pp. 57–73.

[3] Sources for the academic process include questions defended during the universities' *Acta*, or commencement disputes, and accounts of disputations during royal visits. An invaluable overview, with transcriptions of several accounts, is contained in Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): pp. 314, 337–46. Further, see Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (2 vols, Oxford, 1792–96), vol. 2, pp. 159–61; John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family, and Court* (4 vols, London, 1828), vol. 1, p. 533; William T. Costello, *The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-century Cambridge* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), pp. 14–31; Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558–1642* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 88–9; S.L. Greenslade, 'The Faculty of Theology', in T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000), vol. 3, p. 310; Keith D. Stanglin, *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 12–28.

The questions are these: what constituted poor dealing in a disputation of this sort, and what manner of test was God's truth expected to pass?

The Fundamentals: Opponent, Respondent, Moderator and Question

The academic process remained the basis for public disputation of religion throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but not every aspect was homogenous or set in stone: academic or not, a disputation was a blend of shared, fundamental structures with institutional and personal custom; logical reasoning with rhetorical style. In the universities, a disputation proceeded thus: the respondent would present an opening oration on a thesis or question, after which one or more opponents would step forward to challenge it with formal arguments. The respondent could repel each argument with a short negation or distinction of terms, at which the burden of proof would return to the opponent.[4] At the close, these arguments would be revisited, and the question determined, by the moderator.[5] The rituals varied between levels and institutions, but all university disputation followed this pattern, and the same structure was applied in public religious debate.[6]

Opponent and Respondent

The roles in disputation can be identified primarily by their attributes, as they, too, suffered from a blurring of language. In the 1580s, the puritans John Field and Walter Travers had the principal roles as 'to reply' (oppose) and 'to answere' (respond) in reporting the 1581 Tower disputations and a 1584 conference at Lambeth respectively.[7] William Alabaster termed the opponent's role 'disputer or opponent' in recounting his conversion to Catholicism in the 1590s, and the Catholic report of a debate in the mid-1610s similarly described these as to 'dispute' and to 'defend'.[8] These

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[4] Distinctions would be drawn from Aristotelian categories: Stanglin, *Missing Public Disputations*, pp. 22–4.

[5] Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge*, p. 88; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 72–3; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 316–17; Chapter 1 above.

[6] Costello, *Scholastic Curriculum*, pp. 14–31; Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge*, pp. 88–9.

[7] John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sig. Ff.i^{v}; BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 51^{r}–62^{v}.

[8] William Alabaster, *Unpublished Works by William Alabaster (1568–1640)*, ed. Dana F. Sutton (Salzburg, 1997), p. 160; S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), p. 10.

descriptions are useful in underlining the disputants' responsibilities, but, for polemicists, they could also perform a pre-judgemental function. Where doubt and discord were sewn by the devil and certainty and unity were the ideals, the term 'disputer' might carry negative connotations.[9] An 'answerer', meanwhile, could as easily be standing trial as 'defending' a true church. In 1623, the Oxford Protestant Henry Rogers assigned the role of opponent as a consequence of innovation, in a work answering the prolific Jesuit disputant John Percy (alias Fisher): 'in those points in variance betweene us, they are to prove; because they are in the affirmative, we negative'.[10] Some accounts of disputation make little reference to the roles: the Oxford theologian John Rainolds's report of his conference with the priest John Hart in 1582 makes no clear mention of 'opponent', 'respondent' or any variant thereof, but in their use of formal logic, and the shifting back and forth of the burden of proof, the two are clearly described as following an adaptation of the academic process.[11]

In practical terms, the roles were very different, requiring different skills, and each had benefits and limitations.[12] Both opponent and respondent could influence the content of a dispute: the respondent could generally exert control over the topic or *quæstio*, whereas an opponent was able to take charge within the disputation, as the party responsible for introducing arguments.[13] They also had differing conditions for victory, as described in the strained context of the 1554 examinations of Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer: 'If in these disputations it had so been, that the distinction of the answers had been wiped away or removed by the opposers; or if the arguments, of the opponents' side, had been so strong that they could not be dissolved of the answerer …'.[14] The respect held for the format, coupled with the responsibilities of the disputants, meant that the roles were at once an accepted manner of proceeding *and* a chance to secure victory, and the latter was increasingly being recognized. Among the conditions imposed on the imprisoned Edmund Campion was a restriction to the role of respondent, which limited his contribution. In an

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[9] Simon de Voyon, *A Discourse upon the Catalogue of Doctors of Gods Church*, trans. John Golburne (1598), sig. B^{r}; Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 32, 35.

[10] Henry Rogers, *An Answer to Mr Fisher the Jesuit* (1623), p. 7.

[11] John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584), *passim*.

[12] See Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 72–3. For an expression of the roles in dialectic form, see Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike* (1588), fol. 102^{r-v}.

[13] Geoffrey Fenton, *Actes of Conference in Religion* (1571), sig. E.iiii^{v}; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 318–19.

[14] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition*, ed. Stephen Reed Catterly (8 vols, London, 1837–41), vol. 6, p. 521; Chapter 3 below.

ideal disputation, as laid out by Henry Jacob in 1606, 'if at any time the Answerer denying a Proposition shall withall give a reason of his deniall, he doe it in few wordes'; and in John Field's account of the Campion disputations, one of the Jesuit's opponents paints this as an advantage: 'If your cause were good and your skill great, you might make it harder to reply, [than] to answere. For the answerer may with a worde deny the proposition, and so, soone take from the replyer all his weapons.'[15] But the roles were not truly balanced, and after the Campion affair, in challenges and in the preambles to accounts, equal time to oppose was insisted upon. In 1590, the imprisoned separatist John Greenwood would accept a debate only if 'it shall be free aswell to oppose as answer', and Jacob – a puritan offering to dispute in the aftermath of James's controlled Hampton Court conference – required that 'when one side hath opposed to the uttermost that they can, or shall see meet, then the other side shall oppose in like maner to the contrary'.[16] In the 1620s, when public – which is to say non-academic – disputation with priests moved into private households, this continued. The minister George Walker recalls offering adversaries their choice of role.[17] Featley emphasized equal time in each.[18] In the Protestant report of a 1566 Paris debate, however, this equity is described by the Catholics as a 'late fashion' and 'new trouble' when raised by their adversaries; 'seeing hitherunto they have kept the place of respondentes, & delivered the Articles of their confession to be examined'.[19]

The Moderator

The moderator was a far more dispensable presence in disputation beyond the universities, oftentimes displaced by the assembled crowd, a doubting or presiding individual or more imposing sources of authority. It was in the figure of the moderator that such debate was most in thrall to circumstance, and again questions of control came into play. The Campion debates offer the most extreme example: during the third (of four), Field notes that William Fulke, one of the opponents, called for a moderator from among the audience. When none volunteered, Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, stepped into the role, having taken it up by default on the

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15 Henry Jacob, *A Christian and Modest Offer of a Most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation* (1606), p. 4; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Ff.i^{v}.

16 Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certaine Sclaunderous Articles* (1590), sig. C^{r}; Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, pp. 3–4.

17 George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), p. 9; George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), sig. A3^{v}.

18 Daniel Featley, *An Appendix to the Fishers Net* (1624), pp. 55, 74, 86, 92; Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 271.

19 Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sig. F.i^{r}.

second day. The arbiter of good practice was thus, by the Protestants' own accounts, an individual who at the first debate had given a *first-hand* description of the respondent's time on the rack.[20] When James I took part in disputation (at Hampton Court, and with John Percy in 1622), his royal power, combined with his intellectual forwardness, transformed the role into a sharp blend of moderator, disputant and ultimate authority.[21]

More often, the moderator is omitted entirely from disputation reports, or the role passes to the assembled company. The latter is a particular feature of seventeenth-century debates, intended to demonstrate the truth to wavering members of the laity. By his report of a debate with Percy, Walker stated, 'these hearers shall judge of the forme and cariage of our disputation, and to whom the victory doth belong.'[22] The gathering at the Campion disputations are described as showing displeasure, and disputants passing between points several times leave them to 'the judgement of the learned', or that of the audience.[23] In the aftermath of a meeting between Percy and Featley, again in 1623, the Protestant side were criticized in one Catholic account because they did not 'satisfie the Judicious & unpartiall Auditors'.[24] This said, disputants without a moderator could still hearken back to the academic practice when faced with poor form. James Ussher, disputing against the imprisoned priest Henry Fitzsimon, objected: 'I would we had … a moderator, to judge of this dealing.'[25] But while the moderator's role in keeping order could easily coexist with a 'public' audience or *quæ*stio, in a dispute of religion the final *determination* was to be sought elsewhere.

The Question(s)

The question was at the heart of the disputation process, and nowhere can the authority of the form be observed more clearly than in disputants'

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[20] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs L.ii^{r}, O.i^{v}; Alexander Nowell and William Day, *A True Report of the Disputation or Rather Private Conference had in the Tower of London, with Ed. Campion Jesuite, the Last of August. 1581* (1583), sig. C.i^{v}; HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections* (8 vols, London, 1904), vol. 3, p. 9; James V. Holleran, *A Jesuit Challenge: Edmund Campion's Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, 1999), pp. 186–7. In Catholic reports, only the prior intervention is noted: BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 154^{r}.

[21] BL, Additional MS 38492, fol. 81^{r}; Chapter 5 below.

[22] Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 19.

[23] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs L.i^{v}, L.iii^{v}, N.iiii^{r}, Q.i^{v}, S.iiii^{r}, T.iii^{r}, Y.iiii$^{r–v}$, Aa.iiii^{r}, Ff.iii^{r}; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 73.

[24] Anon., *A Reply to D. White and D. Featly* (1625), p. 17.

[25] Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fol. 80^{v}. See Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford, 2007), p. 61.

insistence on adherence to the topic at hand. Disputation represented both institutional tradition and a long-standing method of reasoning: deviation was a cardinal sin, often interpreted as a sign of doubt or error. At the debate between Featley and Percy, an argument was introduced by Sir Humphrey Lynde, the organizer, that was dismissed as 'not now to the question'; and, at a previous encounter, Featley himself reports asserting 'I will not now digresse from the question' as a potent and justified defence.[26] Writing in the aftermath of their debate, Percy accused him of this very fault: he had 'no shift, but to divert the disputation from the substance of the proposed Question'.[27] In religious controversy, deviation was oftentimes a matter of perspective, but it was not insignificant. The sanctity of the *quæstio* extended to the course of argument, and thus to the validity of the conclusions: John Field's account of the Campion debates has an opponent charge the Jesuit with labouring 'to avoyde the direct course of disputation'.[28]

The centrality of the question remained true to the academic format, but the choice of question, and its relationship to the positions of the disputants, was the most significant departure. In the universities, one of the participants (or in some cases the moderator or an outside party) would select the question, comprising a general thesis; but in public religious disputation this was *entirely* contextual.[29] The 1584 Lambeth conference focused on puritan objections to the Prayer Book.[30] Disputations between Protestant ministers and Catholic priests, meanwhile, dealt in the underlying rifts and immediate flashpoints of confessional controversy. George Walker offered the same 'questions' to every priest he encountered – that the Pope was Antichrist, Rome the Whore of Babylon, justification by works heretical and image worship idolatry.[31] In Percy's disputations, the topics were ostensibly raised by doubting individuals, but in fact reflect a principal focus of Catholic controversialists: the comparative visibility and succession of the Roman and reformed churches. It was a matter that, curiously for a divine so often involved in formal disputation (but crucially, given his opposition to keen disputants like Walker and Featley), had great significance in approaches to cross-confessional debate.[32] The origins and

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[26] Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), p. 11; A.C., *An Answer to a Pamphlet* (1623), pp. 16–17; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 73.

[27] A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 67.

[28] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Aa.ii^{r}.

[29] Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 317–18; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 58.

[30] BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 49^{r}–63^{r}.

[31] Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 9l; Chapter 6 below.

[32] A.C., *True Relations of Sundry Conferences* (1626), p. 1; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 4; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 1–2. See Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978), pp. 216–17; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant*

context of the *quæstio* thus distinguish these events from controversial disputation in the universities. While Debora Shuger notes the 'liberties' given the latter in their questions and arguments, this was because 'one could never rule out the possibility that the whole business was just play-acting … [the] mix of scripted and unscripted elements renders the commitments and motives of the speakers … invisible.'[33] Closing a significant academic debate of 1554, Hugh Weston made this point: 'I do openly witness, that I do thoroughly consent with you; and have, for disputation's sake only, brought these arguments against you'.[34] Any such ambiguity is absent, however, from 'professional' religious disputes. For a Jesuit questioning Protestant visibility before Luther, or a minister critiquing the Prayer Book before a gathering of notables, the format allowed flexibility only in tactics and presentation: no deflection of the disputants' true positions existed. This is why public religious disputation was all the more extraordinary, and subject to greater control. In 1658, Ley's history distinguished its subject from 'ordinary' university debate; 'where the controversie is rather formall than serious, except when the Respondent taketh upon him the defence of some Paradox'.[35] In these instances, there could be little doubt that both the questions *and the disputants* were serious. This distinction was lost on Henry Jacob, who in making his offer of disputation after Hampton Court protested: 'It is ordinary in our Universities to admit of argumentatio[n] against any poynt of Religion and Faith; and that in such a maner, as is more dangerous to the truth, and lesse indifferent, [than] this forme that is heere offered.'[36]

In reports, the choice of *quæstio* was often the first target for polemical exploitation, and its expression by the respondent could prove a greater bone of contention than the arguments themselves. Making an offer of disputation to the priests imprisoned at Wisbech in 1580, William Fulke suggested, by his own report, that they choose the topic: 'thereby it shall appeare whether I come premeditated.'[37] In the debate between Featley and Percy, the Jesuit's framing of the succession question remained in dispute

Thought, 1600–1640 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 270–321; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, pp. 131–207; Chapter 6 below.

33 Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', esp. pp. 321, 325–35. Shuger states that 'no one seems *ever* to have gotten in trouble for words spoken in a disputation', but John Feckenham reportedly objected that imprisoned Catholics would need immunity: William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sig. A5^{r-v}.

34 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, p. 520; D.M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London, 1970), p. 135n.

35 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 31.

36 Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, p. 26.

37 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sigs A4^{r}, A4^{v}–A5^{r}.

throughout, continuing so in the aftermath.[38] At an earlier debate, again involving Featley, it was not the formulation of the *quæstio* that proved contentious, but its expression by the respondent, Richard Smith. Featley accused the priest of trying to usurp the opponent's role, in offering a long speech, but a Catholic account recalls Smith's reply – that he was simply outlining the question, as both men had been taught at university. 'D. Smith tould him that himselfe was a Doctour of Oxford, and that he (M. Featlie) was a Graduate of the same universitie, wherefore there was reason they should observe their universitie-manner.' Featley's answer shows the level of adaptation that might occur in public debate, but also the importance of shared rules:

> Your *tiphenie* wherewith you cover this skarre in your reputation from the custome of *Oxford* (for the respondent to confirme his Thesis) is too transparent and netlike. For what was the custome of *Oxford* in this kinde to us … who had by joynt consent set downe an other order to be held in this disputation?[39]

Arguments and Authorities: Logic Form, Scripture and the Fathers

Logic Form

Structured logic remained the principal mode of reasoning in academic disputation, and it, too, was carried over into these encounters. In Field's report of the Campion debates, Fulke tells Campion, 'our purpose is not to deale by discourse, but briefely by Logical arguments, according to the order of schooles'.[40] In offering his 'indifferent conference' after Hampton Court, Henry Jacob asked, 'That the Opponents frame their Arguments in strict forme of Syllogisme only: And that the Answerers … answer directly to the premisses, either by denying or distinguishing'.[41] Both instances reflect a polemical appropriation of the format, but they nonetheless speak to an assumed respect for structured logic. In the (borrowed) words of Thomas Morton, it was 'the Art of all Arts, and the high Tribunall of reason and truth it selfe, which no man in any matter, *whether it be case of humanity or divinity* can justly refuse' [my emphasis].[42] Logic form was

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[38] Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 12; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 17; Chapter 6 below.

[39] Daniel Featley, *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), p. 288; S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 19–20; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 37.

[40] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. H^{r}.

[41] Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, pp. 3–4.

[42] Thomas Morton, *A Full Satisfaction Concerning a Double Romish Iniquitie* (1606), Part III, pp. 53–4. See Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*

integral to the disputation process, and tied to its weight – as William Costello describes it, 'the opponent follows a carefully plotted line of syllogisms designed to trap the answerer into a position where he may be forced, step by step, into admitting the exact opposite of his thesis.'[43] For a disputant, the use of syllogism, enthymeme, induction and example was simply part of the package.

This is not to suggest that all clergymen held the same opinion, or that use of these forms did not change over time. William Perkins, following Ramus, argued that syllogistic reasoning was requisite only when dealing with doubtful questions or 'crypticall' parts of scripture.[44] The separatist Henry Barrow was an outspoken critic of formal scholasticism, lamenting the potential impact of syllogistic wrangling upon truth: 'I would not bynde the majestie of the Script. to logicall formes … my co[n]science could neither be convinced or instructed with anie syllogismes so much as with the weight of reason & force of truth.'[45] The encounter between Featley and Percy spawned a dispute over the propriety of formal reasoning in a public setting: Featley stated that a *quæstio* necessitated this type of argument, while the Jesuit pleaded the understanding of unlearned, lay members of the audience – a natural concern, given developing attitudes towards learning, and one correspondent with Catholic notions of salvation and authority.[46] In the accounts considered here, logic form is challenged on its incompatibility with truth, its potential for misuse and its lack of accessibility. In 1658, Ley concluded: 'for Logickly strict Form of Syllogisme throughout the disputation, it cannot be well observed, much less is it of necessity to be required'.[47]

Featley is the clearest example of a disputant with unwavering loyalty to logic form, and he offers an introduction to its use in recounting his debate with Percy: 'There are two meanes only, to prove any thing by necessary inference; to wit, a *Syllogisme* and an *Induction*: other formes of argument have no force, but as they are reducible to these.'[48]

(Cambridge, MA, 1958), p. 145; Antoine de Chandieu, *A Treatise Touching the Word of God Written, against the Traditions of Men*, trans. John Case (1583), sig. A.iii^{v}.

43 Costello, *Scholastic Curriculum*, p. 20. De Chandieu remarked, 'this short kinde of disputing … draweth us backe, that we follow not similitude of truth, for truth it selfe', de Chandieu, *Treatise*, sig. A.v^{r}.

44 Donald K. McKim, 'The Function of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology', *SCJ*, 16 (1985): esp. pp. 506, 514; *ODNB* Perkins, William. This does, however, accept formal logic as a route to truth.

45 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. D.iiii^{r}.

46 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 8–9; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, esp. p. 190; Chapter 6 below.

47 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 71.

48 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 11.

A syllogism, for those unfamiliar, is a three-part argument, composed of major (*x* must be true, if *y* is true), minor (but *y* is true) and conclusion (ergo, *x* is true), and was an opponent's central manner of proceeding.[49] George Walker's enthusiasm for syllogistic reasoning is also clearly evident; both he and Featley challenged adversaries to produce the form.[50] Occasionally in the debate accounts disputants are charged with offering or demanding a syllogism incorrectly, and such critiques reveal the complicated relationship between syllogistic reasoning and the disputation process. In addition to its link with the opponent's role, there was a correct time and place for the syllogism. Demanding such an argument from one of his adversaries, Campion is admonished: 'It is more [than] the usuall order of disputatio[n], to require a *Syllogisme*, when I am come to [the] issue of mine argument, namely to authoritie'.[51] Percy argued that the form was 'impertinent to an Induction'.[52] These debates observe a customary fluidity: Costello's 'carefully plotted line' is a starting point, on which written authorities and alternative structures were expected to build.

A common fault was the production of poorly formed syllogisms. In recounting a debate with the elderly Jesuit Thomas Everard in 1626, Featley reports twice objecting to a syllogism consisting 'all of Negatives'.[53] In a debate between Walker and the Jesuit Sylvester Norris, the former recalls a swathe of four-termed syllogisms, at which he despaired, finally offering 'to make [Norris's] Syllogisme for him'.[54] Correct formulation of these arguments was vital: a flawless syllogism logically forced the granting of its conclusion.[55] But the form was also a polemical device that could – in the face of conviction and sometimes dubious reliability – cut both ways.

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[49] Fraunce, *Lawiers Logike*, fols 97^{v}, 98^{v}; Ong, *Ramus*, p. 186; Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (New York, 1961), pp. 22–3; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 69.

[50] Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 244; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 26–7; Walker, *Summe*, sigs A4^{v}, C^{r-v}, C2^{r}. For earlier examples of the syllogism in disputation, see Field, *Three Last Dayes*, esp. sigs L.iii^{r}, T.iii^{v}, X.i^{v}, Aa.ii^{v}, Bb.iii^{r-v}; Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fols 80^{r}–82^{v}; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 274, 450, 670; Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certain Letters and Conferences Lately Passed betwixt Certaine Preachers & Two Prisoners in the Fleet* (1590), pp. 16–30.

[51] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. R.ii^{r}.

[52] A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 37.

[53] Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 265–7.

[54] Walker, *Summe*, sigs E2^{r}–E3^{r}. In Norris's account, the Jesuit defends his arguments: S.N., *A True Report of the Private Colloquy betweene M. Smith, alias Norrice, and M. Walker* (1624), pp. 23, 41–5.

[55] Fraunce, *Lawiers Logike*, fol. 98^{r}; Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fol. 80^{r}; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 24; G.R. Evans, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 89.

Ussher, criticizing an argument, was told: 'Syllogismes are not so exactly to be wayed', and was referred back to the question.[56] Norris was to inform Walker: 'Your cause lyeth a bleeding, whe[n] you thus begin to wrangle about Syllogismes'.[57]

Where argument did not proceed syllogistically, or by the truncated antecedent-to-consequent structure of the enthymeme, it was pursued by induction and example. Featley defines induction as an argument 'in which wee proceed from enumeration of particulars, to conclude a generall' – a catalogue of evidence tending to a conclusion.[58] John Rainolds favoured this mode; its rhetorical potential appealing to his humanism more than did the technicalities of syllogistic reasoning.[59] Again, disputants could disagree about its use, and this can be seen most clearly in Featley's debate with Percy, on the topic of the succession: having agreed to give an inductive table of the visible Protestants in all ages, Featley proceeded only to the first age; demanding an answer on Christ and his Apostles before continuing. In the aftermath, Percy scoffs: 'was it ever heard that [the respondent] should be inforced to reply to one proposition alone, before the whole Argument, whether it were Syllogisme or Induction, were fully propounded?' In this, the Jesuit places induction in the same realm as the syllogism, echoing Featley's concern with logic form.[60] But more importantly, here is an example of a controversial division – perhaps *the* controversial division – being expressed entirely through the mechanics of disputation.

Even for those pleading the benefit of the unlearned, then, these formulae provided ammunition in polemic. Reports of unsound argument in disputation accounts rival those of theological divergence. The most common fault, beyond structural missteps, is that of *petitio principii* – begging the point in question.[61] Rainolds tells Hart: 'Whether in opinions of faith and religion … you or we doo hold *heresies*: that is the point in question.'[62] This most fundamental of *principii* was to prove a stalling point for several debates, not least because the church was, for Catholics, the central guarantor of truth, but Rainolds and Hart bypass it – remarkably – by taking a step back to formal arguments and

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56 Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fol. 82^{v}.

57 S.N., *True Report*, p. 43.

58 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 26; Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. E.i^{v}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs X.iii^{r}, Dd.iii^{v}; S.N., *True Report*, p. 24.

59 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, esp. pp. 42–3, 368–9, 475, 482, 497, 566–8, 590.

60 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 41, 63; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, esp. pp. 26–9; Chapter 6 below.

61 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 3^{r}; Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. E.ii^{v}.

62 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 195.

authorities.[63] Beyond this point, disputants are accused of confusing or abandoning the question; charges levelled at Fitzsimon in 1600 and Percy in 1623 demonstrating that respondents were as susceptible to structural critiques as their opponents.[64] Use of formal argument was not, it must be said, an absolute constant, and it is relatively straightforward to identify those disputants who held it in highest esteem. Some disputants knew where to draw the line, especially in the face of an immediate purpose or an heterogeneous audience.[65] But the influence of these forms cannot be underestimated: they were a scholarly commonplace, questioned only in specific circumstances. In this, public disputation proves a microcosm of Renaissance learning – a balancing act between formal scholasticism and its appropriate, practical application.

Scripture

A disputation could not bear fruit (or confirm truth) without solid ground to reason from: 'if the premisses in a syllogisme bee not sometimes certayne … there will bee no ende of making syllogismes'.[66] It was here that difficulties arose, for at the root of controversy lay a dispute over authority. For Catholics, that of the church, as the object of Christ's promise in Matthew 28:20, was the only sure determinant – a fact that might preclude disputation.[67] For reformed divines, the ground had to be scripture. John Walker cites Augustine's use of scripture to decide between councils in Field's account of the Tower debates, and Rainolds also stresses its decisive authority against Hart.[68] George Walker, in the 1620s, named it 'the chiefe judge of all', and Featley reports informing Everard, 'I will never dispute of point of Faith without Scripture, the Ground of Faith', while calling for a bible.[69] To move beyond debate accounts, George Carleton affirmed in 1606 that 'if [a] disputation be in Logicke or Philosophie, then the parts of [a] distinction to bee confirmed out of Logicke or philosophie,

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63 'But of which soever it shall appeare by conference that they are repugnant to the holy scriptures: let them be judged *heresies*': ibid., p. 195. See Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, esp. pp. 164–5, 195–7, 204–5.

64 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs H.i, K.iiiiv; L.D., *A Defence of the Appendix* (1624), p. 15; Walker, *Summe*, sigs C3^{r}, E^{v}; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 18, 21, 24, sigs T4*^{v}–V*^{v}; Bodl., Barlow MS 13, f. 80^{r}.

65 Sweet reportedly admonished Featley, 'leave these Logick disputes': Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 25.

66 Fraunce, *Lawiers Logike*, fol. 98^{r}.

67 Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, esp. p. 188; Chapter 6 below.

68 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Aa.i^{r}; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 231, 257, 326.

69 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 19; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 248.

if in divinitie, then out of the scriptures.'[70] Antoine de Chandieu, as translated by John Case, argued that the Word, 'as it is chiefe, so ought it to be the verie fou[n]dation of all disputations'.[71]

Although the citation of scripture was seen as powerful evidence by all involved, its role, and the manner of its interpretation, followed confessional lines. In Field's account of the Tower debates, one opponent cites Campion's insistence – in his *Rationes Decem* – 'that the circumstances of the place be considered, the wordes that goe before, that followe after, the scope, the clauses, and whole context'; an approach derived from Augustine. As originally presented by Campion, however, these were not rules for interpretation so much as a full demonstration of Protestant error.[72] Hart presents another Catholic viewpoint in Rainolds's account of their debate, following Vincent of Lérins: interpreters 'must take the scriptures in the sense of the Church: and therein they must folow, *universalitie*, *antiquitie*, *consent*.'[73] In their use of authorities, antiquity was a rule that Protestants would also urge; but Rainolds, Barrow and George Walker stress the interpretation of scripture by scripture, while Catholic disputants are quick to point out the flaws in this approach.[74] Following the polemicist Thomas Stapleton, Hart tells Rainolds that such use of scripture is 'common … with all Heretikes', offering a catalogue of pitfalls in comparing passages.[75] The latter point is answered with the need for diligence (and learning), but the former proves problematic: indeed, it is that very *principii* which could lead controversial disputation in a circle – the church proved by scripture; scripture interpreted by the church – and thus reduce it to an exercise in wrangling. As the lay Protestant Humphrey Lynde would point out, 'our adversaries are well content, to trie their cause by Scriptures, if the Reformed Churches would graunt them but this one poore request, That they may be sole Judges and Interpreters of the Scripture'.[76] In this, disputation highlights the incompatibilities in all

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[70] George Carleton, *Tithes Examined and Proved to be Due to the Clergie by a Divine Right* (1606), sig. F.ii^{v}.

[71] De Chandieu, *Treatise*, sig. A.v^{v}.

[72] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. I.iiii^{r}; Edmund Campion, *Campian Englished* (1632), pp. 56–63. On Augustine, see Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 25.

[73] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 190–91; Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 53–4.

[74] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 80–82; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 25; Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. D.ii^{r}; S.N., *The Pseudo-Scripturist* (1623), pp. 55–8; Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sig. B.ii^{r}.

[75] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 83, 94–5, 185; Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, p. 158.

[76] Sir Humphrey Lynde, *Via Devia: The By-Way* (1630), pp. 43–5.

cross-confessional controversy, but it might also be suggested that in its shared rules, its goals, its grounding and its own intellectual authority, it represented a conscious effort to present solutions.[77]

One further point that could forestall or change the course of a disputation was the use of differing translations of scripture.[78] Rainolds turned to the Greek and Hebrew text, and to the Syriac translation, to counter Hart's use of the Latin, although he urges that too, where it supports his point. He is typical of Protestant divines in observing that a particular phrasing 'is not … in your Latin, which man hath translated. But it is … in the Hebrew, writen by the Spirite of God.'[79] Walker, however, challenged Percy in 1623 with a claim that he could confirm Protestant doctrine solely using the Latin, though 'there is none so full of errors and mistakings'.[80]

The Fathers

Beyond scripture, proofs and *exempla* were sought in the primitive church and the writings of the fathers. Roger Goad describes this sequence in Field's account of the Tower debates, and one Catholic report has Campion stating: 'I doe principally relye and cl[eave] unto the scriptures … and next unto them, to the churche and doctours'.[81] For Protestant divines, of course, patristic works were no substitute – they were at best a guide for interpreting scripture.[82] While Hart, in Rainolds's account of their disputation, deems their consent 'the rule whereby controversies should be ended', Rainolds doubts that he 'would beleeve the Fathers in those things, in which they are convicted of errour by the scriptures', describing any reliance on human authority as a measure of weakness.[83] As presented

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77 See Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 134.

78 Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 38–56.

79 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 55–7, 139–41, 244; S.L. Greenslade, 'The Faculty of Theology', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, pp. 317, 319.

80 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 22–3.

81 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. K.i^{r}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 2^{r}. See John White, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church* (1614), p. 514; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 75.

82 S.L. Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', pp. 322, 332; Jennifer Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, p. 370. See Quantin, *Church of England*, esp. pp. 32, 54–5, 72–3.

83 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 36, 490, 584. William Whitaker avoided human authorities in favour of objective Ramist method: Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 101. Further, see Quantin, *Church of England*, p. 74.

by Rainolds, this encounter included a dispute on the merits of patristic authority, in which Rainolds asserted that these texts had been corrupted and interspersed with counterfeits.[84] But they were still invoked on all sides in controversy, and the disputations are no exception: Rainolds himself engages Hart with patristic citations, and there are few accounts in which they are not produced.[85] Featley, whose reformed credentials are beyond doubt, recalls telling the priest Christopher Bagshaw that 'in regard of the antiquity of the Author, whosoever he was, you should vouchsafe him some answer'. This expectation infused all reference to the fathers.[86]

Reporting a 1621 debate, Featley offers a list of principles for interpreting patristic writings: that some 'after the manner of Orators … utter many things by *Hyperbolies*'; that works and writers should be compared for clarification; that all 'bastard and Apocryphall Treatises' should be rejected; and, finally, that an author's period of writing must be noted, as the most ancient generally gave the 'purest' testimony.[87] John Sweet, in the aftermath of Featley's encounter with Percy, emphasized the second of these, again in connection with the authority of the church.[88] Methods of interpretation follow confessional lines, and again issues of interpretation are complicated by a plethora of editions and translations; but these guidelines stem from shared hermeneutic principles, as common as the rules of logic.[89] By a report written by Featley, King James presented guidelines for patristic interpretation in 1625, distinguishing private opinion from that of the church, dogma from rhetoric, and doctrinal profession from controversy.[90]

Much like formal logic, the use of authorities provided disputants, and the authors of accounts, with ammunition. By Field's work, Campion was told, 'You doe open violence to the place' on a passage in Tertullian,

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[84] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 184–230. Rainolds describes such claims of corruption as a trick used by 'young Logicians … when they could not unloose a knotte', but he tries it himself, pp. 76, 216–17, 412–13. See Quantin, *Church of England*, pp. 18, 56.

[85] Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, esp. pp. 615–17; Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sig. M.i^{v}; Greenslade, 'Faculty of Theology', p. 321; Quantin, *Church of England*, pp. 23–4.

[86] Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 251; Quantin, *Church of England*, pp. 22–3; 61.

[87] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 100–104; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 157, 470, 472–3.

[88] L.D., *Defence*, p. 29; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 25.

[89] Quantin, *Church of England*, pp. 18, 64–6; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 20n.

[90] Daniel Featley, *Cygnea Cantio* (1629), pp. 30–32. See John Jewel, *A Replie unto M. Hardinges Answeare* (1565), p. 461; Edward Mayhew, *A Treatise of the Groundes of the Old and Newe Religion* (1608), Part I, p. 140; Simon Birckbek, *The Protestants Evidence* (1635), pp. 162–3.

responding: 'Every argument used by the Fathers, must not bee pressed farther [than] their purpose'.[91] Rainolds, despite urging their flaws, is sharp in challenging any misuse of the fathers. Where Hart cites Chrysostom for the papal supremacy, Rainolds both criticizes his interpretation and accuses Catholics of using it to 'perswade the simple, and chiefly young scholers who trust your common-place-bookes'.[92] In addition, he notes words passed over and points missed ('I am the soryer that your sight serveth you no better'); and responds to a citation of *all* the fathers with the words: 'Hath any man living read them all? … Nay, can they shewe them? Can they get them? I had almost said, can they name them?'[93] In the Catholic account of Featley's debate with Smith, the former is accused of ignoring evidence in Augustine and Cyprian, confusing a point by urging works together and falsely citing Augustine to the benefit of his own position.[94] We can find such critiques in all controversy, but here they are presented in a scholarly setting, contributing to procedural claims and approaches.

Contemporary Authorities

Despite the emphasis on antiquity, current authorities were not ignored. As in controversy more generally, their citation was as much tactical as evidentiary; but again disputation proves more direct. Rainolds invokes Robert Bellarmine, to counter Hart's use of Stapleton with a more imposing Catholic authority; and in a disputation with the puritans Thomas Sparke and Walter Travers, Archbishop Whitgift reportedly cited Peter Martyr and Nicholas Ridley to set his arguments in a reformed tradition.[95] Disputants could, however, be criticized for flying to such writers too readily. Just as Rainolds scorned Hart's overreliance on Stapleton, Featley tells Bagshaw, 'We come not hither to heare *Bellarmines* but D. *Bagshaws* answers'.[96] Where John Walker cited Sadoleto against Campion, one Catholic account has the Jesuit describing his use of 'a lat[e] wryter within this XL yeres' as a waste of time, although the citation itself is not refused.[97] Unlike that of

91 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Y.i^{v}.

92 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 280–81.

93 Ibid., pp. 71, 312, 467; Quantin, *Church of England*, p. 56.

94 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 104, 113–14, 114–16.

95 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 106–8, 114, 451, 457, 527; BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 54^{r}, 62^{r}. See White, *Defence of the Way*, p. 387; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 15n; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 239.

96 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 249. On Stapleton, see Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, esp. pp. 347–8, 443–4, 641, 645. On Whitgift's citations, see Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 74.

97 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fols 11^{v}–12^{r}.

scripture and the fathers, then, the use of more recent works trod a fine line between evidence and evasion.[98] The use of successive church council determinations was similar, as were the objections that might be raised.[99]

Virtuous Pagans

Neither were the authorities cited always theological. Rainolds and his intellectual disciple Featley cite Aristotle in several places; as does Hart in the former's account of their debate. Both Rainolds and Hart invoke the philosopher in applying reason to religious topics: the sufficiency of scripture; the need for consensus in scriptural interpretation.[100] But Featley cites Aristotle in pressing formal points against Smith and Bagshaw, and in the latter case, when challenged, he states: 'I urge not *Aristotle* for any matter of faith, but for a question of Logick'.[101] The separatist Barrow attacked 'the study of all Heathen and prophane Histories … whereby to open and expound the Scriptures'.[102] But even so, this, with the use of closer historical examples, denotes a pool of authority beyond scripture and the fathers.[103]

The question of appropriate and correctly interpreted evidence – and, beyond that, of authority and certain ground – was the most frequent stalling point for public religious disputation. However, accounts do not describe this as a failing of the practice itself: rather, it was a fault in their adversaries, and one which perpetuated controversy. Those resting on scripture were met with an argument that '*It must be examined to whome the possession of Scripture doth belong*', while on the other side, as John White had it, 'I can prove all the ancient DD. to have taught and beleeved flat contrary to all they writ. For first, I will make the present Church of Rome the Catholicke Church. Then I will say they beleeved that article, *I beleeve the Catholicke Church*.'[104] In the face of these circuitous *loci* of authority, it was the disputation form – with its use of shared principles and its root in formal logic – that was taken up as a common measure, transcending and illuminating confessional 'error'. William Laud voiced distain for 'that which might put a man into a Wheele … prooving Scripture by Tradition, and Tradition by Scripture, till the Devill find a meanes to

98 Featley, *Cygnea Cantio*, p. 25.

99 Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sig. E.ii^{v}; A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 32–3.

100 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 89, 307, 540, 609.

101 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 298; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 254–5.

102 Henry Barrow, *The Pollution of Universitie-Learning* (London, 1642), p. 4.

103 See James McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle in Tudor Oxford', *EHR*, 94/371 (1979): p. 306.

104 Tertullian, in A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 69; White, *Defence of the Way*, p. 518.

dispute him into Infidelitie', and turned to reason as a further source of proof.[105] Thus was learned disputation that 'worthie & necessarie science' which might confirm truth, if used well.[106]

Tactics: Attack, Defence and Use of the Audience

Beyond the formal architecture of disputation, another level of technical adroitness can be observed. Aggression in debate took various forms: Campion is described as making a pre-emptive strike against his opponents' deployment of the fathers, and Rainolds similarly pre-empts a distinction between pope and bishop in his report of the Hart conference ('least I lose my labour through an [except the Pope:]').[107] Broad categories and careful distinctions could be adopted to prepare for follow-up arguments, and Rainolds asks Hart self-evident questions as a prelude to disputed points – a technique identified by Laud following a 1622 disputation with Percy: 'it seemes by that which followes, you did by this Question … but seeke to win ground for your other'.[108] Here was a fluid adaptation of the standard chain of syllogisms.[109] Assaults were not always so technical, however – they could take the form of direct negations, or cast doubt on an adversary's knowledge. Field's account of the second Campion debate has Fulke telling the Jesuit, 'you shewe your selfe altogether ignorant of the matter'; and Goad later accuses him of conjecture, from 'ignorance or forgetfulnes' of passages in Colossians 2.[110] Contradictions are pounced upon – Rainolds is quick to note Hart's inconsistencies, and Hart makes similar accusations: 'you speak as though you were bereft of sense and reason'.[111] More reprehensible was the urging of a deliberate absurdity for cynical reasons – this, after all, undermined the goal of disputation.[112] Disputants also made accusations of evasion or trifling.[113] Hart's reply to one such indictment is particularly revealing: 'It is a folly (I see) for me

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105 R.B., *An Answere to Mr Fishers Relation of a Third Conference betweene a Certaine B. (as he Styles him) and Himselfe* (1624), pp. 16–17.

106 De Chandieu, *Treatise*, p. 5.

107 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. K.i^{r}; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 358.

108 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 180; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 47; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 260.

109 See Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 308, 326, 344, 540; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 71.

110 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs M.i^{v}, Q.iii^{r}.

111 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 120, 175, 330, 336, 534, at 534.

112 Ibid., pp. 132, 479.

113 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs D.iiii^{v}–E.i^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Bb.ii^{r}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 2^{r}; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 144–5, 172, 447.

to reason with you, if you be resolved to cast of[f] so weightie reasons, as trifles.'[114] This, referring to differing interpretations of a place in Luke, again speaks to the incompatibilities a disputation sought to overcome.

Another common tactic was the issuing of challenges *within* disputation, an attempt to change the subject or conditions, to speed victory or to generate ammunition for later accounts. Such challenges were a prominent feature of the Campion debates, arising from his desire to oppose and the grandstanding of his opponents. By Field's account, William Charke issued a challenge while opposing on the fourth day, and John Walker repeatedly used the phrase 'what say you to …' in advancing his arguments.[115] Reporting the Hampton Court conference, William Barlow describes a challenge from the bishop of Winchester to an older Rainolds, the bishop 'willing him, of his learning, to shew where ever he had read, that Confirmation was at all used in Auncient times by any other but Bishoppes'.[116] These challenges could also undermine an adversary's reputation or argument: they were powerful weapons in debate, and a potent resource in the aftermath. George Walker notes that when Percy denied his challenge on the Latin translation of scripture, 'he was much condemned, censured and reproved by the hearers'.[117]

Still more polemically pertinent – and indicative of purpose – were those attacks intended to separate a divine's arguments from those of his church. Rainolds often makes this effort with Hart (the priest placed 'al[l] the Popes' in danger with one argument); and Charke reportedly told Campion that 'you have gyven a greater wounde to your owne syde, then you or a hundred suche as you, can cure', following an answer on the sufficiency of scripture.[118] Featley can be seen using this tactic where Smith admitted 'a figure joyned with truth and propriety' in the institution of the Mass: Featley, by the Catholic report of their debate, stated: 'None of yours doth acknowledge any figure in these words of our Saviour, this is my bodie'.[119] Attacks were not simple grandstanding: a reliance on recent authorities was a sign of credulity and a rejection of antiquity, while inconsistencies were called out as an indication of invention, irrationality or poor dealing.

Divines might also seek to overpower their adversaries through use of the audience – invoked as supporters of a particular approach, or as victims of

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114 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 145.

115 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, from sig. Aa.ii^{r}.

116 William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference* (1605), pp. 34–5.

117 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 23.

118 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 335, 344, 423; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 5^{r}.

119 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 67–70; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 292–3; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 261.

'misleading' arguments. Confronted with 'bitter and reproachfull' attacks in his debate with Norris, Walker reports asking for permission to respond in kind, 'though it be very unseemly'.[120] Disputants could equally plead the hearers' benefit in refusing arguments: by Field's account, Campion thus dodged a place he saw as unnecessary, while Goad stated that he 'should weary … [the] company' by reciting Catholic errors.[121] These points have a negative match in accusations of 'abuse' of those assembled. Campion was subjected to several such claims, once when he asked to explain an argument: 'Belike you have an yll opinion of the auditorie, that they can understand nothing, except you tel it to them twenty times over.'[122] By one Catholic report, the Jesuit invoked the needs of the audience in bringing an opponent to a question, 'that our … trowblinge this worshippfull audience, mighte not be altogether in vayne'.[123] Divines could also highlight points by turning to the audience in triumph, and Campion's opponents do this often: 'Marke here his absurdities', Fulke instructs.[124] Opposing Percy, Featley reacted to one answer with a triumphant 'Mark, I beseech you …', and in Walker's encounter with Norris, both make similar referrals.[125]

But how were disputants to hold their ground against such triumphs, challenges or traps? Where disputation without bitter speech was the ideal, humility was a powerful tool; used early in debate and often in reports. A divine's preparation time is frequently emphasized, to suggest providence in victory or misuse in defeat. Attacking Featley's initial account of their debate, Percy stated:

> Any man reading this parcel, would be induced to thinke, that D. *White* and D. *Featly* had never had notice before … for what end they were to meet with the Jesuites: but that they were on the suddaine summoned to this Conference, without any preparation, or knowledge of the Question.[126]

By the Protestant accounts of the disputations in the Tower, it was not just the imprisoned Campion who claimed unpreparedness. Alexander Nowell and William Day paint their first debate as unexpected: 'we came

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120 Walker, *Summe*, sig. C^{v}.

121 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs I.iiii^{r}, L.ii^{v}.

122 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs K.ii^{r}, L.iiii^{v}; Aa.iii^{v}, Ff.i^{r}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 11^{v}.

123 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fols 2^{v}–3^{r}.

124 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs L.iiii^{r}, U.iii^{v}.

125 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 24; Walker, *Summe*, sigs A4^{v}, C^{v}, C4^{r}, D2^{v}; S.N., *True Report*, p. 53.

126 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 13; Daniel Featley, *The Fisher Catched in his Owne Net* (1623), pp. 5–6.

purposed to examine [the] untruthes of Campions booke, rather [than] to dispute'.[127] Humility is further voiced in the arguments themselves. Fulke and Goad both make remarkable admissions in Field's account: 'The very words I do not remember', Goad admits, on an error from the Council of Trent; and Fulke, unaware of decrees from Nice, tells Campion, 'If I do not shew it, then let me beare the blame.'[128]

The most frequently challenged mode of defence was evasion. Whitgift is reported to have made efforts to change the subject at Lambeth, whereas Sweet, in the aftermath of Featley's disputation with Percy, describes every aspect of the former's conduct as evasion – from their initial dispute over the question to his departure.[129] For reasons of subject and authority, of course, evasion was in the eye of the beholder, and most offer justification for avoiding or refusing arguments. Rainolds finds an admission of defeat from Hart qualified with reference to other scholars: 'Our *Rhemists* will render good account (I dout not) of this … I must referre to them. For I my selfe know not indeede how to accord it.'[130] In 1581, Campion reportedly rejected an argument because it would lead into 'all questions' – an evasion grounded in the procedural sanctity of the *quæstio*.[131] Hart informs Rainolds, 'We shall never make an end if we stand on everie particular that may be cavilled at'; Rainolds similarly states, 'if I should flit thus from point to point on every occasion that your speech doth offer, we should … never make an end of the point in question'.[132]

Equivocation

One means of defence rarely applied was equivocation; that concept of mental reservation which grew to prominence in Jesuit polemics of the seventeenth century.[133] Though rarely used, equivocation is mentioned in several reports, and these references suggest that among the benefits of disputation was a view that it could provide an antidote or countermeasure to the practice. Though justified by Robert Persons with reference to Aristotle, equivocation pulled at those same threads of untruth and uncertainty which lay behind the use of scholastic procedures.[134] Featley's allegiance to the mechanics of

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127 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. E.i^{v}.

128 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs L.iii^{r}, N.ii^{r}.

129 BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 52^{r}, 58^{v}, 61^{v}; L.D., *Defence*, pp. 14–16.

130 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 491.

131 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs M.ii^{v}, M.iii^{v}.

132 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 521, 561–2.

133 Janet E. Halley, 'Equivocation and the Legal Conflict over Religious Identity in Early Modern England', *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 3 (1991): pp. 33–52.

134 Ibid., esp. pp. 35, 42.

disputation – logic form; a full and correct framing of the question – sits in tandem with his outspoken hatred of secrecy and falsehood: 'the new subtile device of refining a lye by Equivocation'.[135] He depicts Persons as 'the grand Master of your new equivocating Religion'.[136] George Walker reports making accusations of equivocation *within* disputations against Jesuits: with Percy, this is given as an 'exception' or distinction; part of the disputation format.[137] Elsewhere, Walker would accuse an adversary of 'speaking ambiguously, a speech which may beare divers senses; which *Logick* abhorres in a *disputation*'.[138] In addition to this question of intent and transparency, disputation before an audience (or later printed) sat firmly on one side of the line between public and private speech described by Thomas Morton.[139] It was a line felt by John Rainolds even before the Jesuit equivocation controversy. He told Hart: 'I had rather you would deale with me by publike monuments and writings of our church … [than] by reports of private speeches.'[140] For seventeenth-century Protestants, equivocation was antithetical to disputation, as anathema to scholarship: 'you know that no disputation may be undertaken, no Argument framed, no Treatise composed without this; no not so much as one bare Proposition, or Sentence may subsist with æquivocation'.[141] Remarkably, it makes no appearance in the grand master's history, either.[142]

Practical Considerations

Rules in Disputation

Those works dealing with public disputation as a practice unto itself – Jacob's *Christian and Modest Offer*, several of Featley's reports and (later) Ley's *Discourse* – offer conditions to be followed. These were all written from a Protestant perspective, but their 'rules' can also be seen observed in Catholic accounts. Ley's first is to 'begin with God, and end with God

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135 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs G3^{r}, X2*^{v}. Further, see sig. A2^{r}; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 239–40; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 14.

136 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Ff3^{r}.

137 Walker, *Summe*, sig. B^{r}; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 14–15.

138 George Walker, *A Defence of the True Sence and Meaning of the Words of the Holy Apostle Rom. Chap. 4. Ver. 3. 5. 9.* (London, 1641), p. 29.

139 Halley, 'Equivocation', p. 46.

140 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 53.

141 Henry Rogers, *The Protestant Church Existent, and their Faith Professed in All Ages* (1638), pp. 1–2. See Francis White, *A Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere to Certain Questions Propounded by His Most Gratious Ma[jesty] King James* (1624), sig. c3^{v}.

142 N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), *passim*.

by prayers and praises'; a rule stated by Featley, but contested in several debates.[143] Alongside an emphasis on the rule of scripture, other common conditions include a clear statement of the question, logical argument (though not, for Ley, formal logic) and equal opportunity to oppose and respond. Other conditions relate to fair and accurate reporting in the aftermath – notaries, subscription to and close protection of the notes, and (for Jacob, after Hampton Court) freedom to print the debate.[144] Featley's rules are drawn primarily from the fathers, whom Robert Persons had also taken as model disputants; but Ley illustrates his conditions with examples from the period considered here – Rainolds and Hart; Featley and Percy; Hampton Court.[145] One rule given by Featley is that 'bitternesse of speech be avoyded', and this was echoed in the Percy debate, where the Jesuit's companion, John Sweet, asked that 'all bitter speeches be forborne'.[146] This is also present in one of George Walker's reports.[147]

Within the disputations, there is a further awareness of correct proceeding. Where a side comprised more than one disputant, this was taken into account, and at larger events a single representative speaker would be chosen. Proposing a disputation to the Catholics at Wisbech, Fulke asked them to select one 'to speak for all the rest … for I cannot speake to eight men at once'.[148] The emphasis in arranging these encounters was on balance. Walker notes that Percy, when confronted with an interjection from another minister, complained: 'it was unequall for two to set against one both at once'.[149] This was the situation Campion had so infamously been subjected to, four decades before.

Location and Space

The choice of location for these events often came down to circumstance. Those held for doubting individuals took place in private houses, and prisoners were confronted behind prison walls. In the latter case, issues of

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143 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 69; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. R4*^{r}. See Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs H^{r}, O.i^{r-v}, T.i^{r}, T.i^{v}, Z.ii^{r-v}, Z.iii^{r-v}, Cc.iii^{v}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fols 1^{r-v}, 7^{v}, 13^{r}; BL, Additional MS 48064, f. 50^{v}; Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 48; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 231; Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sigs. A.iiii^{r}–*A.ii^{v}, B.i^{v}.

144 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 69–72; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. R4*$^{r-v}$; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 51; Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, pp. 3–7; Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sig. A.iiii^{r}.

145 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs R3*^{v}–R4*^{v}; N.D., *Review*, *passim*; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 69–72.

146 Featley, *Appendix*, p. 51; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 8; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 15.

147 Walker, *Summe*, sigs A2^{v}–A3^{r}.

148 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A4^{v}.

149 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 6.

exposure played a significant part, in relation to the effect the authorities – or conscientious prisoners – feared the disputation might have.[150] The layout of the room is less frequently described, but Walker and Featley provide details of the seating arrangements at disputations in the 1620s, and these paint the picture of an intellectual joust, with the audience in close attendance. Countering a claim that Percy took his arm to persuade him to continue their disputation, Featley recalls that they were 'placed distant one from the other, at the opposite ends and corners of the Table', with the crowd 'sate, or stood, close crowding about the Table, and betwixt those two'.[151] Walker describes his encounter with Norris thus: 'the one sitting downe at the one end of a Table, the other at the other end, and the auditors sitting along on both sides, and some standing about in a large upper Parlor'.[152] These were instances of 'public' disputation at its most private, and more prestigious (or dangerous) events needed a more formal layout. One Catholic account of the Tower debates has Campion on a stool, with his opponents behind a table stacked with books.[153] For occasions like Hampton Court, meanwhile, reports of disputation during royal visits to the universities may give the best indication of the arrangements.[154]

Notes, Written Answers and the Production of Accounts

Notaries, Notes and Written Answers

The practices outlined here are drawn from printed and manuscript reports of disputation, intended to expand on disputants' arguments and justify their methods. While we cannot reliably reconstruct what happened in a debate from these accounts, shared assumptions, structures and ideals *can* be gathered– and thus we can move beyond the accounts into the events themselves.[155] Accounts of public religious disputation need to be examined not as flawed 'true reports' of debate, but as extensions and representations of it: a statement of method and means

150 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 5.

151 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 43–4.

152 Walker, *Summe*, sig. A3^{r}.

153 BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{r}.

154 Wood, *History and Antiquities*, vol. 2, p. 159; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 337; N.D., *Review*, p. 48.

155 Ann Hughes, 'The Meanings of Religious Polemic', in Francis J. Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston, MA, 1993), p. 212.

of understanding.[156] In this, they reveal much about the events to which they immediately pertain, and about the culture surrounding them. Their authorship and purpose, however, does raise a procedural question as important as any in the disputations themselves: how were these events being recorded and set forth? And how great was the distance between disputation performed and disputation reported?

The first thing to consider here is the role of notaries. Ley, in his *Discourse*, describes their charge as being 'faithfully, and without partiality, to write what passeth betwixt the adverse parties', and he draws on Jacobean examples to underline this ideal. He suggests that Francis White, in the aftermath of a debate with Percy, could be painted as 'silly' because 'there was not a word written'; and further recounts an accusation levelled at Percy 'when he thrust himself into a Notaries office' at Featley's 1621 disputation. Featley, by his own account, challenged Percy:

> M. *Fisher*, what are you afishing for there among your Notes? I pray reade what you have written: for I suspect, you have not done fairely in setting down my Answers, because I have noted you sometimes to write, before I had fully given them.

On agreeing to read his notes back, Percy is here found 'to have set down one Answer … as if D. *Featly* had yeelded to the Popish *Tenet*'.[157] As remarkably, Field reports this from Campion:

> I see that you have some appoynted to note, as if it were made a solemne matter. I should have the like … I have bene yll dealt withall already, & things heretofore spoken by me, have bene mistaken, and published in print otherwise [than] I ever meant.[158]

When Featley disputed against Percy, however, two years after their encounter above, he describes an agreement 'that the Arguments and Answers should be taken by one common Writer; and that the *Opponent*, Dr. *Featly*, should set his hand to each severall Syllogism; and the *Respondent*, Mr. *Fisher*, to his severall Answers'.[159] Offered a disputation at Wisbech in 1580, the imprisoned Catholic and former college head John

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156 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 33, 72; Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 4–5.

157 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 67–8; White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. b4^{r}; Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 89–90; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 37–8, sig. Y2^{*v}; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 35–6.

158 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs H^{v}, H.i^{v}, I.iii^{v}.

159 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 17, 37–8.

Young reportedly requested 'foure Notaries, two for us, & twoo for you, and at the ende of every argument let them reade it, and if they agree, let them say, *Concordat*, & let the foure bookes be kept in two Chests, wherof you to have one key, & wee an other, &c.'[160] Such demands reflect an awareness of the potential for misrepresentation. Percy, recounting his second meeting with Featley, states:

> the wryting of such things as had passed in the Conference … was wrapped up in a paper, and sealed up with three seales … & left in *Syr Humfrey Lynds* hands, or some other Protestant, with promise that it should be kept unopened till the next meeting.[161]

Despite the respect held for notes taken in disputation, the use of writing was by no means consistent, nor always so formal as to require a notary. Oftentimes, points are taken down through a participant's approach, or because of the occasion. Some are subscribed by request, where an adversary finds a capitulation. This tactic was favoured by Featley, but it can also be observed earlier, in accounts of disputation with Campion and the separatists Barrow and Greenwood.[162] At the other extreme, written answers could be so extensive as to supplant oral disputing. Fulke asked the Wisbech Catholics 'whether you will conferre by speech or writing', and Percy's process is described by Featley thus:

> the principall Respondent, M. *Fisher*, meditates by himself an Answer; which hee first writeth in a private paper, then sheweth it to his Assistant, M. *Sweet*, and two other that stood by: according to whose advice he addeth, blotteth out, and altereth what they thought fit. After this, he dictateth it out of his private paper to the common Writer of the conference … and, having compar'd it with his private paper, subscribes it as a Record, and then reads it openly.[163]

This, of course, comes from an opponent's report, and it is offered as a sign of uncertainty, but Rainolds, citing an earlier authority, similarly describes his exchange with Hart as conducted 'not by extemporall speaking, but writing with advise'. In neither instance is the process reflected in the

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160 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. B^{r-v}.

161 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 38.

162 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. F.i^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. L.iiii^{v}; Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, pp. 7, 10, 17, 21; Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. E.iii^{r}; Patrick Collinson, 'Separation In and Out of the Church: The Consistency of Barrow and Greenwood', *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 5/5 (1994): pp. 257–8; Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 58, 66, 67, 72; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 247, 249; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 240, 242, 243, 258, 263.

163 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A4^{r-v}; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, pp. 20, 29–30.

report's dialogue, and this again cautions against reading such works as true narrations of the events they describe.[164] Some disputants preferred written arguments. While Ley praised Martin Bucer's 'quick hand' in recording one of Luther's disputations, Thomas Bell in 1605 stated: 'the best triall is to be made by writing … the truth cannot wholy and truly be reported, for that none can write so fast as words doe passe in any disputation.'[165]

The Production of Accounts

Notes or written answers were not, then, a constant product, and accounts were contingent on the information available, filtered through memory and purpose. Nowell and Day state that, after their debate with Campion, they 'set downe in writing certaine notes of the same, out of our fresh memorie to all events', with this proviso: 'our memorie could not alwayes retaine the order, or the very wordes wherein every sentence was uttered'.[166] Featley's account of his debate with Percy is described as written 'partly, out of the fresh memory of such passages as we then observed; but especially, by help of such Notes as were taken in the Conference it self'. His account of his disputation with Bagshaw is 'drawne out of the notes' of two observers.[167] Most remarkably, Rainolds's account of his debate with Hart is described – in a preface attributed to Hart himself – as being drawn from notes on which they collaborated; written by Rainolds, given to the imprisoned Hart for review, then added to before printing.[168] Ley would give this as the ideal: 'The Disputants are to have liberty to revise their own Reasons, Objections, and Solutions, and to correct them by altering, adding, or expunging … This liberty Dr. *Reynolds* and Mr. *Hart* allowed one another.'[169]

Adding to the measure of deviation to be expected in reports derived partially from memory, there is evidence of editing. William Barlow terms his account of Hampton Court 'an *Extract*, wherein is the *Substance* of the whole', and Percy held his account of his debate with White to contain its 'chiefe Passages': 'for substance I have not omitted any thing that may much import, considering what the occasion, and subject of the Conference was'.[170] Recounting the separatists' prison disputations, Henry Barrow admits to forgetting one point and inserting another, 'not perfectly remembring the due

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164 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 15.

165 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 40; Thomas Bell, *The Popes Funerall* (1605), sig. E2^{v}.

166 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. A.ii^{r-v}.

167 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. *3^{r-v}; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 231.

168 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 10–11.

169 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 72.

170 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, sig. A3^{v}; A.C., *True Relations*, p. 35.

place where yt should come in'.[171] In all accounts, arguments are perfected with hindsight: Rainolds's work blurs the line between report and treatise, and Percy lists questions he 'might have asked'.[172]

What is remarkable is the propensity of such works to describe themselves as 'true' relations.[173] Some claim fundamental truth despite imperfections in memory, and omissions are justified by pertinence. Field advises: 'If Campions answeres be thought shorter [than] they were, thou must knowe that he had much wast speach, which being impertinent, is nowe omitted: although I protest, nothing is cut off from the weight and substance of the matter'.[174] In recounting his disputation with Percy, Featley explains omissions through the absence of the earl of Warwick (present in the event), as well as 'moderation' in depicting the Jesuit's process: his account is thus 'fair' and 'passable', as well as including 'nothing but the truth'.[175] Another of his methods is to support claims to accuracy with the subscription of those present: his full account of this debate gives the names of two earls, two knights, Francis White, two esquires, the clerk of the Court of Wards, two bachelors in divinity and the notary Thomas Aylesbury, to this effect.[176] The account of his debate with Smith was written by John Pory and subscribed by the playwright Ben Jonson, both of whom were in the audience.[177] Nor was it just listeners who might offer these guarantees: Rainolds makes much of Hart's preface, and Percy states that he consulted with White to confirm his notes on their debate.[178] In his account, White invokes his *own* status as 'eare-witnesse'.[179]

Of course, these claims rarely pass unchallenged. As White noted, 'our Adversaries will perpetually tumultuate, and accuse of falsitie, all things which passe not under their owne hands'.[180] Countering Percy's account of their 1622 debate, Laud exclaims 'Not one Answere perfectly related?'; and in a subsequent work he finds an argument 'I doe not at

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171 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C.iiv; Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, pp. 2, 58, at 58.

172 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 19–21; William Bishop to John Bennett, in Michael C. Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics, 1621–1625*, Camden 5th series, vol. 34 (Cambridge, 2009), p. 175: 'I have seen the former daies conference set out by himselfe with many additions, what he thought to have saide'.

173 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, sig. A.ii^{r}; Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 26; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 37, R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, sig. A^{v}.

174 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs A.ii^{v}, G.iii^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. G.iiii^{v}.

175 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs *3$^{r–v}$, *4^{r}, p. 38.

176 Ibid., p. 46; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 6.

177 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 306; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 35.

178 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 5, 11; A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 32–5.

179 White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. b6^{r}.

180 Ibid., sig. b4^{r}.

all remember was so much as named in the Conference, much lesse was it stood upon'.[181] The first account of Featley's encounter with Percy was accused by John Sweet of 'daubing and amplifying' Featley's arguments.[182] Walker's account of his debate with Norris is thoroughly deconstructed in the latter's self-consciously titled *True Report*:

> in relating the arguments and answers … some he changeth, some he corrupteth: heere he leaveth out, there he foisteth in: one while he disjoynteth the wordes, otherwhile he dismembreth, & perverteth the sense … he maketh such a misshapen and confused Chaos of malicious slaunders, of foolish & impertinent additions, as may well become one of his owne deformed and bastardly brood;

Norris describes such falsehood as common to past heretics and contemporary Protestants, including (unsurprisingly) Daniel Featley.[183]

These assertions and counter assertions are but the most obtuse element of a more intricate polemical stance, encompassing questions of authority and presentation, and using literary methods to persuade. Most accounts are written in dialogue form, although some mingle this with direct narrative, or abandon it altogether. The Campion debates present a representative sample: Nowell and Day recount the first in a basic narrative, whereas Field uses annotated dialogue for later encounters. The dialogue form played a role in claims to balance and truth, separating authorship from content.[184] But it also turned the readers into 'participants', or even moderators.[185] This was enhanced where a report was intended for a specific readership, as in Rainolds's report of his debate with Hart. Virginia Cox has found a distinction between treatise and dialogue: while the former 'casts its writer and reader in the role of master and pupil', in the latter they are 'hunting-companions, sharing equally in the … chase'.[186] But Rainolds directs his account to the students of the English seminaries, with the instruction 'learne of your felow and friend M. *Hart*', on the matter of the Pope's deposing power.[187] Rainolds presents his adversary as a companion needing to be guided; a pupil on a hunting trip – Hart

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181 R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 66; William Laud, *A Relation of the Conference* (1639), pp. 26–7.

182 L.D., *Defence*, pp. 17–19; see A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 37–8.

183 S.N., *True Report*, pp. 3–7.

184 Cox, *Renaissance Dialogue*, pp. 43–4.

185 Ibid., pp. 2–3, 106.

186 Ibid., p. 44; Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 22, 23.

187 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, esp. p. 28.

is emblem, warning and target for Rainolds's heterogeneous readership. Thus, the relationship between disputants could prove as complex a device as that between author and reader: As well as triumphing over an adversary, a report might raise him up; to accentuate victory and associate a cause with its champion. Thus, White is 'accounted a prime Protestant Controversist' in an otherwise disparaging account by Percy.[188]

The Ideal Disputant

John Ley draws lessons from his examples. Christ's debate against the devil in Matthew and Luke teaches 'not to give railing speeches', and assigns scripture as a disputant's weapon.[189] Other instances encourage 'meekness of spirit'.[190] The *Discourse* gradually builds an image of the ideal disputant, thus demonstrating how a model of disputation as performance might be constructed by induction from examples, reports and recollections.[191] Taking the reports examined here as our evidence, we can describe the perfect clerical disputant as a student of scholastic logic, though neither its slave at the expense of truth, nor its victim in urging falsehood; a close adherent of scripture, willing to examine a variety of authorities through formal argument; a moderate, fair combatant (though not shy in defending truth); a faithful reporter, whose concern with the outcome looked beyond the event itself. Disputants were bound to the disputation format, as a respected trial of truth and a shared field for scholarly combat. These elements, focused on equity and procedure, attribute a clear purpose, drive and solemnity to this type of encounter.

Ley describes his subject matter as 'the personall debates of such … whose minds are contrary, and their tongues contradictory, and their pens also; when they take them up like pikes to prosecute the war by writing, which by verbal disputation they began'.[192] He distinguishes his category from discourse 'without the strife [of] tongues': debate between those in agreement, or written works termed 'disputations' by their authors. A second distinction refers to those academic debates 'where the controversie is rather formall [than] serious'.[193] Ley's work is infused with his religious standpoint, and informed by its context, and adopting strict categories is, moreover, counterproductive. But drawing on this, and

188 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 22.
189 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 34.
190 Ibid., p. 47.
191 Ibid., pp. 62–4.
192 Ibid., p. 33.
193 Ibid., p. 31; Chapter 1 above.

on the examples detailed here, it is now possible to describe the reach of academic disputation into public debate, and to further elucidate the distinctions given in Chapter 1. Disputation remained a commonplace of post-Reformation discourse, but it was a distinctly malleable one. The influence of the format can be seen in the structure of reports, in the assumptions underlying procedural critiques, and even in those debates that deviate from it, in elements unconsciously retained. But divines could still argue over etiquette and technicalities, and elements of the form were adapted to question and circumstance. What we are confronted with, therefore, is not a defined category, but a constellation of events, radiating outward from a formal core. At the close of the previous chapter, 'public religious disputation' was defined partially by the status of those involved, and by use of the academic form. Here, it has become clear that these criteria describe a spectrum, rather than an homogenous block.

This said, the assumption underlying the views detailed above – and many still to be considered – was that, despite this adaptation, disputation remained an authority unto itself. It comes as no surprise that a report written for polemical impact would accuse a disputant of poor dealing, but these accusations would have been ineffectual had they no foundation in a known, respected process. Moreover, if we are to accept a connection between disputation and truth, poor practice was not merely 'academic': it was the sign and cause of error.

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CHAPTER 3

Disputation Exploited?

> And he spake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.[1]

Just as the academic form could be used in a variety of ways, so the authority of disputation could be invoked to different ends. Attitudes towards the practice were shaped not just by its long history and academic standing, but by recent instances. By the time of Elizabeth's accession, disputation had played a role in the advance of English Protestantism, and in the institutional and intellectual riposte of Catholicism under Mary – experiences that would inform its handling in the opening decades of the reign. Protestant disputants and writers found an exemplar in Peter Martyr's 1549 disputations on the Eucharist – held at Oxford, to the academic format.[2] Though Martyr himself had doubted his performance and the events' outcome, the subsequent accounts describe instances of full, 'Syllogistical disputation' for reformed doctrine, which John Ley and others would later pick up on.[3] The Jesuit Persons, however, took this to be a case of poor dealing: answering John Foxe in 1604, he would focus on the debates' official origins and mandate, and the apparent partiality of their moderator, Richard Cox.[4] These forces upheld invalid arguments,

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[1] *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Acts 9:29.

[2] Pietro Martire Vermigli, *Tractatio de Sacramento Eucharistiae* (1549); translated as *A Discourse or Traictise of Petur Martyr Vermilla Flore[n]tine, the Publyque Reader of Divinitee in the Universitee of Oxford* (1550). Reports survive at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Additional MS C.197, Rawlinson MS D.1326, fols 1^{v}–23^{v}) and the British Library (Harleian MS 422, fols 4^{r}–31^{r}, Sloane MS 1576, fols 1^{r}–88^{v}). See Jennifer Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', in T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000), vol. 3, pp. 369–73; S.L. Greenslade, 'The Faculty of Theology', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, p. 322; Thomas M. McCoog, '"Playing the Champion": The Role of Disputation in the Jesuit Mission', in Thomas M. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Oxford, 1996), p. 120; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 60, 72.

[3] Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', pp. 371–2; Francis Godwin, *Annales of England* (1630), p. 218; John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), p. 42.

[4] N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), pp. 34–43, at p. 36; N.D., *A Relation of the Triall Made before the King of France, upon the Yeare 1600 betweene the Bishop of Evereux and the L. Plessis Mornay* (1604), pp. 50–52. On Cox, see Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', p. 371.

and the Protestants then claimed victory in printed accounts. Here, in the view of Persons and others, was a series of events ordered and manipulated by authority, in which poor form was mitigated by state power, against the proper end of a disputation. Falsehood's rout was then turned to hollow victory by the spread of partial reports.[5] This opinion is informed by events that were to follow.

The beginning of Mary's reign was marked from 18 October 1553 by debates in the convocation house, arranged in tandem with the parliamentary restoration of Catholicism. By all accounts, these exchanges, spread across six days, were held to some measure of the academic format: there was syllogistic reasoning, firm separation of the roles, and a named moderator. But where Protestant and Catholic reports differ is on the extent to which this process was accepted. In this case, it is the turn of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, reproducing a Protestant account, to describe partiality in those presiding, and exertions of authority.[6] By the report, written by John Philpot, the promise was given that 'it shall be lawful … for all men freely to speak their conscience' in debating Edward's Prayer Book and the catechism, but when some of the Protestants present objected in their favour, this was reneged upon. The process of objection and answer turned into an oppositional disputation, then into a show trial, intended to uphold matters already settled, and to enforce subscriptions already demanded.[7] Philpot and his fellows invoke reason and equity numerous times:

> This is not … according to your promise made in this house, nor yet according to your brag made at Paul's Cross, that men should be answered in this disputation to whatsoever they can say; since you will not suffer me, of a dozen arguments, to prosecute one … [you] are now gathered together to suppress the sincere truth of God's holy word, and to set forth every false device, which, by the catholic doctrine of the Scripture, ye are not able to maintain.[8]

The order is changed and manipulated; the Protestants are threatened. But those on the Catholic side, particularly the prolocutor, Hugh Weston,

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[5] Persons describes a series of disputations at the commencement of Edward's reign: N.D., *Review*, pp. 34–69. It was then forbidden by royal proclamation, though John Feckenham was later allowed to out of prison to dispute: Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', p. 373; Thomas Stapleton, *A Counterblast to M. Hornes Vayne Blaste against M. Fekenham* (1567), sigs I.iiii^{v}–K^{r}.

[6] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition*, ed. Stephen Reed Catterly (8 vols, London, 1837–41), vol. 6, pp. 395–411; N.D., *Review*, pp. 69–73. Foxe reproduces John Philpot, *The Trew Report of the Dysputacyon Had & Bego[n]ne in the Convocatio[n] Hows at London* (1554).

[7] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, esp. pp. 396, 402.

[8] Ibid., pp. 396, 397, 401, 404, 406, at p. 404; Philpot, *Trew Report*, sigs D.vii^{v}–D.viii^{r}.

state that the aim of the debates was never to call truth into doubt, but to satisfy its opponents; indeed, John Aylmer, for the Protestants, took this to mean that they were not disputations at all: 'by answering we should but encumber ourselves, and profit nothing; since the matter is already decreed upon and determined, whatsoever we shall prove, or dispute to the contrary'.[9] Persons, in his 1604 history, would underplay the formal elements of these debates: 'The manner of disputinge was not in forme or after any fashion of schoole, but rather of proposinge doubts, and answeringe the same for satisfaction of them that were not resolved'.[10] His emphasis is on Catholic certainty, and its defence against a misguided or heretical few: it is edification, not disputation. The points are settled, and confirmed by the authority of the church. By Philpot's account, Weston made this statement at the end of the fourth day: 'all reasoning set apart, the order of the holy church must be received, and all things must be ordered thereby'. Where the Protestant participant Richard Cheney prays '*Vincat veritas*', Weston replies '*Vicit veritas*'.[11] Philpot and the others are shouted down, and Philpot was to be executed soon after. As a Protestant chronicler would put it in 1630, 'the Truth was oppressed by Multitude not Reason'.[12] But, in the judgement of Persons, the Protestants were obstacles to their own salvation. Catholicism was rightly restored; God's truth had not been suppressed, but tragically ignored by the losing side.[13]

For Protestant writers, the great travesty of mid-Tudor disputation was to occur the following year, when Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer were taken to Oxford, that the Catholic position on the sacrament – a *quæstio* for both the 1549 and 1553 debates – might again be affirmed against prominent opponents.[14] These debates mixed the examination of prisoners with academic disputation: they took place in the university, and men from Oxford and Cambridge were tasked with opposing the captive Protestants.[15] The debates were also woven into the ritual life of the university, and at the close Cranmer was allowed

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9 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, esp. pp. 397, 408; Philpot, *Trew Report*, sig. D.vii^{v}.

10 N.D., *Review*, p. 70.

11 'Truth will win' / 'Truth won'. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 405, 406; Philpot, *Trew Report*, sigs D^{r}, D.iii^{r}.

12 Godwin, *Annales*, p. 282.

13 N.D., *Review*, pp. 71–3.

14 For accounts, see Nicholas Ridley, *An Account of a Disputation at Oxford, Anno Dom. 1554* (1688), *passim*; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 439–536; N.D., *Review*, pp. 73–7; Godwin, *Annales*, pp. 300–301. See D.M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London, 1970), pp. 127–37; Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', pp. 375–7; Claire Cross, 'Oxford and the Tudor State from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Mary', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, p. 143.

15 N.D., *Review*, p. 74; Loach, 'Reformation Controversies', p. 375.

to present arguments at the doctoral disputation of John Harpesfield.[16] This setting matches the intellectual weight intended: the prisoners were, by the warrant dispatched to the city, to be heard 'in open disputation'; by Foxe's account they were charged to 'dispute' on transubstantiation.[17] There were full, syllogistic arguments (the Protestants held to the respondent's role), which were expanded upon by use of authorities. In addition to the presence of Weston as moderator, overseers and notaries were appointed: Persons would cite the latter as a measure of balance in 1604.[18] However, the Jesuit cannot suggest here that the encounters were intended to be anything other than formal disputations, and he blames the disordered answering of the Protestants for their lack of a clear argument or persuasive force. In Persons's *Review*, the Oxford debates are rather glossed over, with the assertion that in design, at least, they were 'more reasonable, orderly & indifferent, [than] all the former disputations under the Protestants'.[19]

By Protestant reports and recollections, all academic intent in these encounters was undermined by poor conduct, procedural and preparatory bias, and exertions of authority. The debates are called 'disorderly'; the opponents speak over one another, and at times the Protestants cannot be heard over the audience. Cranmer is decried as '*indoctum*, *imperitum*, *impudentum*'; Ridley is interrupted by calls of 'blasphemy'.[20] Nor are the respondents allowed to read their written answers on the questions, themselves prepared at little notice.[21] Foxe summarizes the events thus, emphasizing their contrast with the academic setting:

> thou mayest behold the disordered usage of the university-men, the unmannerly manner of the school, the rude tumult of the multitude, the fierceness and interruption of the doctors, the full pith and ground of all their arguments, the censure of the judges, the railing language of the oblocutor [Weston] … being both the actor, the moderator, and also judge himself.[22]

These features are a long way from the disputations intended. Though Cranmer is offered books to prepare, Ridley complains that he was

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16 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, esp. pp. 440–41, 511–20; N.D., *Review*, p. 75; Loades, *Oxford Martyrs*, pp. 135–6.

17 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 532, 442–3, 497.

18 Ibid., pp. 444–511, esp. p. 471; N.D., *Review*, p. 74.

19 N.D., *Review*, p. 74.

20 'uneducated, ignorant, impudent'. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 444, 454, 469–70, 532–3.

21 Ibid., pp. 480, 501.

22 Ibid., p. 511.

unprovided in terms of books and time, as does Latimer.[23] All three were asked whether they would subscribe to Catholic doctrine, *before* any argument was proposed, and subscription is urged in the debates themselves.[24] Foxe notes Cranmer's objection that 'It is indeed no reason … that we should dispute of that which is determined upon, before the truth be tried. But if these questions be not called into controversy, surely mine answer then is looked for in vain'. The Catholics have determined the truth already – to their eyes, again, it was not in doubt. At the close of successive days, by Foxe's report, the cry went up: '*Vicit veritas*'.[25]

In these disputations, a conflict is being played out between two absolute measures of certainty. On both sides, where authority holds a disputation to the truth, it is rightly and properly performed – the format is protected against the wrangling and evasion of heretics. But where authority turns disputation against the truth, this is manipulation and tyranny; a subversion of the format and a foil to its scholarly purpose. After the Oxford disputations, Cranmer wrote to the Privy Council, arguing that order and balance were the only way to reach truth: 'to have suffered us to aunswere fully to all that they could say; and then they agayne to aunswere to all that we can say'. He asks what could have prompted the manner of the debates, other than the Catholics' doubt in their own cause; doubt in their abilities; a need for swift dismissal.[26] Persons's contrast between Catholic- and Protestant-ordered disputes is equally remarkable.[27] On both sides, in and out of power, we are drawn to that point from John Ley on good ordering: 'in nothing is more prudence and caution required … that it may be managed to the best advantage for victory on the Truths side.'[28]

The Dangers of Disputation

To put these debates, and the policies of Elizabeth and James, in context, the relationship between disputation and authority was never easy. For the Catholic Church, any dispute or conference with heretics had to be carefully handled, to ensure preservation of orthodoxy, and clarity of purpose. Disputation with heretics was forbidden by the Council of Trent on these

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23 Ibid., pp. 442, 443, 471, 480; Loades, *Oxford Martyrs*, p. 129.

24 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 442–3, 503, 533.

25 Ibid., pp. 444, 500, 511, 520; Loades, *Oxford Martyrs*, p. 133.

26 Thomas Cranmer, *An Aunswere by the Reverend Father in God Thomas Archbyshop of Canterbury* (1580), p. 425; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 535–6.

27 N.D., *Review*, pp. 76–7.

28 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 57.

grounds.[29] Ley suggested that in Italy, disputation of religion was restricted more than anywhere else after the Reformation, citing Edwin Sandys's *Europæ Speculum*.[30] Of course, his opinion of any such prohibition is evident: 'by the domineering decrees of the Councell of *Trent*, and by the Tyrannicall authority of the *Inquisition*, they are better able to oppose … [than] by Disputations and Arguments from Scripture or reasons'.[31] But rulings against religious disputation were made across Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, based not only on a need to preserve religious truth, but also on the potential for civil disruption and challenges to royal authority.[32] This, too, had an established tradition: in the time of Augustine, Imperial laws forbade public disputing with heretics and sectarians.[33] Nor were such measures exclusively Catholic. In 1619, during the Arminian controversy, a proclamation was issued in the Netherlands, prohibiting 'the Inhabitants … to hold any secret or private assemblies or meetings together, under pretence of disputation or conference touching the five knowne and manifested points of Religion in controversie'.[34] The intent behind this order, which was printed in England the same year, was 'to preserve and maintaine the peace of the Land'. In this, it takes the Synod of Dort as a settlement, restricting controversial debate even if 'under a shew of Questions and Answeres'.[35] As with Trent, and as had been the case in England in 1549, in 1553/4 and again under Elizabeth, a benchmark has been laid out in conference, which is then to be upheld by authority.

Preservation of the Settlement: The Westminster 'Disputation'

The Westminster conference of 1559 was intended to ease the passage of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, and so the imagery of disputation was maintained. The official report, set forth by the royal printers, gave its stated purpose as: 'the satisfaction of persons doubtful', and the 'knowledge of the very trueth in certayne mater of difference', and in a missive to Martyr, John Jewel – soon to be a delegate at the conference

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29 *The Catechism of the Council of Trent, Published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth*, trans. J. Donovan (Dublin, 1829), p. 96; Geoffrey Fenton, *Actes of Conference in Religion* (1571), sig. B.i^{v}; John Golburne, *Acts of the Dispute and Conference Holden at Paris, in the Moneths of July and August. 1566* (1602), p. 13; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 9.

30 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 10; Edwin Sandys, *Europæ Speculum* (1629), p. 117.

31 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 11.

32 Ibid., pp. 6–7; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Acts 24:12.

33 N.D., *Review*, p. 11.

34 United Provinces of the Netherlands, Staten Generaal, *A Proclamation Made by the Generall States of the United Netherland Provinces* (1619), sig. A^{r}.

35 Ibid., pp. 4–10.

– further affirmed that the event had been arranged that the Catholics 'may have no ground of complaint that they are put down by power and authority of law'.[36] This objective was undercut, however, by the occasion's political overtones. The conference had initially been intended to present Elizabeth's settlement to a clerical audience, but its role was then broadened. Even by the sanctioned report, there was an immediacy to its timing, and it was attended by the Privy Council and members of the nobility and Parliament.[37] The account further states that the attendees asked that answers be written and read out in English, against the wishes of the summoned Marian bishops, 'for the better satisfaction & inhabling of their owne Judgments to treate and conclude of suche lawes as myght depende hereupon'.[38]

The drive of the event thus shines through the academic language of this principal account, and while enough was granted the Catholic side for the rhetoric of balance to be maintained, a triumph of Protestant truth was assured. The questions – concerning the use of Latin, the authority of particular churches to appoint ceremonies, and the purpose of the Mass – were framed around scripture and the ancient church, and the final format required answers in English.[39] Of the Catholics' requirements, it was granted that answers could be provided in writing, but this was qualified with the proviso that they should be read aloud. Jewel suggests that there were plans to use the full academic form: 'on the first day nothing should be proposed by either party beyond bare affirmations; and … at the next meeting we were to answer them, and they, in their turn, to reply to us'.[40] But the final meetings did not reflect this.[41] An initial agreement to proceed by written declarations suggests that clear statements were preferred over intellectual convolutions. There was, however, a moderator of sorts: Sir Nicholas Bacon, who took the duty to mean keeping the Catholic

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[36] Anon., *The Declaracyon of the Procedynge of a Conference, Begon at Westminster the Laste of Marche, 1559* (1560), fol. 1^{v}; John Jewel, *The Works of John Jewel*, ed. John Ayre (4 vols, Cambridge, 1845–50), vol. 4, p. 1200; William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation: The Struggle for a Stable Settlement of Religion* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 97; Gary W. Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves and Illustrious Subjects at the 1559 Westminster Disputation', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 75 (2006): pp. 318–19.

[37] Anon., *Declaracyon*, fols 2^{r}, 3^{v}; Haugaard, *Elizabeth*, pp. 97–101.

[38] Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 3^{v}; Normal L. Jones, *Faith by Statute: Parliament and the Settlement of Religion 1559* (London, 1982), p. 124. On the Catholics present, see Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', p. 321.

[39] Jones, *Faith by Statute*, p. 123; Haugaard, *Elizabeth*, pp. 96, 100; Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', p. 321.

[40] Jewel, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 1203.

[41] Collinson, however, terms it the 'Westminster Disputation': Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 32. Jones also describes it as a 'disputation'. The *Declaracyon* alternates between 'conference' and 'meeting'.

participants in check. To Persons, this moderator was 'one of the greatest adversaryes to Catholike Religion, that was in England … utterly ignorant in matters of divinity'.[42]

From the outset, by the printed report, the Catholic bishops deviated from the set form, claiming to have 'mistaken' the final agreement. Their written statement was not yet ready, but they were prepared 'to argue and dispute'.[43] As the conference continues, the printed *Declaracyon of the Procedynge* becomes a litany of awkwardness: having declared that they had no more to say to the first question, the bishops ask to expand on their answer; a deviation which again is allowed, though 'they myghte have ben well reprehended for suche maner of cavillacyon'. Such allowances are described as having two motives: to ensure the Catholics a full hearing, and for the better ordering of the debate.[44] Further debate on the first question was appointed for the second day, but this was then disallowed by Bacon, who told the Catholics to go to the second.[45] Most recent interpretations of the encounter's close take the procedural authority of the moderator for granted, but this is highlighted by Persons.[46] After some dispute as to which side should begin, the Catholics finally refused to proceed.[47] Rather than explain the cause, the printed account glosses over both the initial arrangements *and* this subsequent dispute, satisfying itself with denunciation: the Catholics refuse with no regard to the arguments, to their own reputations or their cause; 'upon what sinister or dysordered meaninge is not yet fullye knowen (though in some part it be understa[n]ded)'.[48] The implication, that they had little confidence in their position, would survive in later citations of the event. George Abbot would assert in 1604 that:

> the Antichristian Bishops to their everlasting infamie, & to the perpetuall prejudice of their cause, refused the disputation or conference, and crying creake, forsooke their cause in the plaine field, knowing right well that when Popery must bee brought to the touch-stone of Gods word, it will proove base and counterfeite.[49]

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42 Jones, *Faith by Statute*, pp. 125–6; N.D., *Review*, p. 79.

43 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 4^{r-v}. Jones, *Faith by Statute*, pp. 124–5.

44 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 5^{v}.

45 Stapleton, *Counterblast*, fol. 12^{r}.

46 Jones, *Faith by Statute*, p. 126; Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', pp. 333–7, 338; N.D., *Review*, p. 79.

47 N.D., *Review*, pp. 81–5: 'the Bishops affirminge … [as] the Protestant party was plaintife or accusant, they should begin, and the Bishopps would answere'.

48 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 6^{v}.

49 George Abbot, *The Reasons which Doctour Hill hath Brought, for the Upholding of Papistry* (1604), p. 104.

Featley reported in 1638 that 'after the Protestants had given the charge, the Popish party … sounded a retreat, and upon frivolous pretences brake up the conference'.[50] The reason for their reluctance has been identified by William Haugaard in the second question, which required either full compliance or a hazardous appeal to papal authority.[51] But, in addition, a direct exertion of authority and clumsy manipulation of the disputation form, in an already politicized exchange, had turned the bishops against further participation.

The established consensus on the conference describes it as a propaganda exercise, intended first to confirm Elizabeth's settlement, then – as it broke down – to discredit and weaken the Catholic bishops.[52] But the printed account manipulates little beyond *process*: the Catholics' discredit is attempted through a description of their practice and attitude.[53] The arguments are glossed over; the questions appended as an afterthought.[54] The purpose of the *Declaracyon of the Procedynge* is not religious instruction. Unlike later accounts, it is entirely an epideictic tale – the character of the settlement is being defined, against its detractors. The Catholics' perceived evasions and eventual refusal are taken as signs of manifest error, and thus, as Persons notes, victory goes to the Protestant side, 'and overthrow to the Cath. Bishopps, who yet, as yow see, were never permitted to propose any one argument, or reason in due place and tyme'.[55] In an echo of Jewel, Persons would state that 'the Queene and those that were nearest about her, havinge determined to make a change of Religion, thought they should do yt best, and most justifiable, yf they promised *some name of disputation*, wherin the Catholiks had byn satisfied or vanquished' [my emphasis].[56] For the Jesuit, Westminster again sets the tone for disputations to come: it was driven by politics, weighted against the Catholics, and conducted and reported in a partisan manner. Although neither side were prisoners when the conference began, by its close the bishops of Lincoln and Winchester were en route to the Tower.[57] But, though Persons invokes good practice and purpose, the *Declaracyon* had already staked a claim to discursive ideals. In calling the debate, Elizabeth had wisely sought ordered, truthful counsel.

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50 Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 20.

51 Haugaard, *Elizabeth*, pp. 103–4.

52 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 32; Jones, *Faith by Statute*, pp. 115, 127; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 121.

53 Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', pp. 318, 337.

54 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 8^{r}; Stapleton, *Counterblast*, fol. 12^{v}; 13^{r}.

55 N.D., *Review*, p. 86.

56 Ibid., p. 78.

57 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 7^{v}; Jewel, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 1204; Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', p. 325.

But the bishops had then confused and ruined the event.[58] Persons would lament: '[many] rested themselves upon this point, that the Protestants were learned men, and had gotten the victory in disputations against the Catholiks, for that so yt was told them. And this they thought sufficient for their assurance'.[59] The question was, how far might open disputing present a danger to the truth? And in how partial a situation could such discourse be sufficient, or even termed a disputation? The state maintained that the truth had made its case: public disputation of controversial religion was soon to be prohibited by royal injunction.[60]

'The clink and the Gate house'

Preservation of orthodoxy, of the peace and of the settlement: through the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, these concerns mandated against disputation with religious dissenters. Where disputation did occur, they ensured that it was part of a wider approach. As John Ley would note, referencing John Udall, 'it was said by some who wrote against the English Bishops … that the clink and the Gate house (two common Gaoles) were the strongest Arguments they had to maintain their cause'.[61] Persons described how the 'more learned' of the Marian priests were removed to Wisbech Castle early in Elizabeth's reign.[62] For the most part, the post-Reformation state in England did not favour public religious disputation, and many of the events recorded in this period were conducted behind prison walls, to the disadvantage of the prisoners. Building on the form and history of disputation already discussed, in what remains of this chapter the implications of Udall's statement will be considered, with reference to anti-Catholic and prison disputation, and particularly the Tower debates of 1581.[63] Was the conduct of these events a sign of weakness? Or did

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58 Anon., *Declaracyon*, fol. 1^{v}; Chapter 1 above.

59 N.D., *Review*, p. 87.

60 Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 2011), p. 114.

61 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 12; John Udall, *The State of the Church of Englande* (1588), sig. A4$^{r–v}$.

62 Robert Persons, *An Epistle of the Persecution of Catholickes in Englande* (1582), p. 110.

63 The Protestant reports of these debates are Alexander Nowell and William Day, *A True Report of the Disputation or Rather Private Conference had in the Tower of London, with Ed. Campion Jesuite, the Last of August. 1581*, and John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite*, printed together in 1583. Catholic accounts include a report of the first debate in the Tresham papers, printed in HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections* (8 vols, London, 1901–14), vol. 3, pp. 8–16, and items at the British Library (Harleian MS 422, fols 136^{r}–172^{v}; Additional MS 11055, fols 188^{r}–192^{v}; Additional MS 39828, fol. 38) and Bodleian (Rawlinson MS D.353, fols 1–35). See James V. Holleran, *A Jesuit Challenge: Edmund Campion's Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, 1999), esp. pp. 220–29.

the use of disputation retain some degree of validity, regardless of its surrounding conditions?

There is a consistent pattern of manipulation and control in prison disputation in this period, which initially suggests that the process was a disposable tool, whose abuse or abandonment would readily be accepted by disputants and audiences alike. Such measures can be divided into procedural adaptation, restrictions on a disputant's resources, and signs of the balance of power, including prison conditions.[64] The central roles could not, it must be said, be changed without outcry: in prison debate from the 1580s, equal opportunities to oppose were insisted upon, as a show of good faith or a call to balance. In 1581, Campion had been held to the respondent's role, and his cries of 'let me oppose' would resound through later events. The withholding of books was a more lasting measure, and a common complaint.[65] William Fulke, sent to offer a disputation to the priests at Wisbech in 1580, reports their objection that their notes and other resources had been confiscated: 'They bid us fight, and take our weapons from us'. Remarkably, he confirms the official source of the restriction: 'I cannot deliver those that are taken away by order of the Counsell'.[66] Hart, in his conference with John Rainolds, stated (by Rainolds's report), 'I am destitute of bookes: we are not permitted to have any at all, saving the *Bible* onely. You of the other side may have bookes at will: and you come fresh from the universitie: whereby you are the readier to use them and alleage them.'[67] The confiscation of materials was not a passive condition of imprisonment – it was a deliberate adjustment of a debate's progress.

The balance of power was equally an obstacle to equitable disputation. At Wisbech, Fulke is told: 'disputation is void, for although wee overcome our adversaries, wee shoulde not prevaile, the lawe is already [passed] against us, & wee come rather to suffer, than to dispute'.[68] John Young here voices the opinion that a disputation with prisoners 'cannot be a free disputation'; a position echoed by John Feckenham in the need for immunity.[69] Fear of reprisals hindered debate: in the Tower, one Protestant report has Campion refusing to dispute on the question of the true church, as a point 'daungerous, unles leave might be obtained of her Majesties most

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64 Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 110, 111.

65 Loades, *Oxford Martyrs*, pp. 129, 131.

66 William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sigs A3^{v}, A4^{r-v}; Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, p. 120.

67 John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584), p. 33.

68 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A5^{v}.

69 Ibid., sigs B^{v}, A5^{r-v}; Chapter 2 above.

honourable Counsail'.[70] But this was as nothing compared to punishments already executed. Rainolds has this from Hart: 'the condition of conference with you is somewhat un-even. For I lie in prison, and am adjudged to dye: the closenesse of the one, & terror of the other, doth dull a mans spirits, and make him very unfitte for study'.[71] Campion had felt the rack before he came to dispute, and Barrow would object that conditions in the Fleet Prison were a barrier to study.[72] These objections are informed by a belief in the demonstrative, scholarly value of *free* disputation: Campion's demands are buttressed with an assertion that his opponent, Fulke, would be granted 'free' debate in any Catholic city.[73]

Matthew Pattenson would object in 1623, 'it is *iniquissima conditio*, for a man armed, to sett upon a prisoner, to insult upon a man weakned with fetters; and destitute of books; withowt preparation and warning: and (which is worst) in the face of a rack and torments … in a place of no indifferencie'.[74] The current consensus on prison disputation draws on these objections: such events were cynically orchestrated by the state, intended purely for the discredit of the captives, or to restate arguments with some semblance of scholarship in later, polemical reports.[75] But, if this was true, the organizers and participants still needed to square their dealing with academic ideals, and with the demands of holding truth. The most basic efforts to justify prison disputation take the form of magnanimity: it is an indulgence, to correct the prisoners' errors, and *any* form of conference, grounded in truth, is sufficient (indeed, generous). Campion is instructed to 'acknowledge the mercifulness of our gracious Queen towards him, in granting him so much liberty as to come to the trial of his demand', a speech Protestant accounts phrase differently: '*Master Lieutenaunt* … exhorted *Campion* to consider what great favour her Majestie shewed him, that hee might have conference with the learned to reforme his errours, when they shoulde bee playnely convinced out of the worde of God.'[76] The process is further justified here with the value of learned disputation, undimmed by Campion's situation. Individual restrictions receive similar replies: Fulke tells the Wisbech prisoners, bereft of books, 'You are allowed to have the holy Scriptures, and

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70 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. K.iii^{v}.

71 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 33.

72 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. C.i^{v}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 9; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 83–4; Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certaine Sclaunderous Articles* (1590), sig. D.ii^{v}.

73 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. X.iiii^{v}; Perceval Wiburn, *A Checke or Reproofe of M. Howlets Untimely Shreeching in Her Majesties Eares* (1581), fol. 98^{r}.

74 'an inequitable situation': Matthew Pattenson, *The Image of Bothe Churches* (1623), pp. 336–7.

75 For example, McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 120.

76 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 122; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. O.i^{r}.

the ancient Fathers, and they are sufficient for any conference.'[77] His view of scripture as a foundation, with the shared hierarchy of authorities, justifies the limitation.[78] Similarly, Hart is told (with Rainolds's customary flair): 'If a man do surfet of varietie of dishes, the Phisicion doth well to dyet him with one wholsome kinde of meat.'[79] If edification and mercy are the principal justifications for the handling of these events, the next remains the authority of disputation, filtered through confessional guarantors of certainty. As will be seen in Campion's case, reports of prison disputation on the authorities' side do not gloss over the prisoners' complaints, but answer them with affirmations of the form. They know that this should be convincing, but there is more at work here than simple display.

A broader point against the customary depiction of prison disputation relates to the survival of sources, and the nature of the prison environment. As has been demonstrated thoroughly by Peter Lake and Michael Questier, the Elizabethan or Jacobean prison was – one hesitates to say 'simply' – a natural point of contact between opposing divines.[80] The world inhabited by clerical disputants was one of perpetual debate and controversy; infused with formal disputation even when such was prohibited. In the prisons, priests might enjoy a surprising degree of freedom and community, particularly at times of relative stability, and this both facilitated internal disputes *and* made them a natural target for representatives of the church, or ministers acting on their own initiative.[81] A Protestant disputant might enter a prison to gain material for polemic, or for career advancement; but also – crucially – in an effort to uphold the truth and gain converts. Persons reports numerous such approaches, before the Campion debates took place: 'they sett upo[n] the captive Catholiques sodainlie ere they be aware, and call them in all haste to dispute of faithe'.[82] John Rainolds held a commission to preach and dispute at the Tower from the 1580s, and Fulke had similar duties at Wisbech. In 1620, John Percy was offered a disputation in prison – an exchange that never produced a written report.[83]

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77 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A3^{v}.

78 Chapter 2 above; William Charke, *An Answeare for the Time, unto that Foule, and Wicked Defence of the Censure* (1583), fol. 37^{v}.

79 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 35.

80 Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation, 1500–1800* (London, 1997), pp. 195–227.

81 Ibid., pp. 197–204, 204–7, 222.

82 Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 110–21, at p. 111.

83 William Allen, *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of XII Reverend Priests, Executed within these Twelvemonethes for Confession and Defence of the Catholike Faith* (1582), sig. B.v^{v}; Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A2^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 28; BL, Additional MS 34250, fol. 67r; George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), pp. 9, 10. See Lake and Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', pp. 205–6, 217.

All other conditions of the period aside, there was a need for public and private disputation on points of religious difference, and the function and condition of the prisons merely offered the best opportunity.[84] It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the intentions behind prison disputation *in situ* and those leading to accounts of the same. Disputations written up and printed by authority are in the minority, and the fact of their publication will undoubtedly have informed their conduct. It is in this context of public and semi-public evangelical discourse, as well as the immediate and the political, that we must consider any instance of prison disputation.

Campion as Respondent

The Tower disputations of 1581 were not show trials. Nor do they reflect a perversion or exploitation of the academic format. To explain: if the purpose behind a disputation was to reach truth and to avoid falsehood, those applied in the case of Edmund Campion were disputation *improved*; disputation *taken to its logical conclusion*. In arranging these encounters, the Protestant authorities were not simply trying to guarantee a favourable outcome – they were trying to avoid what they knew, beyond doubt, to be a false one. Campion could not be permitted to carry away the truth with intellectual or rhetorical flair. He could not be allowed to get away with it.

Duelling Challenges

Prior to 1580, Catholic challenges continued to be answered with reference to Westminster. As late as 1581, they were deemed 'above twentie yeres … out of season'.[85] The restriction placed on disputation had, however, become problematic – the arguments used to uphold it were wearing thin. Though a particular kind of *public* disputation had been prohibited, the practice remained at the centre of clerical life. Within the universities it naturally continued (Elizabeth attended several on visitations), and accounts of disputation on the Continent, in public and on questions of religious controversy, were by the 1570s finding their way into English print.[86] At the

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84 Lake and Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', p. 225.

85 Wiburn, *Checke or Reproofe*, fol. 95^{r-v}.

86 Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (2 vols, Oxford, 1792–96), vol. 2, pp. 154–62; Penry Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford: State, Church and University', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, pp. 397–400; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 59–60; Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): p. 319. On European disputations, see Chapter 5 below.

same time, ministers were being sent privately to confer with priests in prison.[87] More pressing still were the challenges themselves, penned by Jesuits trained in disputation at the universities, and in its controversial use in the seminaries.[88] The pressure they applied can be seen in an exchange between Robert Persons and Perceval Wiburn in 1581: in calling for a disputation, the Jesuit added the strident voice of 'John Howlet' to

> divers earnes meanes … and most humble petitions … both in writing and in print … urged by sundry meanes, by al kinde of friendship that we could make, by humble request, by earnest letters to divers preachers to further the matter: & (if I bee not deceived) to my Lord of London himselfe, for the bringing of the matter to your Majesties understanding, and to the consideration of the Lordes of your highnes privie cou[n]sayle.

Wiburn accused Persons of falsifying elements of the list to give an impression of popular momentum, but momentum on both sides already existed.[89]

The real trigger for a reconsideration of the prohibition had been Persons's arrival in England, along with Campion, that summer.[90] In consultation with other Catholics, and hoping to pre-empt (or, by some readings, provoke) a confrontation with the state, both penned epistles to the Privy Council, stating their intentions.[91] Campion's work (termed the 'Brag' or 'challenge' by his opponents), requested three debates:

> *the first* before your Honours, wherein I will discourse of religion, so far as it toucheth the common weale and your nobilities; *the second*, whereof I make more account, before the Doctors and Masters and chosen men of both Universities; wherein I undertake to avow the faith of our Catholike Church by proofs innumerable, Scriptures, Councils, Fathers, History, natural and moral reasons; *the third* before the lawyers, spiritual and temporal, wherein I will justify the said faith by the common wisdom of the laws standing yet in force and practice.[92]

It is the scholarly disputation that Campion, the 'Flower of Oxford', puts his emphasis on, and this was to be restated in his *Rationes Decem*, distributed

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87 Wiburn, *Checke or Reproofe*, fol. 96^{r-v}.

88 McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 122.

89 Wiburn, *Checke or Reproofe*, fols 94^{v}–95^{r}, 96^{r}.

90 The following owes something to McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 128–31.

91 Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72/3 (2000): pp. 600–613; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 125, 128.

92 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 180.

at St Mary's (at the heart of Oxford disputation), in June 1581.[93] Academic ideals were inescapable, but a development in the Protestant response at this point can be seen. Earlier replies upheld the prohibition – William Charke stated that Christians were 'assured of the manifest trueth', and thus had no need of a debate; Meredith Hanmer agreed that the time for disputing was past. Both, however, were willing to engage *if necessary*, as was Wiburn.[94] In November 1580, Campion reported that many refused his challenge solely because of the royal proscription, and while this certainly formed part of a wider strategy, it may reflect genuine frustrations in English divines.[95] For all that the Jesuits' statements were a precaution against any politicization of their intentions, both the *Rationes Decem* and Persons's works – *A Brief Discourse* and *A Brief Censure upon Two Bookes* – level that same accusation: the English state and clergymen, they argue, were unable to defend their religious points, and so tried to make the confrontation a political one, accusing the Jesuits of sedition so as to play to their own worldly abilities.[96] The *Rationes* assumed that 'it is tortures, not academic disputations, that the high-priests are making ready'.[97] The resulting crisis of legitimacy added to imperatives for debate, firmly situating its prohibition on the wrong side of religious, political and intellectual principle, as a sign of weakness and tyranny. But, in terms of the need for disputation, this was only the final straw. It must be remembered that, in parallel with these challenges, puritan ministers were pressing suit for a public disputation on the ceremonies and church discipline, having already forced a crisis on the related matter of the prophesyings.[98] The Jesuit challenge thus touched a sensitive area: it tapped into a culture of religious discourse that had grown with the 'protestantization' of English clerical life, and was now straining

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[93] McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 128, 131–3; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', p. 325.

[94] William Charke, *An Answere to a Seditious Pamphlet lately Cast Abroade by a Jesuite* (1580), sigs A.iii^{r}–A.iiii^{r}; Meredith Hanmer, *The Great Bragge and Challenge of M. Campion a Jesuit* (1581), *passim*; Wiburn, *Check or Reproofe*, fol. 97^{v}; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 129–30; Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2005), p. 12.

[95] McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 129, 130; Wiburn, *Checke or Reproofe*, fol. 94^{v}.

[96] Edmund Campion, *Campian Englished* (1632), pp. 33–4; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, p. 11n; Thomas M. McCoog, '"The Flower of Oxford": The Role of Edmund Campion in Early Recusant Polemics', *SCJ*, 24/4 (1993): esp. p. 899; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 127n, 137. The following draws on Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', pp. 600–602, 605–12.

[97] Edmund Campion, *Ten Reasons*, ed. J.H. Pollen (London, 1914), p. 90; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 604.

[98] Chapter 4 below; Peter Lake, 'A Tale of Two Episcopal Surveys: The Strange Fates of Edmund Grindal and Cuthbert Mayne Revisited', *TRHS*, 18 (2008): esp. p. 132.

against its bonds.[99] The prohibition would not stand. The next question was *how* the gauntlet was to be taken up.

William Fulke had made several offers of conference to the priests at Wisbech, but that of October 1580, just months after the discovery of the 'Brag', was different in several respects. It was made to a group of Catholics together, intended a full, formal disputation, carried the verbal warrant of Bishop Cox of Ely, and was soon to be printed.[100] In addition, the priests were, by Fulke's account, unprepared for their visitor's episcopal mandate: they refused to acknowledge Cox's involvement until given letter and testimony to that effect.[101] Richard Cox, a former chancellor at Oxford, maintained a keen interest in formal learning and close relations with the queen and Lord Burghley.[102] He had served as the moderator at Martyr's disputations on the Eucharist, and had been present at Westminster, and he was possessed of the academic mind for controversial disputing.[103] The Catholics further tell Fulke that some of them are strangers to one another: at once a sign of developing prison conditions, an echo of earlier precautions and an indication of a new approach.[104]

The aim of Fulke's Wisbech report is not, in the context of Campion's challenge, to provide Catholics with a disputation. Rather, it works in a similar way to Wiburn's answer to Persons's catalogue; a demonstration that eagerness for disputation came from a radical, subversive few, that not all English Catholics were of the same view, and – ultimately – that their faith could not be upheld.[105] Throughout, Fulke is determined to know whether, and under what conditions, the Catholics would dispute, to the exclusion of actual argument: 'I woulde know your resolute answere, whether you will dispute in the case you now stand'; 'I perceive that at this time, & in the state you are now[e,] you doe refuse conference'.[106] He asks, hypothetically, whether the priests will dispute at Cambridge:

> I heard Maister *Young* offer very liberally, to come to Cambridge, & to dispute there, & I know the University is very willing it might come so to passe: therfore

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99 Peter Lake, 'Defining Puritanism – Again?', in Francis J. Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston, MA, 1993), p. 8.

100 Charke, *Answeare for the Time*, fol. 37^{r}; Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 120–21.

101 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A2^{r-v}; Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 119, 120.

102 *ODNB* Cox, Richard; W.J. Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Boston, MA, 2007), pp. 2, 15; Jenkins, 'Whoresome Knaves', p. 323; Lake, 'Tale of Two Episcopal Surveys', p. 137n.

103 N.D., *Review*, pp. 34, 78.

104 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A5^{r}.

105 Charke, *Answeare for the Time*, sig. 37^{r-v}.

106 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sigs A4^{r}, A5^{r}, A5^{v}.

> if the bishop of *Ely*, joining in sute [with] the University, doe obtayne licence of her Majesty [that] you may have licence to dispute there, will you then promise to be willing to accept it?

Throughout, they refuse.[107] It should be remembered that accepting a disputation granted by the queen was to yield to her determination – like others answering the challenge, Fulke calls the Catholics' bluff on the connected matter of political loyalty.[108] But, again, that he and Cox genuinely hoped for a debate, and hoped for it to have good effect, ought not be discounted. The truth should convince the prisoners, and Fulke asks whether they will hear him preach – again his role is customary and pastoral.[109] But, at this moment, the principal aim of Fulke's work is to minimize the effect of Catholic challenges, and to demonstrate that the authorities were not afraid of a confrontation.

Campion: Restriction and Justification

The next step was disputation itself: disputation contained, controlled and aimed towards truth, but disputation nonetheless: Persons, in outlining the period, describes a succession of encounters reluctantly prepared and never carried out, but he acknowledges again that both Catholics and Protestants were eager for the debate.[110] Fulke's proposed conference at Wisbech was to feature most of the restraints evident in the Tower the following year, but his account allows the captive priests to object to their lack of books, the balance of power and related conditions – indeed, it accepts these as the reason for their refusal. He answers with assurances on the centrality of the question, and his own readiness to accept the truth made manifest.[111] He offers them the choice of *quæstio*, and puts his faith in 'Arguments'.[112] On the prospect of a disputation at Cambridge, he adds, 'For any indifferent order that you yourselves will devise, there is no doubt but it may be graunted'.[113] In other words, their objections are answered with confidence and intellectual surety; with a reassertion of the truth, and of the disputation form. The same mixed message would

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107 Ibid., sigs B^{r}, B5^{r}.

108 Wiburn, *Checke or Reproofe*, fols 95^{v}, 96^{v}–97^{r}.

109 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sigs A6^{v}–B5^{v}; Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols, London, 1877–83), vol. 2, pp. 163–4; Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1977), p. 59.

110 Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 121–2.

111 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sigs A3^{r}, A4^{r}, A5^{r}.

112 Ibid., sigs A4^{v}–A5^{r}, A7^{v}.

113 Ibid., sig. B^{v}.

be used with Campion in 1581 – but this time within a debate, and to ruinous effect.

The disputation Campion wished for – and continued to call for in the Tower – is described in clear terms in the 'Brag'. Where he asserts that 'no one Protestant, nor all the Protestants living … can maintain their doctrine in disputation', it is evident that he intends the format in its full sense, and that his requirements extend to setting and balance.[114] The Jesuit was a scholar and a seasoned disputant: he had been involved in disputes at Geneva before returning to England, and had been singled out for his performance in disputation during the queen's visit to Oxford in 1566. His scholarly credentials lay behind his selection for the mission.[115] Campion's expectations are confirmed in Catholic and Protestant reports of the 1581 debates, where he is given ample reason to restate them. 'The disputation that I desire, is yet behinde', he is said to have objected, in John Field's *Three Last Dayes Conferences*:

> for I desire it might bee in the Universities. This may bee called a Conference, but it is not the disputation which I require. Besides, these conferences are unequall, both in respect of the suddainnesse of them, as also for want of such necessary helpes as were fitte and convenient.[116]

The Catholic version does not include the first distinction, but it matches his objections on notice and provision.[117] Campion's concern, as primarily (but not exclusively) set out on the Catholic side, is with balance (that the truth might be reached), and a focus on the *quæstio*.[118] In the Protestant report of the final debate, he states: 'we lacke a moderator'; and in calling for a chance to oppose, one report has him invoking the purpose of the events: 'lett this be a question between us … and in the fore noune, oppose you, and I will aunswere, and lett me in the after noune oppose, and aunswere you, yf you will; and then shall it be tryed'.[119]

The Campion debates took place over four days. On the last of August, Campion's opponents were Alexander Nowell and William Day. Fulke took over on 18 September, accompanied by Roger Goad, and they were to

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114 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 180.

115 Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford', p. 411; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', pp. 123, 126; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 18, 23; Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin', pp. 337–8, 340–41.

116 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. H^{r-v}.

117 BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{r-v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 95–6.

118 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs M.ii^{v}, M.iii^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 102, 114, 146, 147.

119 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. X.ii^{r}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 10^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 96, 117, 131.

return for a third debate, five days later. On 27 September, the opponents were John Walker and William Charke, the latter having been a notary for earlier sessions (other notaries included Field and Thomas Norton).[120] These divines are a remarkable blend. Day had been a young convert, his initial zeal tempered enough for him to enjoy state patronage throughout his career; Nowell was a Marian exile with leanings towards puritanism.[121] Fulke and Goad were both Cambridge men – one head of Pembroke, the other provost of King's. Fulke, an associate of Thomas Cartwright (and a man of dwindling puritan conviction), was the most active in anti-Catholicism; the events of 1580/1 only one part of an engagement that would come to dominate his career.[122] The final opponents were the most unusual pairing: Walker was a committed reformer, adapting to Elizabethan realities, but Charke, the younger man, was more radical. His deployment here was a result of his own anti-Catholic works and his dealings with Bishop Aylmer, who – as Persons had predicted – had a reluctant hand in arranging the debates.[123] The use of divines like Charke and Field suggests caution in these first sanctioned disputations. Aylmer had met both, with other puritans, in 1577, deeming them only marginally less dangerous to uniformity than were the Catholics. But in opposing Catholic arguments they would be steadfast.[124]

The location and conditions changed as the debates went on. The first took place in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower, with seating arranged for a larger gathering, but the second was in Hopton's private hall, and attended by around thirteen people.[125] At the first, Campion

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120 Nowell and Day, *True Reporte*, sigs A.i^{r}, C.i^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs H^{r}, O.i^{r}, Z.iii^{r}; BL, Harleian MS 422, f. 148^{r}. On Norton, see Robert Persons, *A Defence of the Censure* (1582), p. 8; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 592.

121 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 63, 65–6, 70, 74; S.L. Ollard, *Fasti Wyndesorienses: The Deans and Canons of Windsor* (Windsor, 1950), p. 44; *ODNB* Day, William; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 44.

122 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. A3^{v}; Richard Bauckham, 'Science and Religion in the Writings of William Fulke', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 8/1 (1975): p. 18; Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford, 1978), p. 321; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 58–9.

123 *ODNB* Walker, John; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, esp. pp. 202, 237, 342, 412. On Aylmer, John Strype, *Historical Collections of the Life and Acts of the Right Reverend Father in God, John Aylmer* (London, 1701), p. 55; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 135.

124 Strype, *Aylmer*, p. 55; Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts, 1590–1640* (London, 1972), pp. 191–2. On Field, Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London, 1983), p. 351; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 220n.

125 BL, Additional MS 11055, fol. 188^{r}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 8; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 41n.

was accompanied by other prisoners, including Ralph Sherwin and John Hart.[126] But audience, setting and accompaniment were adjusted as Campion's performance became subject to favourable Catholic reporting. Each pair of opponents took a different approach, but as with Fulke at Wisbech there were clear instructions to which they all had to adhere. Campion's restriction to the role of respondent was ordered by authority: in one Protestant report, Fulke states, 'It is not in me to give you leave to oppose. I come hether by commandement to oppose you'. This is confirmed elsewhere.[127] This said, the restriction did lapse once on the second day, once on the third and again under Charke and Walker.[128] Campion also had limited access to resources. The first debate concentrated on his *Rationes Decem*, that 'he could not thinke himselfe to be suddenly taken as unprovided', but the full Catholic report has the Jesuit complaining that this was not fair dealing, as he was 'destitute of all the helpes wherewith hee made his booke'.[129] This is repeated on the second day, and is here tied to the purpose and effect of the debates: 'I would you would dispute to have the truth known rather than to have victory. And if you did so, the better I came provided for the disputations, the better the truth should be sifted and discussed'.[130]

This imbalanced dealing extends to the behaviour of the Protestant disputants, and particularly in the first and final debates. Nowell and Day played to the crowd, surprising Campion with works chosen to undermine his *Rationes*, while at the same time appealing noisily to those present. They concluded the morning of 18 September with a summation, which – by their own account – was attacked by Sherwin as selective.[131] Sherwin himself was, by the Catholic account, several times told to be silent, and the Catholics were denied any reiteration of their own arguments.[132] On the fourth day, Charke often turned to the audience, declaiming to them as much as he opposed Campion. Though the main Catholic account makes more of this ('The Lord of his great goodnes and justice hathe shewed and [manifested] this argument … [which] he nor they shall never be able to answere'; 'I will end with suche an Argumente, as neyther you nor any of

126 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, esp. sig. F.iii^{v}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, pp. 11, 13–14.

127 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. U.iiii^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 121, 131.

128 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs K.i^{r}, T.iii^{v}–T.iiii^{v}, Ff.i^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 103–4, 134, 164–5.

129 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs C.i^{r}, D.iii^{v}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 8.

130 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. H$^{r–v}$; BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148$^{r–v}$; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 95–6, 102.

131 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs C.ii^{r}–C.ii^{v}, C.iiii^{r}, D.iii^{v}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 11; Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: A Biography* (London, 1896), pp. 366–8; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 54.

132 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 87, 90.

your syde shall ever be able to answere'), the tone matches Field's *Three Last Dayes*.[133] By the Catholic report, Charke cut off the Jesuit's arguments (as did Norton), and this formed part of a persistently dismissive tone in replying against him and dealing with his person and process.[134]

Distinctions must be drawn, however, between the performances of Nowell, Day and Charke, and that of Fulke and Goad in the middle two debates; and further between an undermining of disputation and merely poor practice within it. The conduct of participants like Charke notwithstanding, there is an effort on the Protestant side – by all accounts – to assert disputation *against* Campion; to present the Jesuit as a barrier to productive, scholarly debate. Where the Jesuit is given a chance to oppose, this is presented as a deviation from the accepted form, calling to mind Featley's later assertion on good disputing beyond 'the custome of *Oxford*'.[135] Field describes one such forbearance thus: 'you shalbe answered, though it be not your part to oppose'; and in the Catholic report, 'Although it be contrary to the order of disputation, and to our appointed conference, yet I will admitt it'.[136] The grandstanding of Charke is also peppered with elevation of the process, and the Protestant report attributes to him that clear explanation of the roles:

> you woulde deceive [the audience] with an opinion that our advantage is great in replying: but it is not so. If your cause were good and your skill great, you might make it harder to reply, [than] to answere. For the answerer may with a worde deny the proposition, and so, soone take from the replyer all his weapons.[137]

Though the authorities would eventually recognize their mistake in not allowing Campion to oppose, Field (through Charke) is here making an interesting point. Was the process any less accurate or effective if one side was held to the respondent's role? Surely, if Campion's *Rationes* were true, they could be maintained? The use of this work, particularly at the first debate, appears a tactical move, but in form and function it is presented as a respondent failing to defend his thesis (which its Oxford delivery had already implied). Fulke, too, places Campion's conduct in opposition to academic ideals, holding the intended debate up as a disputation in the fullest sense. At the opening of the second debate, reacting to Campion's performance with Nowell and Day, he states (again by Field's account):

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133 Bodl., Rawlinson MS 422, fols 10^{v}, 12^{r}, 12^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 163, 165, 166, 167.

134 Bodl., Rawlinson MS 422, fols 10^{v}, 12^{v}.

135 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 37; Chapter 2 above.

136 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. K.i^{r}; BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 152^{r}.

137 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Ff.i^{v}.

'this I would have knowen unto you, that our purpose is not to deale by discourse, but briefely by Logical arguments, according to the order of schooles, &c'.[138] This is absent from Catholic reports, as might be expected, although Fulke voices an intention to 'reason with him dialectically'.[139] Further criticisms of Campion in Field's work are framed in terms of the course of debate, or the importance of the *quæstio*: Campion should not be allowed 'to discourse, contrary to the order of any good conference'.[140] For the Protestant disputants and reports, the weight of disputation – combined with the perceived indulgence granted, the charges of sedition levelled at the respondent and, finally, the demands of truth – gives sufficient justification for the conditions applied.[141] The Jesuit is not alone in making academic assertions.

Campion: Purpose and Outcome

The manner of disputation Campion was granted did not answer his challenge. But the key point – one often taken for granted – is that it *tried* to. On his arrest in July, the authorities had a number of competing concerns: to counter the political and intellectual impact of his 'Brag' and the *Rationes*, to affirm their church in the face of these denouncements and to establish the Jesuits' part in whatever plot was being concocted in Europe. They needed to display the truth of their faith *and* their legitimacy, and they attempted to do so by besting (even convincing) Campion in debate, while at the same time revealing him to be a traitor. In this, there were both practical and ideological pressures at work, and thus the debates of August and September occurred against a backdrop of interrogation, punitive action and public discredit, which stretched the ideal of 'free' debate beyond its breaking point, and would ultimately result in the greatest polemical defeat of the reign.[142] The political element seeped into these events, undermining their scholarly imagery. The belittling of Campion's racking by Owen Hopton at the initial debate came after several present, including Robert Beale, objected to the assumption of torture offered in the *Rationes*: the disputation proper was thus prefaced by a discussion of Campion's own experiences, and the motives behind them – the Jesuit maintaining that he was persecuted for religion, and having to restate his refusal to betray other hidden Catholics. There was a fine line on the morning of 31 August between disputation

138 Ibid., sig. H^{r}.

139 BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 149^{r}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 97.

140 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs H.iii^{r}, I.iii^{v}, O.ii^{r}, Dd.i^{r}, Dd.iii^{r}, at O.ii^{r}; BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{r}.

141 Compare Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 72.

142 Simpson, *Campion*, pp. 330–45.

and interrogation.[143] Further into these debates, Campion was several times reminded of his tenuous position, once on the matter of disputation itself. In Field's report, he is seen to state: 'Why, in some case the Catholikes thinke they may communicate with you, come to your Churches, & you againe co[m]municate [with] us, & go to our churches, dispute and conferre [with] us, &c', to which Fulke answers, 'You drawe to a thing you ought to be silent in. It is a matter of state, it were best for you to leave such things'. Campion asks whether he is being threatened.[144] It is this very extremity, however, which suggests that the debates' organizers were driven by intentions and ideals beyond polemical exploitation. This is not to say that there was no political or demonstrative intent at work, rather that this was not the only objective. After all, if the disputations had to be conducted against this backdrop, with these conditions, why hold them at all?[145] Equally, if the intent was to answer Catholic challenges, why take a respondent bloody from the rack and then impose further restrictions, particularly as the Catholic reaction became apparent?

Disputants and accounts on both sides aim these debates at edification and truth. Where they fall short, this is again blamed on the opposing party. Campion made the first point in asking for restrictions to be lifted, and this is reported in Protestant accounts. In an echo of the assurance expressed in the *Rationes Decem*, his call for books is accompanied by a statement that 'the truth is so plaine, that it will suffice at this time to defende it selfe'. Again by the Protestant report, he further pleads the audience's benefit: 'so shoulde I have come better furnished, and all these might have bene better profited'.[146] In distinguishing between the weight of two texts, he states 'we come hither for the glory of God and the sifting out of his truth, rather than for victory in argument', but he accepts the proffered authority 'lest we should lose our argument' – for the sake of the debate.[147] Field has this: 'because of these hearers, wee should seeke most for edification, and it is the speciall cause of our meeting'.[148] At the beginning of the third debate, Campion states his intention to 'reform' his adversaries, as they came to instruct him, adding: 'I come to give an [account] of my faith, I am not unresolute'.[149] He is staid in his faith, and means to edify audience and opponents alike. As he had urged in the *Rationes*:

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143 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs. C.i^{v}–C.ii^{r}; HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 9.

144 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs M.iiii^{v}–N.i^{r}.

145 As expressed in Persons, *Epistle of the Persecution*, pp. 112–26.

146 BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{v}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 96, 105, 121; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. H^{v}.

147 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 102.

148 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs I.iii^{v}–I.iiii^{r}.

149 Ibid., sig. O.i^{r}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, p. 122.

> if I can but make good, that there is a Heaven, that there is a God, that there is a Fayth, that there is a CHRIST, I do come of[f] victorius. May I not then be here courageous? may I not here shew an inexpugnable confidence? *Certainly*, *hangd*, *drawne & quartered I well may be*, *overcome I cannot be*;[150]

But Campion is not alone in making such assertions. Far more significant are those statements of truth and purpose on the Protestant side. They at once justify any restriction, while painting Campion as the obstacle to a profitable debate, a danger to the hearers and a barrier to his own salvation. The prisoner here is obstinate in the face of a generous and genuine opportunity. At the opening of the first debate, by the Protestant account, Hopton told the Jesuit that they were there for his benefit, and, although this is not confirmed in the Catholic version, similar expressions on subsequent days are.[151] One Catholic account has this from John Walker: '[the queen] had raythe wyne you by [fair meanes]; [than] to showe justice agaynste you'.[152] On the third day, again by the Protestant account, Fulke makes the same assumption in describing a change in the debates' management:

> The other day when wee had some hope of your conversion, we forbare you much, and suffered you to discourse, contrary to the order of any good conference … nowe that we see you are an obstinate heretike, and seeke to cover the light of the trueth with multitude of wordes, we meane not to allow you such large discourses, nor to forbeare you, as we did.[153]

Again, while this cannot be taken at face value, it needs to be considered in the context of Walker's statement, and other activity in the prisons: it was a duty to win dissenters to the faith. But as Fulke suggests, hope for Campion's conversion diminished as the disputations went on: the third and fourth days saw the Protestant side noting Campion's answers and then simply moving on. At times, though infrequently, they also claim that his answers are unnecessary, Goad asserting, 'Whatsoever you can shewe is well enough knowen, and hath bene shewed by others of your side, and is sufficiently answered'.[154]

As with all such events, of course, it is necessary to distinguish between the purpose of the original debates and that of later reports. In one respect, on the Protestant side, they tally – in the wake of Campion's challenge,

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150 Campion, *Campian Englished*, pp. 36–7.

151 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. C.i^{r}.

152 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 1^{r}.

153 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. O.ii^{r}.

154 Ibid., sigs Q.iiii^{r}, R.iiii^{r}, U.iiii^{r}, U.iiii^{v}, at U.iiii^{r}.

there was a need to counter the image of scholarship he had presented, and that need grew as reports of his performance spread and the debates were scaled back. The Jesuit's call for a public disputation had been wrapped in a conscious intellectualism in the 'Brag' and the *Rationes Decem*: the former had described a 'kingdom of grammarians and unlearned ears' in England, while praising the learning and education of Elizabeth, and the wisdom of her Privy Council. Here was that Campion who had been singled out for his performance at Oxford.[155] The later work, which was directed to the students and doctors of the university, expanded on this with Ciceronian references, a systematic methodology and reasons based around Protestant paradoxes and sophisms, as well as scripture, the church, councils and the fathers.[156] The work is, moreover, situated at a specific moment in Renaissance approaches – it holds simple truth above scholastic logic, matching the language of puritan Ramists and separatist critics of the universities near the end of the century. Its readers are imagined as 'Philosophers, eagle-eyed, lovers of Truth, of integritie, & modestie; enemies of headlong rashnes, illaqueations, and Sophisms'.[157] The challenge thus had an extra dimension to its appeal, as an accessible manifestation of new forms of learning.[158] John Rainolds expressed concern as to its impact, telling one student, 'you seem to me, to study more industriously than decently a most virulent enemy of religion, and to admire more vehemently than justly a barbered and dandified rhetorician'.[159] This same concern permeates the Tower disputations, in all accounts, and in the Protestants' in particular there are attempts to discredit Campion intellectually. Fulke questions his reading of a work by Augustine: 'You would seeme to be an older student in Divinitie [than] you are, by a great deale'.[160] Though the Jesuit's answers vary with reports, Nowell, Day, Fulke and Charke all tested his reading in Greek.[161] The expectations raised by the 'Brag' and *Rationes Decem* are undermined in the Protestants' reports, as is Campion's reputation: 'upon experience

155 Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 180–81.

156 Campion, *Campian Englished*, *passim*; McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 133.

157 Campion, *Campian Englished*, p. 190.

158 Simpson, *Campion*, pp. 362–3; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 608.

159 Simpson, *Campion*, pp. 360–61, from the Latin in Richard Hooker, *The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, ed. John Keble (3 vols, Oxford, 1888), vol. 1, p. 106.

160 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. X.iii^{v}.

161 HMC, *Various*, vol. 3, p. 14; Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sigs F.iiii^{r}–G.i^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs M.iii^{r}, Q.i^{v}, Ff.ii^{r-v}; William Fulke, *A Defense of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holie Scriptures into the English Tong* (1583), pp. 440–43; Simpson, *Campion*, p. 368; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 54–5.

and triall with him, we found him not to be that man that we looked for'.[162] There is an interesting adjustment for the final day, where Walker describes the Jesuit as 'an English man borne, and brought up in this realme in schooles & places where good learning hath bene taught, so that he might have bene a good instrument in this common wealth and Gods Church' – he does not try to undermine Campion's abilities, but paints them as a loss to the realm; taken by Rome, and thus tragically gone to waste.[163] The use of formal disputation, however, was itself a challenge to Campion's reputation, and specifically to the pastoral simplicity of the *Rationes Decem*. The format was chosen because Campion had associated his challenge with a particular degree and variety of scholarship. This has a comparable motive to that which ultimately undermined it – the presence of the more radical opponents and notaries. Just as Catholic points were most reliably answered by radical Protestants (or moderate puritans), the notes of humanism and simple 'truth' in Campion's challenge are met with scholastic form. Campion had asked for a disputation, and he was given one.

The rationale behind the Campion debates can thus be pieced together more fully when we include the authority of disputation, its intended impact – immediate and in terms of subsequent presentation – and the force of truth, *alongside* the image of public discredit, torture and political advantage that, without question, is still at the heart of these events. In addition to a growth of controversial discourse, and the adoption of a public forum by the authorities and their challengers, the build-up to the disputations drew from the continued prominence of the academic process in a changing intellectual environment, fuelled on all sides by certainty that it could confirm the truth. The state and church were drawn into the confrontation by polemical *and intellectual* pressures; its format was decided as much by imperatives of faith as by the rhetoric of tyranny presented in the *Rationes*. Fulke's Wisbech conference confirms that any allowance of disputation would have been conditional, but it could be said that this came from a position of certainty, as much as weakness. Procedural adherence was applied to counter accusations of imbalance; an argument that could be acceptable only in the context of faith. Thus, the Campion disputations were not, indeed, show trials. In the political and intellectual climate, they could not afford to be; and, as they were to uphold absolute truth, they did not *need* to be. From the perspective of the authorities, nothing was left to Campion's wit or reputation. The disputations were

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[162] Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. G.i^{v}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. Ee.i^{v}. See Anthony Munday, *A Discoverie of Edmund Campion* (1581), sigs G.i^{r}–G.ii^{r}: Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 15–16; McCoog, '"Flower of Oxford"', pp. 901–5.

[163] Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs Z.iii^{v}–Z.iiii^{r}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fol. 1^{r}.

set up, within the forms of academe, to avoid the triumph of dangerous falsehood and to persuade as far as possible. But they were also caught up in a set of political actions and personal styles which worked against any image of scholarly dealing, and destroyed the debates' credibility *despite* – not because of – the organizers' intentions.

As the disputations went on, and Campion's performance was subject to favourable reports, they were scaled back and contained.[164] Nowell and Day's account had circulated in manuscript, but the printed Protestant accounts were delayed for two years – a fact Persons took to be a sign of defeat. In this, he contrasts Field's efforts with Fulke's *True Reporte* after Wisbech, overlooking their subtle difference in purpose.[165] The authors offer explanations: Nowell and Day state that they saw no reason to print their account, as the *Rationes Decem* had already been answered, but following Catholic reports they 'were partly of ourselves enclined, and by the often and earnest exhortations of others importuned, and by some of great authoritie almost inforced to set downe the true report of the saide conference'.[166] Field is more composed: he explains the delay through a long-established practice of prison conference: 'being private conferences, it was thought not much requisite to make the[m] publikely knowen, neither had they bin now set forth, if the importunitie of the adversaries, by their sundry untrue and contrary reportes made and scattered amongst their favourites, had not even perforce drawen the[m] forth'.[167] These reports were, however, a reaction to Catholic appropriation and condemnation; damage control, following events the authorities themselves had commissioned.[168]

The debates' harsh compromise and eventual, violent outcome provoked more, and more outspoken, challenges, Campion's martyrdom enhancing the imagery and authority of 'free' disputation. Here, in the judgement of Persons and other challengers, was a series of debates controlled by authority, in which poor practice was upheld by state power, contrary to the truth and the purpose of disputation. Persons's *Defence of the Censure* (1582), a reply to William Charke, repeated his call:

> I am in the name of all my felow Catholiques to renew our publike chalenge of equall disputation to you, and to all your brother ministers agayne. You

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164 McCoog, '"Playing the Champion"', p. 136; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 48.

165 Persons, *Defence of the Censure*, pp. 8–9; Simpson, *Campion*, pp. 371, 376–7. See Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. H^{v}; BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{r}.

166 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. A.ii^{r}; Holleran, *Jesuit Challenge*, pp. 95, 220.

167 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. G.iiii^{v}.

168 Nowell and Day, *True Report*, sig. A.ii^{r}; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 621.

> see M. Campian is gone … Yet notwithstanding we are the same men that we were before: yea muche more desirous of this tryall than before. Wherefore, we request you now at length, yea we conjure you, either for trueth sake, yf you seeke yt: or for your owne credites sake, yf ye will retayne it: that you yeald us after so muche sute and supplication, some equall triall, eyther by writing, preaching, or disputing … For what can a peaceable disputation graunted us for religion, indaunger your state: but onelie … that this disputation may chaunce to discover your errors, and so make the hearers deteste your state of heresie?[169]

'Vincat Veritas': Authority and Disputation

Debate with prisoners did not cease after Campion's execution, but the restrictions applied and allowances made did change and develop. Tensions continued between the need to ensure security and orthodoxy on the one hand, and the responsibility of holding truth, the authority of disputation and the challenges of adversaries on the other. This was not a new problem: the defence and demonstration of truth had been weighed by Augustine:

> My former opinion was, that none should be constrained to christian unitie, that we should strive with the word, contend with disputation, and overcome with reason: least wee should have them counterfait catholikes, whom wee had knowen to be open heretikes. But my opinion was over ruled not with words of contradiction, but with examples of demonstration.[170]

By the later sixteenth century, examples demonstrating the impact of carefully controlled, establishing 'disputations' were not thin on the ground: the settlements of Edward, Mary and Elizabeth had been affirmed and presented by them. But while, in the years up to 1581, Persons's image of poor disputing upheld by authority seems – on all sides – to have been in the ascendant, from the failure in the Tower the academic ideal of disputation was more often urged, and more successfully upheld. Prison disputation, and disputation in general, had started to break free of the shackles of authority: Campion's cry of 'I would you would dispute to have the truth knowen, rather [than] to have victorie' was taken up by any who wrote against unfair conditions or prohibition of debate.[171] Indeed,

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169 Persons, *Defence of the Censure*, pp. 9–11.

170 Thomas Bell, *Thomas Bels Motives* (1593), pp. 16–17; Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England* (1589), pp. 134–5; W.J. Sparrow-Simpson, *The Letters of St. Augustine* (New York, 1919), p. 105.

171 BL, Harleian MS 422, fol. 148^{v}.

the question underlying such calls had become one of purpose, and of form as a sign of purpose. As the clergyman Thomas Becon had once argued:

> *Antichrist* will neither teache nor dispute with any man in the holy scripture for the maintainaunce of the Christen faith, but onely for to augment his owne kingdom, and to stablish his owne lawes. And if any dispute with him, they shall be cast first into prison … And if he can not subdue them to his will, then either he murdereth them prively in Prison, or els hee committeth them unto the seculer power as unto his Hangmen or Butchers to be burned. And thus is the disputation ended, and Antichrist hath gotten the victorie.[172]

[172] Thomas Becon, *The Actes of Christe and of Antichriste* (1577), sigs B.vii^{v}–B.viii^{r}.

CHAPTER 4

Disputation Applied

> And my speech, and my preaching was not with entising words of mans wisedome, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:[1]

For all the caution, containment and constraint evident in these Elizabethan debates, this type of interaction was not associated in contemporary minds with suppression, or with the imposition of religious unity through force. Rather, it was the antidote and antithesis to it; a more effective means of defending the true faith. The dichotomy was still being expressed in Catholic challenges: the Jesuit Robert Southwell, writing in the later 1580s, asked, 'why stryvest thou with the weaknesse of our fleshe? Encounter with the force of our minde … overcome us by disputation if thou canst, overcome us by reason'.[2] But, in addition, the range of encounters for which records survive after the Tower debates confirms that this was widespread: a belief in the efficacy of disputation, as more than a means of discrediting enemies. In the final decades of Elizabeth's reign, representatives of her church continued to engage Catholic *and* puritan divines in prison, and not always with an eye to producing polemical reports. The methods used, and the roles taken, differed substantially from those of 1581. The process was also being applied in a greater range of situations – it features in reports of debate on the radical frontier of the church, but it was also taken up, in part, by those seeking privately to prevent conversions to Catholicism, and by converts hoping to enact their faith. This variety compels us to examine the *purpose* of disputation, as perceived and depicted by contemporaries.

The Response to Campion

As can be seen in the ostentatiously scholarly tone of *A True Report* and *The Three Last Dayes Conferences*, the authorities themselves felt it necessary to clarify precisely what disputation with imprisoned Catholics was *for*.[3] To respond to further challenges and condemnations, they needed to demonstrate that these were neither interrogations nor staged trials, but learned confutations of Catholic arguments. And, indeed, this was

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1 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Corinthians 2:4.

2 Robert Southwell, *An Epistle of Comfort* ([1587?]), fol. 205^{r}.

3 Chapter 3 above.

precisely what Protestant divines believed they had the responsibility – and the force of truth – to pursue. Stringent anti-Catholic policies continued through the 1580s, but the fact remained that violence *sans* disputation was a sign of irreligion and polemical defeat.[4] Thus, the Campion affair did not lead the authorities to question their use of disputation: instead, they saw their carelessness *within* it. Thomas Norton's report of 30 September 1581 held that the Tower debates were damaging through a lack of 'order or modera[tion]', and of an appropriate audience, and although the last of these has been described as a call for additional restrictions, the others indicate a positive departure. Norton's suggestions focus on subscription to the arguments, to prevent outcry or false triumph in the aftermath, *and* for the sake of the audience. They do not rule out further disputations, or suggest further restrictions on Catholic disputants.[5] The way to conduct such an encounter without incurring condemnation was to do so with purpose, in a scholarly manner.

In 1582, a directive was delivered from the Privy Council to John Whitgift and the bishops, entitled 'Our Opinion concerning the Proceedings with the Jesuits and Seminary Priests, and other Papists, by such as shall be appointed to have Conference with them'. The directive contained instructions for disputation.[6] John Strype described it as a response to the increasing number of priests held in England, and to new Catholic challenges, but its recommendations match the problems of 1581. They emphasize a reliance on scripture, and discount written authorities after the accession of Pope Gregory I; but they also request abstention 'from angry and opprobrious Words', and arguments 'with Weight and Force of Matter'. The questions to be dealt in concentrate on papal authority (a topic with distinct overtones of treason) and the rule of scripture, but these final recommendations confirm that position suggested by Norton: they encourage a measured and methodological response to Catholic arguments; a manner of *instruction*, grounded in Protestant guarantors of truth. The directive gives a list of potential disputants, including Alexander Nowell and William Day, William Fulke, Roger Goad, John Walker and Laurence Humphrey – whose final debate with Campion had

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[4] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere" in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72/3 (2000): esp. pp. 607, 620.

[5] BL, Lansdowne MS 33, no. 61, f. 150^{r}; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 621; John Strype, *Historical Collections of the Life and Acts of the Right Reverend Father in God, John Aylmer* (London, 1701), pp. 53–4.

[6] John Strype, *The Life and Acts of the Most Reverend Father in God, John Whitgift* (London, 1718), pp. 98–9. Strype cites manuscripts including the Inner Temple Library, London, Petyt MS 538, vol. 47, fols 18–19.

been cancelled by Aylmer, on the bishop's own authority.[7] Also present are William Charke and Walter Travers: the refinement of debate did not, it would seem, preclude the involvement of aggressive or radical disputants.[8]

John Rainolds and John Hart

The key presence in this tonal shift was, however, a divine absent from the disputations of the previous year. John Rainolds had been more active in university disputes than in anti-Catholic polemic. Though he had been ordained in the 1570s, and took a prominent role in clashes at Oxford, he is at this time more often described as a *student* in divinity; a more positive figure than someone like Charke.[9] His critiques of Ramus included an objection to his oppositional invectives and 'moral example as a controversialist'.[10] Moreover, like his father and two of his brothers, Rainolds had been brought up a Catholic, and his studies at Oxford were interrupted by a visit to one of the English seminaries.[11] The most dramatic account of his conversion tells of a disputation with his brother William, in which each persuaded the other:

> As heart would wish, each one his brother takes;
> As fate would have, each one his faith forsakes:[12]

Although this tale does not fit the chronology of either man's beliefs, disputation was here woven into the myth of John Rainolds (John Ley believed the story, taking it to show the efficacy of the form).[13] His

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[7] Strype, *Aylmer*, pp. 53–4; Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: A Biography* (London, 1896), p. 360.

[8] Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 99.

[9] Thomas Fuller, *Abel Redivivus: or, the Dead Yet Speaking* (London, 1651), pp. 480–81; Lawrence D. Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Newark, NJ, 1986), pp. 29–31; *ODNB* Rainolds, John.

[10] James McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle in Tudor Oxford', *EHR*, 94/2 (1979), p. 307.

[11] Peter Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus* (London, 1668), p. 51; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, p. 25.

[12] From a poem by William Alabaster, in Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, pp. 479–80. For other versions: Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS D.399, fol. 199; Cambridge University Library, Additional MS 8460; William Alabaster, *Unpublished Works by William Alabaster (1568–1640)*, ed. Dana F. Sutton (Salzburg, 1997), pp. 12–13, 84–5.

[13] Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 26–7, 32; John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), p. 56; Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (2 vols, Oxford, 1792–96), vol. 2, p. 228; Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 84; Joshua Rodda, '"The Condition and State of a Scholar": Disputation in William Alabaster's Conversion Narrative', *RH*, 31/3 (2013): pp. 391–2.

development from young Catholic to staunch puritan has been described as 'gradual'.[14] In short, Rainolds's background sets him apart from the opponents of 1581, and his role in the first printed debate after Campion can be taken as indicative of a new approach. The methods in his own account of his debate with John Hart match the recommendations of 1582 to a significant degree.[15]

Rainolds's adversary, meanwhile, presented an opportunity. The debate with Hart in the winter of 1582 was arranged by Sir Francis Walsingham, a patron of Norton, of John Rainolds and of reformed learning more generally.[16] By the disputation – and, more directly, by Rainolds's account – Walsingham hoped to counteract the results of the Tower debates.[17] A seminary priest, Hart had been captured on his arrival in England that June, and had been scheduled to be executed beside Campion, but he had recanted en route to Tyburn and was granted a reprieve, apparently offering himself to Walsingham as an informant on William Allen. His wavering then occasioned the debate.[18] Lawrence Green has suggested that Walsingham was 'less interested in Hart's soul than in the political value of a recantation', adding that the temporal authority of the pope was the one point in the conference that concerned him.[19] In 1609, Walsingham's Catholic namesake was similarly to describe the conference as a Protestant contrivance, 'assigned' in lieu of a trial, after a challenge to disputation that – on its own terms – went unanswered.[20] But Protestant reports add another layer to the motive, and, while to be expected, this should not be dismissed. Rainolds's report states that he was sent to Hart 'for the better informing of [his] conscience and judgement'; and Hart's own preface to the work – whose reliability remains to be discussed – describes the occasion in similar, though resistant, terms.[21] While held at Nonsuch, Hart had been sent to Rainolds at Oxford, for three months' unreported

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14 *ODNB* Rainolds, John.

15 Compare John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584), pp. 29–32 and Strype, *Whitgift*, pp. 98–9. Three versions of Rainolds's account survive: *The Summe of the Conference*, a Latin edition and an incomplete manuscript in Lambeth Palace Library (MS 402), signed by Hart on the last page.

16 Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 30–33.

17 *ODNB* Rainolds, John; Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 9–10.

18 Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1977), p. 60; E.E. Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons: The Jesuit Mission of 1580–1* (London, 1980), p. 152; B.A. Harrison, *A Tudor Journal: The Diary of a Priest in the Tower, 1580–1585* (London, 2000), pp. 31–2, 163–5, 193.

19 Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, p. 31.

20 Francis Walsingham, *A Search Made into Matters of Religion* (1609), p. 3; Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, pp. 481–2.

21 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 9–10, 33.

'religious instruction', and this same drive can be seen in the report of their later debate.[22] Hart's preface denies any doubt on his own part, demonstrating a Catholic resistance to any disputation not held to the rule of the church.[23] But, although Hart, even as presented here, was not open to instruction, this does not stop Rainolds trying. Like Campion, he comes to teach – and thereby save – his adversary, after the manner of 1582.[24]

The disputation was spread over several encounters, but is presented by Rainolds as one, uninterrupted whole: written exchanges between and after the divines' meetings are included within the report's continuous dialogue.[25] Thus, the work cannot at any point be taken as reported speech, but is a representation of methodology and purpose, designed by Rainolds himself. Its creation is described in the preface attributed to Hart: it began, the writer states, with 'breefe notes', upon which Rainolds expanded. Later, Hart was allowed to suggest amendments, but when he discovered that the account was to be printed, he tried to delay, eventually being permitted to review it with greater access to books.[26] This sequence of events cannot be taken as fact, or as written in Hart's own words: the vague explanation of his hesitancy ('for some considerations which seemed to me very great and important') is telling, as is a formulaic acknowledgement that the account is 'a true report'.[27] But Rainolds's preface similarly justifies the account, praising its preparation as a manner of debate unto itself. He describes a conference 'not by extemporall speaking, but writing with advise; the question agreed of; the arguments, the answeres, the replies set downe, and sifted of both sides, till ech had fully sayd'. It was a method akin to disputation; one 'most fit for triall of the truth'.[28]

Adherence to the disputation process is assumed, rather than expressly described. Logic form is used here, but is not so explicitly staged as it was with Campion. On the one occasion where Rainolds *does* offer detailed criticism of another's logical practice, he refers not to Hart but retrospectively to Campion, and his criticism is clearly tied to the *purpose* of such debate: 'I wish, if it had beene the good will of God, master *Campian* had had the grace in the Tower-conference to have aimed

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22 Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons*, p. 152; Harrison, *Tudor Journal*, pp. 31–2, 38n, 50n–51n.

23 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 9; Chapters 2 and 6.

24 John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sig. O.i^{r}; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the "Public Sphere"', p. 602.

25 Godfrey Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests* (4 vols, Ware, 1969–77), vol. 1, p. 154.

26 LPL, MS 402 represents a stage in this process. Though it is signed by Hart, the body text and edits share a distinct hand, and the alterations suggest Rainolds editing himself.

27 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 10–11.

28 Ibid., p. 15; Chapter 2 above.

at this marke: rather in sinceritie to have sought the truth, [than] with shiftes and cavilles the mayntenance of his cause and credit.'[29] He makes an assumption about its efficacy, but Rainolds's decision not to focus on formal logic is a reflection of his humanism and burgeoning puritanism: his own preference in the debate is towards listing, and other more rhetorical – and thus *persuasive* – methods.[30]

Unlike Campion's opponents, Rainolds does not let answers stand, or simply note them for subsequent, written exploitation. His approach is ruthlessly academic, and based on comprehensive evidence. Several times, he shows an answer from Hart to be false, only to prove that it was also unnecessary. On St Peter's presidency of two Apostolic gatherings, deployed to uphold the papal supremacy, he prefaces a response with: 'But, to yeeld unto you (for your most advantage) as much or more [than] any likely-hood may afford you … yet are you no neerer unto [the] supremacy which you shoote at.'[31] He argues that the schoolmen have little authority in scriptural interpretation, *before* demonstrating that they support his point.[32] Where Hart asks why he turned to lesser writers before the more respected fathers, Rainolds offers a reply that describes both his own approach and – inadvertently – the perceived ethos behind prison debate: 'They who deale with taming of lyons (I have read) are wont, when they finde them somewhat out of order, to beate dogges before them: that in a dogge the lyon may see his owne desert.'[33]

The most antagonistic aspect of this approach is that Rainolds, as Hart puts it in the account, is 'disposed to toy'.[34] Several times, he lays logical traps for the priest, forcing him into a corner (and thus meeting the requirement for victory in a disputation).[35] Once, Hart asserts, 'I see what you goe about'; Rainolds having begun an induction to prove that when the pope erred, he did so as pope. Rainolds replies 'You are too suspicious', before going on to make precisely the point predicted.[36] For one so opposed to the theatre in later life, Rainolds makes little effort to avoid linguistic or scholarly theatrics, and his use of colourful argument is a signal that he hoped to have some good effect.[37] Later in his career,

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29 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 46–7; Chapter 3 above.

30 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 42–3, 160, 335, 368–9, 466, 475, 482, 497, 513, 590.

31 Ibid., p. 153.

32 Ibid., pp. 109–13.

33 Ibid., pp. 495–6.

34 Ibid., p. 161.

35 Ibid., pp. 180, 446, 634; Chapter 2 above.

36 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 355–8.

37 Ibid., p. 80; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 79–82.

Rainolds is said to have used striking imagery and humour in teaching: Featley recalls that anyone who encountered his criticism of Aristotle's scholastic champions would laugh so hard as to endanger both spleen and health.[38] Rainolds's approach with Hart involves sarcasm, elaborate metaphor and *reductio ad absurdum*. One of his more dramatic extensions appears early in the work, where Hart introduces 1 Corinthians 12:21 ('the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you'), in support of the pope's single primacy. Rainolds asks who the feet are:

> The *Emperour* I trow, must be the right foote. The left, who? The *king of Spaine*? What shall the *French king* do then? It is well that the *king of Scots* is no member of it: nor the *king of Denmarke*. Marry we had newes of the *king of Swethland*, that Jesuits had converted him. Shall he be the left foote? Or shall the *king of Poleland* set in a foote for it? … how many feete may this body have?[39]

Similar absurdities occur further in, Rainolds deducing from his opponent's arguments that Peter was built upon himself, and was his own head.[40] But the cornerstone of his approach is the use of similitudes. Rainolds compares the work of Thomas Stapleton to the army of Antiochus; impressive only in the eyes of its creator. He compares the pope's usurpation of temporal power to that of Richard III (one *can* imagine Walsingham's smile of approval), casting Hart as one mistakenly working to defend that monarch. Throughout the account, Rainolds constructs analogies involving all manner of professions, historical anecdotes and classical tales. The Jesuits are said to mix counterfeit coin with genuine, on discovering that they have been given both. By way of an infamous debate between Diogenes and Plato, the false church becomes a plucked chicken.[41] What is important, in the context of Campion, is that these dramatic features all have a connection to scholarship: in appearance, they have more weight than the grandstanding of Nowell, Day and Charke. Rainolds was not above such grandstanding, but he works to validate it. Hart, in Rainolds's report, is quick to point out where Rainolds crosses a line: 'You triumph over me at every small occasion, as though you had a conquest'.[42] Several

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38 Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, p. 478; Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 55–6.

39 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 39–40; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Corinthians 12:21. In the Lambeth manuscript, this exchange is an insert, to replace a shorter argument: LPL, MS 402, fols 6^{v}–7^{v}.

40 Rainolds, *Summe of the* Conference, p. 63.

41 Ibid., pp. 62, 84, 95, 106, 123, 124–5, 144, 147, 152, 174, 192–3, 199, 237, 295, 361, 366, 404, 424–5, 428, 487, 555, 629.

42 Ibid., p. 169.

times, Rainolds is criticized for his tone, but this is framed in terms of his reputation.[43] His rhetorical flourishes are also countered by the evidence that accompanies them: Rainolds's points, however made, are never made to look trivial. Here, the aggression of Charke is offset with focused learning and humour; the pastoral simplicity of Campion is met with humanist poise. As a response to the Tower debates, Walsingham's choice of disputant was an astute one.

In the report, Hart is given space to offer arguments. But two things must be borne in mind, aside from the work's authorship: his alleged submission to Walsingham, and his level of ability. By Anthony Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*, Hart had attended Oxford, but later biographers find no record of him in college registers.[44] He took orders at Rome and proceeded to Douai, graduating just two years before being sent on the English mission.[45] Rainolds invokes his training in reaction to pleas of unpreparedness: Hart's course of study was short, but intense; and thus 'you may not alleage unripenes of yeares, or reading, or judgement: especially against me, before whome, in time so long, in place so incomparable, you tooke degree in divinitie'.[46] This is presented as a statement of equality, but Rainolds's preface – directed 'to the Students of the English Seminaries at Rome and Rhemes' – casts it in a different light. The preface emphasizes the time spent by English university students ('sixe yeares in the studie of Philosophie, for that you spend three; seven in Divinitie, for that you spe[n]d foure'), asking whether that in the seminaries was truly enough.[47] Transposing this back into the point on Hart's education, it becomes clear that beneath the purpose of disproving the papal supremacy (and winning Hart to the truth) lies an attempt to compare English and Continental Catholic training in logic and divinity.[48] This was a point the state and church had a keen interest in, particularly in Campion's aftermath.

Further, Rainolds does not miss an opportunity to drive a wedge between Hart and the Catholic Church. Where the priest cites Gilbert Génébrard, in arguing that popes not lawfully succeeding ought not be judged as popes, Rainolds observes that Génébrard there conceded that popes had erred, and that the succession had been broken; 'Wherein if you say the same with him, M. *Hart*; I am glad of it. But your felowes

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43 Ibid., pp. 91, 367, 599.

44 Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (2 vols, London, 1721), vol. 1, p. 277; Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols, London, 1877–83), vol. 2, p. 327n.

45 *ODNB* Hart, John.

46 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, pp. 34–5.

47 Ibid., pp. 20–21.

48 See ibid., pp. 349, 351–2, 486.

(I feare me) will not allow that you say'.[49] Further signs of this intention appear in their arguments on the Mass, where Rainolds implores:

> I would to God, *M. Hart*, you would … consider more deepely both the wicked abuses wherewith the holy sacrament of the Lords supper is profaned in your unholy sacrifice of the Masse; and the treacherous meanes whereby your Maister and Felowes of the College of *Rhemes* doo seeke to maintaine it.[50]

The participants' attributes give the report an active drive. Hart is a link to those readers addressed in the preface, and a counter to the martyred scholar who emerged from the mishandled Tower debates.

We must, however, distinguish the impact of the report from that of the conference itself, for Hart was not convinced. A capitulation of sorts comes near the close: 'Truly,' the priest says, 'I see more probabilitie on your side [than] I did'.

> I had thought … that you meant to give as much to [the] Prince by [the] title of [the] supremacie, as we do to the Pope. Where you give no more me thinkes … [than] *S. Austin* doth, who saith that *Kings do serve God in this*, *as Kings*, *if in their own realme they com*[*m*]*aund good things*, *& forbid evil*; *not only co*[*n*]*ceni*[*n*]*g the civil state of me*[*n*], *but the religion of God also*. And thus much I subscribe too.[51]

Rainolds's account contradicts the political interpretation, because he does not call a halt at the moment this leaves Hart's mouth.[52] Instead, he asks for more time, to discuss the true church. Hart refuses: 'I wil co[n]fer no farder herof, unles I have greter assura[n]ce of my life.'[53] Rainolds here suggests that he was authorized to proceed, but that Hart then proved a barrier. Once the *Summe* was printed, the priest was given his assurance, being deported to France the following year.[54] He travelled to Rome and was received into the Society of Jesus in November 1585, having applied during or soon after this debate.[55] The facts and purpose of the conference thus fell victim to polemical posturing: the victory in Rainolds's report is limited, and while he tells the seminarians to 'learn' from Hart, it was

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49 Ibid., pp. 330–35.

50 Ibid., p. 553.

51 Ibid., pp. 666, 674; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 55.

52 Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, pp. 31–2.

53 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 674.

54 Foley, *Records*, vol. 2, p. 106n; Harrison, *Tudor Journal*, pp. 19, 194; Reynolds, *Campion and Parsons*, p. 152.

55 Harrison, *Tudor Journal*, p. 194; Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, vol. 1, p. 154.

recorded – possibly by Hart himself – that in the midst of their exchange the priest was given 'twenty days in irons because he refused to agree with the minister Reynolds'.[56] But the *Summe* was a success. It achieved a necessary distance from the Tower debates, and would become an example for later writers. Ley, in the 1650s, would enthuse:

> had the learned and religious Doctor prevailed nothing at all with his Adversary … yet we cannot but account it an happy effect of their Dispute, that it produced in print so excellent a Book as the Report of that Conference is, so full of all kinde of Learning pertinently applied,[57]

A Sea Change in Anti-Catholic Disputation

As the 1580s continued, the Catholic threat became more immediate and visible, and many of those on the 1582 list fell into disfavour. The promise of the directive was not, in terms of its potential in polemic, fulfilled. But, despite a lack of printed accounts, disputation with Catholics continued. At Oxford in 1584, Rainolds faced his brother Edmund, in a blend of public and academic disputation, in the presence of the earl of Leicester and against the backdrop of Catholic activity at the university. Both were said to have performed well.[58] In the intervening year, the Yorkshire divine William Palmer had engaged the imprisoned priest William Hart on behalf of local authorities.[59] Far more intriguing are those depictions of prison disputation to be observed into the 1590s. Robert Abbot disputed with the priest Paul Spence at Worcester, but did not print their conference, 'least I should seem partial either for my self or against him'. His description of the debate maintains a tone of private consultation.[60] In the 1600s, Thomas Morton engaged a priest and a lay gentleman before a mixed audience. His biographer, John Barwick, asserted:

> I have heard there is still in some mens hands a true relation of that conferrence in writing; But he would never suffer it to be Printed, because he and his Adversaries engaged themselves by mutuall promise, not to Print it but by

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[56] Harrison, *Tudor Journal*, p. 57; William Allen, *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of XII Reverend Priests, Executed within these Twelvemonethes for Confession and Defence of the Catholike Faith* (1582), sig. B.v^{v}.

[57] Ley, *Discourse*, p. 56.

[58] Green, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures*, p. 32.

[59] *ODNB* Palmer, William; Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, vol. 1, p. 155.

[60] Robert Abbot, *A Mirrour of Popish Subtilties* (1594), sig. A4^{v}–*^{r}; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 178n; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation, 1500–1800* (London, 1997), p. 205.

> common consent, which he never could obtain from them, though he earnestly desired and sought it.[61]

These instances further suggest a diversity of purpose in anti-Catholic debate, with changes in audience and attitude. The concerns of Abbot and Morton sit at some remove from the encounters of 1581.

A focus on edification, or learned confutation, can be seen again if we turn, briefly, to a new set of circumstances. In June 1600, a student of Trinity College, Dublin, disputed against Henry Fitzsimon, a Jesuit imprisoned in Dublin Castle.[62] Fitzsimon had returned to Ireland in 1594 and had reportedly allowed himself to be captured in the hope of finding chances to dispute; a strategy that had proved spectacularly unsuccessful.[63] His adversary in 1600 was James Ussher, later archbishop of Armagh – a student of Walter Travers and an adherent of Ramist logic.[64] Alan Ford has described their encounter as a case of the radical divines of Trinity being channelled against Catholicism – a less dangerous equivalent to the 1580s' harnessing of men like Travers, Field and Charke (now marginalized in England by Whitgift).[65] In the *form* of his disputation with Fitzsimon, however, it is Ussher's status as a student that shines through. The disputants have equal opportunities to oppose – Ussher allowing Fitzsimon to take the role 'verie willinglie'.[66] Formal logic is used throughout, and its force in asserting truth – within the 'course of disputation' – is urged.[67] The arguments move from syllogistic form to authority, the respondent's part is concise, and the question (the identification of the pope as Antichrist) is termed Ussher's 'thesis': it is a 'disputation' in *every* respect.[68] Though partly a result of Ussher's youth and 'precocious' intellectualism, here is

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61 John Barwick, *A Summarie Account of the Holy Life and Happy Death of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Late Lord Bishop of Dureseme* (London, 1660), pp. 67–8; R.B., *The Life of Dr. Thomas Morton, Late Bishop of Duresme* (London, 1669), pp. 17–19.

62 Ussher's account is held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Barlow MS 13, fols 80^{r}–82^{v}, with a letter to Fitzsimon, fol. 83^{r-v}. For this reference, I remain indebted to Professor Ford. A marginal deviation from its dialogue suggests some abbreviation, and Ussher's letter indicates more than one meeting: Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford, 2007), p. 13n.

63 Ford, *Ussher*, p. 12.

64 Ibid., esp. pp. 26, 36–44.

65 Ibid., p. 59; Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts, 1590–1640* (London, 1972), p. 181; Declan Gaffney, 'The Practice of Religious Controversy in Dublin, 1600–1641', in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish* (Oxford, 1989), p. 150.

66 Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fol. 82^{r}.

67 Ibid., fol. 80^{r}.

68 On the question, see Ford, *Ussher*, pp. 77–8.

a balanced, scholarly attempt to urge Protestant arguments; in which the goal, on all sides, is 'persuasion'.[69] Ussher's youth, Fitzsimon's fervour and the drive of Trinity provides an account of a phenomenon only glimpsed in England: prison disputation loosed from its early Elizabethan restraints.

New Opponents: Disputation with Puritans

Challenges Issued

By the mid-1580s, calls for disputation were coming from more than one direction. Puritan critics of the settlement were aware of the tests that might be applied and the authorities that could be brought to bear on the Prayer Book and church discipline, and had become increasingly vocal in calling for a debate. Such demands were particularly pronounced after Whitgift's rise to Canterbury in 1583: his drive for clerical conformity through subscription required both a defence of puritan positions and – where successful – demonstrations of resistance and security.[70] The puritan adherence to scripture, meanwhile, provided both the political shield *and* the ground and defined *quæstio* necessary to offer formal arguments.[71] *A Briefe and Plaine Declaration*, which appeared in 1584, emphasized this mandate, in asking that the queen and council 'appoynt on both sides the best learned, most Godly & moderate men to debate all differences of waight betweene them and us'. The format is set out as a manner of disputation – unsurprising, in a work attributed to William Fulke:

> that … the questions to be debated be without all ambiguitie set downe, the reasons of both sides without all out-goynges shortly and plainely delivered in writing each to other, that after upon sufficient examination the reasons of both be continuallye confirmed and resolved, till eyther by the evidence of truth one part yeeld unto the other; or the folly and madnes of those which gaynesay it, do in equall judgement become manifest,[72]

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[69] Bodl., Barlow MS 13, fols 80^{r}, 83^{r-v}; Ford, *Ussher*, p. 12.

[70] Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 155, 159, 172.

[71] See Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 73; Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London, 1988), pp. 72–3; Peter Lake, 'Defining Puritanism – Again?', in Francis J. Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston, MA, 1993), p. 23.

[72] William Fulke, *A Briefe and Plaine Declaration, Concerning the Desires of all those Faithfull Ministers, that Have and Do Seeke for the Discipline and Reformation of the Church of Englande* (1584), sigs A2^{v}–A3^{r}.

The *Declaration* calls for a debate aimed at truth, without evasion or 'Lordly carrying away of the matter', and it draws from the Acts and Corinthians to support this manner of test by scripture.[73] Complaints that the debate might devalue the authority of the state or bishops, or that the challenge was similar to that of the Jesuits, are pre-empted: the work returns to scripture to correct the former, and in contrasting its challenge with those of the Catholics, it distinguishes both the severity of their threat to the settlement, and the *type* of debate being urged:

> they call it to a sudden and tumultuous reasoning, where the readiest wit, the best memorye, the moste filed speech, shall carry awaye the truth … We require that where both sides may upon mature & sufficient deliberation be heard without any of these shewes, and the matter delivered unto her majestie, their Hh: and whomsoever they shall chuse, to receive and examine the allegations of both sides:[74]

Formal debate is distinguished from rhetorical invention or performance – the object is not the 'show' of truth, but truth itself.

As the 1580s continued and Whitgift's policies turned towards a resistant minority, this challenge was pressed in more aggressive terms. John Udall phrased it thus:

> Let us bee disputed with before indifferent judges, let the holy word of God bee the touch-stone to trye our disputations by, and then shall it easily appeare, who hath the Lord on his side and who not. The trueth will prevaile in spite of your teeth, and all other adversaries unto it … Venture your byshopprickes upon a disputation,[75]

Udall groups the bishops and conformist divines with other adversaries to God's truth.[76] But he also echoes those assumptions voiced by Fulke, and those of Catholic challengers: a disputation, properly performed, will affirm that truth before authorities 'indifferent'; it is a counter to human invention and error. The challenges also play a similar political role. Like Campion's Brag, they are an appeal to the queen over the heads of worldly adversaries, and present an image of necessary action compelled

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73 Ibid., sig. A3^{r-v}.

74 Ibid., sig. A4^{v}; Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, pp. 76–7, 79; Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, esp. pp. 57, 64–5, 68.

75 John Udall, *A Demonstration of the Trueth of that Discipline which Christ hath Prescribed in his Worde for the Governement of his Church* (1588), sigs B^{v}–B2^{r}; Martin Marprelate, *Oh Read Over D. John Bridges* (1588), sig. A2^{v}.

76 Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p. 83.

by the truth.[77] The goal of the disputation urged was persuasion, on a grand scale.

Challenges Answered

Significantly, these challenges were not always – or simply – dismissed. John Bridges was to reject the *Declaration* on several grounds, not least because the puritans' minds, he said, were already made up: they would give the determination to the queen and council in name only, and had 'alreadie *debated*, *weighed*, *judged*, *determined*, *and prescribed* these thinges, and that, for *necessitie*'. He was also to attack Fulke's emphasis on establishing the questions: 'who shall have this *sufficient consideration of the questions* that are to *be set downe*, whether they be fit *questions*, or no?' The lack of a moderator, of an agreed *quæstio* or binding conclusion, was an obstacle to disputation; the academic emphasis of the *Declaration* belied the puritans' intractability, and was itself not so clearly defined as it would have its readers believe. In other words, while Fulke holds disputation up as an ideal, Bridges takes that ideal a step further.[78] He picks up on the citation of 1 Corinthians 14 to suggest that the debate proposed was not a disputation, but a prophesying:

> For that was not a strict and logicall *reasoning*, nor a deliverie of their assertions and aunswers by *writing*: but a discoursing at large by mouth: nor so properlie anie disputing, one against another, as an interpreting, one after an other, or exhorting, instructing, and comforting one another,[79]

Bridges asked, in essence, what the proposed conference was for.[80] It was a point Whitgift had raised during the *Admonition* controversy of the 1570s: he had told Thomas Cartwright, it 'may be noted, what you hunt after and seeke for, when you refuse private conference by writing offered unto you, and cry out for publike disputation: *scilicet popularem laudem*'.[81] This suspicion would resurface in the 1580s. On meeting a gathering of

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[77] Ibid., pp. 72–85; Peter Lake, 'Defining Puritanism', pp. 10–11; Peter Lake, 'Puritanism, (Monarchical) Republicanism, and Monarch: or John Whitgift, Antipuritanism, and the "Invention" of Popularity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 40/3 (2010): p. 466.

[78] John Bridges, *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England for Ecclesiasticall Matters* (1587), pp. 14–16.

[79] Ibid., p. 17; Fulke, *Briefe and Plaine Declaration*, sig. A3^{r}; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Corinthians 14:29–33; Chapter 1 above.

[80] Bridges, *Defence of the Government*, pp. 16, 18.

[81] 'certainly popular praise': John Whitgift, *The Defence of the Aunswere to the Admonition* (1574), p. 354; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards*

Kentish petitioners, Whitgift suggested 'that they rather sought a Quarrel against the Book, than to be satisfied'. He asked what 'Spirit' moved them, 'so boldly to offer themselves, thus to Reason and Dispute … against the State established in Matters of Religion; and against the Book, so Learnedly and Painfully Penned, and by so great Authority, from Time to Time confirmed?'[82] Here, Whitgift undercuts the image of loyal necessity the challenges worked to put across, but in doing so he echoes both their own certainty *and* Bridges's distinction on the grounds of a disputation. The situation, then, is not simply one of puritans calling for a debate and their conformist adversaries refusing it. The argument is over the purpose intended; over which side might expect to have their views confirmed.[83]

Larger petitions were met with private consultations, and disobedience or refusal of subscription after 1583 was dealt with by examination, but these calls for a disputation did lead to one debate.[84] At Lambeth Palace, over two days in December 1584, Thomas Sparke and Walter Travers opposed Whitgift, Edwin Sandys of York and Thomas Cooper of Winchester, before an audience including Leicester, Walsingham, Lord Grey of Wilton and (for the second day) Lord Burghley.[85] Sources for this Lambeth meeting are scarce, but a full manuscript account was produced by Travers, and the event is confirmed elsewhere. *The Unlawfull Practises of Prelates*, a pamphlet of the same year, was written partly to vindicate the puritans.[86] Whitgift's biographers George Paule and, later, John Strype give flattering reports of the archbishop's performance.[87] Cooper also confirms that the event took place: '*M. Travers* … He never sawe him to his remembrance, but once, and that was at my Lord of *Canterburies*, in the presence of some honourable persons: at which time the man shewed no great learning'.[88] We know that this encounter occurred, between these

Reason, Learning and Education, 1560–1640 (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 68–9; Lake, 'Puritanism, (Monarchical) Republicanism, and Monarchy', p. 473.

82 Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 127.

83 Lake, 'Puritanism, (Monarchical) Republicanism and Monarchy', pp. 466–7.

84 Strype, *Whitgift*, pp. 125, 137; Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), pp. 249–50, 253–4.

85 Travers's account is contained in Dr Williams's Library, London, Morrice MS B, fols 368–86, and BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 49^{r}–63^{r}. On Travers's authorship, see S.J. Knox, *Walter Travers: Paragon of Elizabethan Puritanism* (London, 1962), p. 64n. The Morrice manuscript is partially transcribed in A. Peel, *The Seconde Parte of a Register* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1915), vol. 1, pp. 275–83. On the date, see Anon., *The Unlawfull Practises of Prelates against Godly Ministers* ([1584?]), sig. C2^{r}; Knox, *Walter Travers*, p. 64; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 269.

86 Anon., *Unlawfull Practises*, esp. sigs C2^{r}, C8$^{r–v}$.

87 George Paule, *The Life of the Most Reverend and Religious Prelate John Whitgift, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (1612), pp. 30–31; Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 170.

88 Thomas Cooper, *An Admonition to the People of England* (1589), p. 78.

participants and before a powerful audience; but its performance and purpose are open to question.

Travers presents the Lambeth meeting as a concession from Whitgift, drawn by the influence of Leicester and other forward members of the Privy Council: in this he offers an object for the event's persuasive purpose. Towards the beginning of the account both sides make statements, and in each the conference is described in similar terms. For Whitgift, the goal is to satisfy (or dismiss) the puritans, while for Sparke and Travers it is nothing short of a demonstration before the gathering, and – ultimately – changes to the Prayer Book. Whitgift's speech distinguishes the event from an examination:

> you appeare not nowe judiciallie before me, nor come not as called to question by authoritie for these thinges, but by waye of conference to object, what you have to saye against the booke that it may be aunswered. For which cause is shalbe free for you (speaking in dutie) to charge the booke [with] such matters as you suppose to be blameworthie in it.

Travers's account here builds on the perceived sympathies of the audience, and again in reporting Thomas Sparke's opening statement, which offers thanks to god, and to those gathered, for the 'conveniente libertie and freedom which his [Lordship] had promised us, to declare what pointes of the booke had neede to be revisited, and reformed'.[89]

The question is, which characterization of the meeting's purpose was closer to the truth – was it, as Travers's depiction of Whitgift and the accounts of the archbishop's biographers might suggest, a dismissal of puritan objections? Or was it a real opportunity for them to urge their arguments, sanctioned by those on the council who opposed Whitgift's drive for conformity through deprivation? It was certainly an expression of tensions at the heart of Elizabeth's government – that year, Walsingham and Burghley had brought Whitgift to moderate his approach, and the two puritans had ties to several of those present.[90] Sparke counted Lord Grey as a patron and had served under Cooper at Lincoln.[91] Travers had become chaplain to Lord Burghley's household and tutor to Robert Cecil in 1580,

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[89] BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 50^{r}.

[90] Anon., *Unlawfull Practises*, sigs C3^{v}–C4^{r}; Strype, *Whitgift*, pp. 126, 137, 143–4, 157–66; Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp. 63–4; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 255–9, 263–9; Lake, 'Puritanism, (Monarchical) Republicanism, and Monarchy', esp. pp. 468–9, 490.

[91] Thomas Sparke, *A Sermon Preached at Cheanies* (1585), sig. A.v^{r}; Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (5 vols, London, 1813–29), vol. 2, p. 189.

before securing a position at the Temple.[92] The gathering at Lambeth, then, seems more inclined towards the puritans than to Whitgift; although this did not equate to support for their position. Leicester is Travers's greatest source of optimism. The two puritans are of his choosing, a fact that Travers places in Whitgift's introduction:

> whereas my L. of Leicester had requested for his satisfaction in such pointes in the booke of Common prayer; as were called into question that he might heare what the ministers did reproove and how such thinges were to be aunswered, he [Whitgift] had granted my L. to procure such to come thither for that purpose as might seeme best to his good [Lordship].[93]

Leicester sought counsel, and Sparke and Travers were the men chosen to provide it. This is partially confirmed by Paule's biography of Whitgift: several in the audience had been led away by puritan arguments, and so the meeting was for their 'satisfaction', not the puritans' dismissal.[94] By Travers's account, Leicester took a direct role: he questioned Whitgift and agreed with Travers's interpretation of individual passages.[95] On the second day, he actually *reminds* Sparke of an objection on baptism, and later observes, 'it was a pitifull thing that soe manie of ye best ministers, & painefull in their preacheing, stoode to be deprived for these thinges'.[96] He also directs the event's practicalities.[97] With this in mind, it is significant that Travers then depicts the meeting as a journey, rather than the more customary battle.[98] A delay in the second day's debate, to allow Burghley to catch up, prompts this: 'by which occasion, as by a contrarie winde, alreadie a good waye uppon the voyage, we were cast back againe, & touched againe all the places we had bene before'.[99] Whitgift was not to be defeated – the lords were to be carried to the truth.

The outcome of this debate would argue against any optimistic interpretation of its purpose, and has remained the focus for research.[100]

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92 Strype, *Whitgift*, pp. 173–5; Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp. 54–5, 65–9; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 201–2, 271; Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p. 10; Prest, *Inns of Court*, pp. 192, 195; Lake, 'Puritanism, (Monarchical) Republicanism, and Monarchy', p. 468.

93 BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 50^{r}.

94 Paule, *Whitgift*, pp. 30–31.

95 BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 54^{v}, 55^{v}; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 269.

96 BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 60^{r}, 62^{r}.

97 Ibid., fols 62^{v}–63^{r}.

98 See Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 22; the Conclusion below.

99 BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 56^{r}.

100 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 462–3; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, p. 155.

S.J. Knox, in his biography of Travers, argued that the puritans at Lambeth were subject to a form of self-censorship, in that they did not argue for a change to church discipline.[101] In Travers's report, where Leicester asks for new objections, Whitgift answers: 'yea [they] wold call the [bishops'] authoritie into question & other thinges', but the puritans then retreat to the matter of a suitable preaching ministry.[102] Though Whitgift did not (as Paule and Strype claim) convince the gathering or return the puritans to conformity, neither does the impact of the conference match puritan challenges, or the promise of Travers's report.[103] Upon Leicester's lament, Travers invokes the demonstrative nature of the exchange:

> I must needes say in conscience to god, & in the dutie I owe to her most excellent [Majesty], to yo[u]r good [Lordships], & to this whole Church and State, that the ministers in soe doeing have don well, & ought not to have yelded … the matters being such, which they were to subscribe to, as [your Lordship] hath partly hearde, & partly is further to be shewed.[104]

What we have in his account is another type of challenge; another comparison of the truth, upheld by disputation, with obstinate and worldly error.

As Antoinina Bevan Zlatar has discussed, this event, like the Tower debates, would prompt fictional attempts to restage it.[105] But Travers's report performs a similar role. Here, Whitgift is evasive and unlearned; opposed to the image, ideals and purpose of disputation. Travers exalts the process – the roles are not formally introduced, but they are identifiable by the structure of the arguments, and in his use of language. In presenting objections to the Prayer Book, he and Sparke take the role of opponents, and there is use of 'reply' and 'answer' to denote their oppositions and Whitgift's responses.[106] Travers had been educated at Cambridge, and after Campion he had appeared on that catalogue of divines suggested for anti-Catholic disputation.[107] He thus knew how important the process was, and further how it could be used to give the truth every chance. Here, Whitgift is placed in the respondent's role, as Campion had been.[108] This situating

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101 Knox, *Walter Travers*, p. 64.

102 BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 62^{r}.

103 Paule, *Whitgift*, p. 31; Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 170; Knox, *Walter Travers*, p. 64n; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 269–70.

104 BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 62^{r}.

105 Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, pp. 159–60.

106 BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 51^{r}–62^{v}.

107 Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 99.

108 Further echoes of Campion include Whitgift's refusal of an opening prayer (BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 50^{v}; Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.353, fols 1^{r-v}, 7^{v}, 13^{r}; Field, *Three*

of the archbishop underlines a sense of puritan victory, but Travers also subscribes to Charke's 'if your cause were good' view, and the account's subtext relates to a respondent's duty to confirm his thesis – in this case, Whitgift's defence of the Prayer Book. Any fault in the archbishop is thus a fault in his cause, and they are many. Whitgift is evasive (a cardinal sin where the *quæstio* was paramount): the puritans' points are often followed by swift transitions, at his urging.[109] His learning is also called into doubt: he does not read the languages in which scripture was written; admittedly having little knowledge of Hebrew.[110] If we match these points to the image of disputation in previous challenges (and developed in conformist replies), they take on new meaning: the archbishop was the opponent of truth, as drawn from scripture and confirmed by correct disputing.

The positioning of disputation in Travers's Lambeth report is thus equal to that of puritan *and Catholic* challenges. Whitgift had, with great prescience, argued after the Kentish petition that such questioning would weaken his authority, and that is Travers's intent.[111] Where Whitgift states 'yea [they] wold call the [bishops'] authoritie into question', this does not appear to be a challenge unanswered, but an ironic nod from Travers himself, to a task already accomplished. The debate aligns the puritans with scriptural authority against the worldly rule of the archbishop, but also with disputation, as a mode of confirmation sitting at one remove from human invention. Whitgift's archiepiscopal authority is measured here by the procedural authority of disputation, and he is found wanting.

Cooper, of course, was to make the same judgement of the puritans. In responding to the challenges of Marprelate and Udall in 1589, he stated that 'The desire of disputation is but a vaine brag: they have bene disputed & conferred with oftner [than] either the worthines of their perso[n]s or cause did require.' Lambeth and other, more private debates justified the refusal of further argument. Disputation had confuted puritan points (at least, by Whitgift's reckoning), and their purpose in calling for a debate had been revealed. Like the Jesuits, they were unable to defend their cause and merely sought a showcase for their dangerous opinions and 'popular' rhetoric.[112] Challenges would continue through the *Classis* movement of the 1590s, but the gauntlet would not be taken up in so public a setting until the conference at Hampton Court.[113]

Last Dayes, sigs H^{r}, O.i^{r-v}, T.i^{r}, T.i^{v}, Z.ii^{r-v}, Cc.iiii^{v}), and his distinction between the learned and unlearned (BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 54^{v}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. X.ii^{r}).

109 BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 52^{r}, 58^{v}, 61^{v}.

110 Ibid., fol. 57^{r-v}; see Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 100.

111 Strype, *Whitgift*, p. 127.

112 Cooper, *Admonition*, p. 39.

113 Richard Bancroft, *Daungerous Positions and Proceedings* (1593), pp. 80–81.

'*Christian conference*'

Despite a shared elevation of (and reliance upon) disputation, a key point in these disputes was precisely *how* it was to be used. On this fault line, the conflict was not simply between scripture and church tradition, but between scripture and *all* temporal authority, including reason. How far was disputation an effort to remove human invention, and how far was it a showcase for it; a fickle path into vanity and error?[114] Puritans had a contradictory attitude towards learning – it was necessary in ministers, and an aid to scriptural interpretation – but in these debates and challenges there is little emphasis on syllogistic reasoning.[115] It features once in Travers's Lambeth report, and is here raised not by the puritans, but by Burghley.[116] Later that decade, Travers would express reservations on its use: 'th'argumentes of Logike are as common to good and badde, as are the rules of grammer: yea as the Sun[n]e, and the rayne'.[117] For critics of the church, moreover, this infidelity of logic form was only part of the story: like the Jesuits, they had a keen awareness of setting and purpose. Thus, they held to a two-part format, emphasizing scripture as the determinant, and balance as a preventative against 'examination'. Thus far, I have tended towards the latter distinction, deeming events in consistory or before ecclesiastical commissioners to be separate from *disputation*. But one example does serve to underline the concerns of puritan disputants.

This instance also displays the prevalence of disputation in religious discourse. John Aylmer, having objected to the Tower debates, was not averse to formal logic. In 1578, his Commission had taken a precisian named Francis Merbury to task, in the consistory at St Paul's, and the exchange – by Merbury's account – had become a test of rudimentary logic and disputing.[118] Merbury herein accuses English bishops of murdering 'as manye soules as have [per]ished by the Ignorance of [the] ministers of ther makinge whom they knew to be [Trouble]': if Aylmer had made such ministers, he too deserved condemnation. To this, the bishop responds, 'Thy proposition is false[,] if it were in Cambridge it would be hissed out of [the] schooles', and this gives rise to an academic examination. Aylmer asks Merbury whether he knows the definitions of 'distinction' and 'difference', or the number of predicables and predicaments of scholastic logic. The man's protest, 'I am no logicien', soon ends this line

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114 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, esp. pp. 43–4, 48–57; Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp. 94–5.

115 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 106–10, 111; Chapter 1 above.

116 BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 56^{v}.

117 Walter Travers, *A Defence of the Ecclesiastical Discipline Ordayned of God to be Used in his Church* (1588), p. 180; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 110.

118 BL, Additional MS 39828, fols 23^{r}–24^{v}.

of questioning, but, while Aylmer takes the intellectual victory, Merbury maintains purity in truth.[119] In exchanges like this, examination could be tied to formal logic. The reaction against such a style was then drawn into a notion of 'conference' that eschewed scholastic wrangling, focused on the will and persuasion, and was grounded in the Word.

This stripped-back version of the disputation ideal was further articulated by the separatist Henry Barrow, in recounting a series of prison debates that saw himself and John Greenwood opposing representatives of the English Church. Greenwood had held several clerical posts before his separation, and while Barrow was a 'gentleman commoner', he had studied at Cambridge and Gray's Inn.[120] On their capture in 1587, a range of measures was taken against them which included both official examination and semi-public disputation. It was in this context, in the Fleet and at Whitgift's Lambeth, that Barrow would form his distinctions.[121] His examinations by Whitgift are viewed with contempt: Barrow presents the archbishop's method as one of 'interrogatories', devoid of form or concern with the truth.[122] But he and Greenwood were also called upon to take part in equitable debate, that the reason for their separation might be understood. In these, the pair are exacting in their requirements.[123] The recorded conferences took place over two months in 1590, in various rooms at the Fleet, and before a controlled audience.[124] On 9 March, Greenwood met William Hutchinson, archdeacon of St Albans and chaplain to Aylmer. On 14 March, Barrow faced the London divine Thomas Sperin. Three days later, Greenwood and Hutchinson resumed, the latter joined by one

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119 Ibid., fol. 23^{r-v}.

120 Henry Barrow, *The Writings of Henry Barrow, 1587–1590*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London, 1962), pp. 93–6; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 388; Patrick Collinson, 'Separation In and Out of the Church: The Consistency of Barrow and Greenwood', *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 5/5 (1994): pp. 244–6; Prest, *Inns of Court*, p. 196; *ODNB* Greenwood, John.

121 Barrow, *Writings*, p. 91; Collinson, 'Separation', pp. 252–3.

122 Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certaine Sclaunderous Articles* (1590), sig. D.ii^{v}; see Collinson, 'Separation', pp. 253–4. These examinations are detailed in Barrow, *Writings*, pp. 86–100, 101–5, 170–72, 173–89, 190–207; John Greenwood, *The Writings of John Greenwood, 1586–1590*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London, 1962), pp. 20–29; John Greenwood and Henry Barrow, *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow, 1591–1593*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London, 1970), pp. 85–9, 223–5, 226–9.

123 Collinson describes conferences between Barrow and 42 divines while he and Greenwood were in the Fleet (*ODNB* Barrow, Henry), but only seven were printed. These are contained in *Sclaunderous Articles*, sigs C^{r}–F.iii^{v} and Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certain Letters and Conferences Lately Passed betwixt Certaine Preachers & Two Prisoners in the Fleet* (1590), pp. 1–30, 48–66. For a chronology, see Greenwood, *Writings*, p. 337.

124 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sigs C.ii^{r}, C.iii^{v}, D.ii^{r}, D.iiii^{r}; Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, pp. 5, 58, 62–6.

Dr Bright, and the following day Barrow conferred with Hutchinson and Lancelot Andrewes. On 20 March, they both met with Sperin and another London minister, Stephen Egerton, and on 3 April they met Sperin and one Cooper. Andrewes and Hutchinson returned on 23 April.[125]

At the initial debate between Greenwood and Hutchinson, as described by Barrow, the latter expressed his purpose as 'not to examine him [Greenwood] … but to confer with him about his seperating of himself from the Church of England'. Greenwood's reply was that he had not asked for any such meeting, but was nonetheless 'willing of anie Christian conference, where it shall be free aswell to oppose as answere, & on both sides the matter to be recorded in writing'.[126] He assumes here that disputation will be applied, but views a restriction in the roles as tantamount to an examination. The term 'Christia[n] co[n]ference' is used again by Barrow, in a later account.[127] During his first solo meeting, where Sperin states that he was sent by Aylmer, Barrow retorts, 'what I hold concerning their Church of England the Bishhopps knew long agoe, & never as yet would grant either publicke or private conference, where the Booke of *God* might quietly decide the co[n]troversies betwixt us'.[128] Again, these are his criteria: ground in scripture; balance in the roles.

The separatists are also critical of logic form, as a barrier to the truth. Barrow is not above syllogistic argument, but refuses to be convinced by it. Reacting to a distinction from Sperin on the substance of a ministry, he states: 'whilest you professe science you make shipwrack of faith, & with your logick put away the Testame[n]t of Christ'.[129] He repeats this in a later debate, and in a dispute on the manner of proceeding ('whither it should be after their schole maner, by Logicke or no') he makes his position clear:

> I desired to reason after a Christia[n] maner, according unto truth, though not in logicall formes … I would not bynde the majestie of the Script. to logicall formes, whereabout we should have more vaine cavilles, and spe[n]d more tyme, [than] about the discussing of the question; and that my co[n]science could neither be convinced or instructed with anie syllogismes so much as with the weight of reason & force of truth.[130]

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125 On Hutchinson, see Barrow, *Writings*, p. 191. On Cooper, see Barrow, *Writings*, p. 506n. On Sperin, Egerton and Cooper, see Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, sig. A.ii^{r}; Collinson, 'Separation', pp. 241–2.

126 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C^{r}.

127 Ibid., sig. D.ii^{r}.

128 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 1.

129 Ibid., p. 9.

130 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sigs D.ii^{r}, D.iiii^{r}.

While he accepts *some* connection between formal logic and truth, in matters of faith it is a worldly restraint on scripture, which his opponents credit too much. Such views persist in later reports. Greenwood tells Sperin and Cooper: 'By your Logicke & prophane Artes you pervert the trueth of the Scriptures … You make it a cloke for your wickednes, with shiftes to torne away the trueth.'[131] The final encounter is written up in summary, and Barrow blames this on its 'disorderly' handling by Andrewes and Hutchinson, 'who sought nothing so much as to obscure & turne away the truth by theire schole learning, manifold cavills & shifts, shameles denyall of manifest truthes, & most unchristian contumelies, scoffes, & reproches against owre persons'.[132] 'Disorderly' partially translates as 'academic': Barrow's opinion of such learning informs his view of disputation. But the Cambridge man still uses syllogistic reasoning to engage his opponents, and his overall requirements match those of puritan challengers.[133] He and his fellows are not simple; they simply do not 'boast … of such things whereof they ought to be ashamed'.[134]

But how far did these encounters match the separatists' ideal, and thus differ from their examinations by authority? The identities of the opponents offer our first insight into the purpose of these events. With Campion in 1581, the use of radical disputants suggested a wariness of disputation: the Jesuit had to be confronted by wholly antithetical positions, to maximize the debates' force in dispelling Catholic error. But, in 1590, several of those sent to the separatists were proximate to them on the reformed spectrum.[135] Barrow voices surprise that Sperin was there for Aylmer: 'I had heard he had sometymes bene otherwise minded'.[136] He also reports that in opposing Sperin and Egerton, where he declared the bishops to be an Antichristian addition to Christ's ministry, Egerton halted Sperin's denial: 'Mr. *Egerton* willed him never to denye that, which they had agreed uppon'.[137] Cooper, too, can be placed in this category: in the confused, discursive close of 3 April, he is reported by Barrow to have remarked: 'We graunt the things they seeke are good, and manie of us have written and taught fullie the same, but they seeke them not by due

131 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 50.

132 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. E.iiii^{v}.

133 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 23; Henry Barrow, *The Pollution of Universitie-Learning* (London, 1642), pp. 3–4, 7–8; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 68, 241–2; Chapter 6 below.

134 Barrow, *Pollution*, p. 2.

135 Collinson, 'Separation', pp. 241–2.

136 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 2.

137 Ibid., pp. 21, 29.

order.'[138] Though it did not prevent heated and ultimately inconclusive debate – mainly because the separatists saw their opponents as *apostata*, blind to the conclusions of scripture – use of these ministers, alongside divines like Lancelot Andrewes, suggests a new faith in disputation; not as a form of exploitation, but as a genuine effort to return the separatists to the church.[139] This said, Cooper himself, in Barrow's report, describes these events as another form of examination: 'They denie our Church & ministrie & therfor are not to be disputed with'.[140] Barrow, it seems, retained a keen distrust of his visitors' motives.

The nature and purpose of these meetings can further be understood through the liberties granted the separatists, and the topics covered. By Barrow's account, Hutchinson told Greenwood that 'he came by virtue of Commission', and this prompted the separatist to require a witness and access to writing materials.[141] The request is granted. Similarly, in a clash over written answers with Sperin and Cooper, the separatists could take the initiative: Cooper questions their intentions ('To what purpose? You seeke writing [but] to catch'), but Greenwood decides, 'we will write, though you will not'.[142] There is little interest here in publicizing the separatists' views.[143] Barrow takes these conferences as an opportunity to display the error and hypocrisy of his adversaries; but what was the aim of the adversaries themselves? The questions cover the nature and authority of the English Church, but are introduced with a consistent theme: asked to state the reason for his coming, Hutchinson accepts a distinction between 'examination' and 'conference', and a focus on Greenwood's separation is expressed.[144] In a later debate, Sperin tells both prisoners, 'I would know the causes of your forsaking our Church'.[145]

For the church representatives, these are disputations to reclaim. For Barrow, they are misguided, disingenuous efforts, resting on faulty ground, more in love with the process of argument than its end, and – at times – approaching that repressive 'examination' which was antithetical to disputational ideals on every side. As has been noted, puritans had other models of conference against which these events could be measured. Where Sperin offers a prayer at the opening to one debate, he is rebuked by Greenwood: 'Whie do you

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138 Ibid., p. 64.

139 Ibid., sig. A.ii^{r}, p. 7; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 336, 347; Collinson, 'Separation', esp. pp. 242, 246, 257–8.

140 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, pp. 63–4.

141 Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C^{r}; see Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 1.

142 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 52.

143 However, see Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C^{r}.

144 Ibid., sigs C^{r}, D.ii^{v}.

145 Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 16.

here take uppon you to offer up the prayers of us all without our consent, *we not being met togeather to that purpose* [my emphasis]'. At Lambeth, Travers had Whitgift make this same distinction, warning Sparke: 'he shold make noe prayeres there, nor that place a conventicle'. These events are described as wholly alien to separatist gatherings, just as Lambeth did not match puritan exercises.[146] But both cases fall short of another, more oppositional category; one that mingled the equity of disputation with simplicity, and tempered a belief in the force of reason with reliance upon scripture. From the challenges of Fulke and Udall through godly debate in the 1610s, Barrow's 'Christian conference' was not a short-lived idea.

Conversion and Reclamation

Persuasion was the goal and purpose of a public religious disputation – Rainolds speaks to Hart of 'the truth: wherein I wish your companie' – and, while in some cases this was only a hope or an ideal, such claims were not made *entirely* for show.[147] At its best, a disputation allowed individuals to weigh, with the aid of academic procedure, the claims of competing doctrines or institutional churches – a combat between 'Truth and Error', as Daniel Featley would describe it; 'As, by smiting the Flint with the Steele, wee strike out fire'.[148] After conversion, it could offer an arena for the performance of faith, after the model of St Paul and Augustine.[149] Underlying all such debate, however, was a belief that the force of truth, urged with faith and learning, could work a positive effect.[150] This, too, was assumed from prior evidence: an anonymous *Epistle, or Apologie* from the early seventeenth century has the reminder that,

> from age to age as heresies have risen in the Churche like course of conference hath bene taken to *confirme the faithfull & converte the misbeleevers*, even

146 Ibid., p. 48; BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 50^{v}; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 222–6; Collinson, 'Separation', pp. 249–50; Lake, 'Defining Puritanism', p. 15; Chapter 1 above.

147 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 360; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sigs O.i^{r}, O.ii^{r}; Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C^{r}; Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, p. 1.

148 Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sig. I*^{v}; Michael Questier, '"Like Locusts over All the World": Conversion, Indoctrination and the Society of Jesus in Late Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in McCoog, *Reckoned Expense*, pp. 273–5.

149 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 56–7; Molly Murray, '"Now I ame a Catholique": William Alabaster and the Early Modern Catholic Conversion Narrative', in Ronald Corthell, Frances E. Dolan, Christopher Highley and Arthur F. Marotti (eds), *Catholic Culture in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2007), p. 205.

150 Questier, *Conversion*, p. 17; Chapter 1 above.

> until these late daies as appeareth by those conferences which have bene in Germanie not only amoung the Papistes, but also amoung the followers of those notable reformers M. Luther & M. Calvin by reason of the diversities of theire opinions in matters of faith [my emphasis].[151]

Such examples persuaded a wide range of writers that conference had a role in conversion: Robert Persons's history of the practice affirmed 'that disputations in points of Religion are sometymes necessary, & do much good'.[152] Fulke, in urging a conference with the Wisbech Catholics, stated: 'If disputations had not beene a meane to faith, the Apostles would not have used them'.[153] Set against this was an awareness that the 'grounds and principles, are not knowne to us by light of nature … but are receaved only by light of faith, & reveyled from God': conversion was moved by grace, more in the will than in the understanding.[154] Even for that champion of disputation Featley, 'the readier and surer means to be resolved in matter of faith, is by zealous and fervent praier, than by hot and eager disputing'.[155] But faith's handmaid was not easily dismissed.[156] For some, reason took a role in preparation, and for most in demonstrating truth, and it was not to be abandoned to the enemy.[157] It is this concern that fuels disputation. In addition to the examples discussed below, relatives of the Catholic convert Edward Walpole hired ministers to dispute against popish errors, in a deliberate attempt to return him to the church.[158] George Walker reports the following from Sir William Harrington at a meeting in the 1620s: 'Now cousen, if ever thou wilt bee converted, be converted with these proofes'.[159]

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151 Anon., *An Epistle, or Apologie of a True, and Charitable Brother of the Reformed Church* ([1605?]), fol. 12r.

152 N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), pp. 14, 72. Michael Questier takes a different view, though the difference is partly one of emphasis: Questier, '"Like Locusts over All the World"', p. 280.

153 William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sig. B2v.

154 N.D., *Review*, pp. 23–4; Questier, '"Like Locusts over All the World"', p. 273; Zlatar, *Reformation Fictions*, pp. 25–6. Compare Morgan, *Godly Learning*, esp. pp. 46–7, 54–5.

155 Daniel Featley, *An Appendix to the Fishers Net* (1624), p. 52.

156 Rainolds, *Summe of the Conference*, p. 255; Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 126; Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 41, 57, 232, 243.

157 Morgan, *Godly Learning*, p. 61.

158 Henry More, *The Elizabethan Jesuits: Historia Missionis Anglicanae Societatis Jesu (1660)*, ed. Francis Edwards (London, 1981), pp. 273–4; *ODNB* Walpole, Edward; Chapter 6 below.

159 George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), sig. Fr.

'Nolo mortem peccatoris': Official Sanction

In 1577, the bishops and Privy Council set out a regimen of private conferences to be used with prominent recusants, a policy that was later enhanced.[160] Into the 1590s, at the urging of the ardently anti-Catholic earl of Huntingdon, Thomas Morton conferred with a number of recusants, his biographer John Barwick citing the queen's instruction 'to convince them by arguments rather [than] suppress them by force'.[161] The earl would similarly ask Lancelot Andrewes to aid him in converting northern recusants by conference.[162] In 1604, this duty was formalized in canon law, Canon 66 instructing that a bishop must apply divines to the purpose, while himself using 'his best endeavour by instruction, persuasion, and all good means he can devise, to reclaim both them and all other within his diocese so affected'.[163] Neither were such efforts exclusively anti-Catholic: near the close of Hampton Court, by William Barlow's report, James I stated that 'conferences, and perswasions' would precede any enforcement of certain points of conformity.[164]

William Alabaster, Tobie Matthew and Francis Walsingham

It remains to be seen how close a relation the exchanges envisaged in such commands bore to disputation, and thus what they can tell us about the perceived efficacy of that process. Examples survive in the conversion narratives of William Alabaster in the 1590s, and of Tobie Matthew and the Catholic Walsingham in the seventeenth century. Alabaster had converted through an attempt (by conference) to convert the priest Thomas Wright. While Alabaster describes their encounters as not 'to any great purpose of matters of controversie', it was in the priest's chamber that he came across William Rainolds's *Refutation of Sundry Reprehensions*

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160 Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 151–2; Anthony Milton and Alexandra Walsham, 'Richard Montagu: "Concerning Recusancie of Communion with the Church of England"', in Stephen Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 72; Peter Lake, 'A Tale of Two Episcopal Surveys: The Strange Fates of Edmund Grindal and Cuthbert Mayne Revisited', *TRHS*, 18 (2008): esp. p. 149.

161 Barwick, *Summarie Account*, p. 67. On Morton, see Tobie Matthew, *A True Historical Relation of the Conversion of Sir Tobie Matthew to the Holy Catholic Faith*, ed. A.H. Matthew (London, 1904), p. 84n.

162 Henry Isaacson, *An Exact Narration of the Life and Death of the late Reverend and Learned Prelate, and Painfull Divine, Lancelot Andrewes, late Bishop of Winchester* (1651), fol. 4^{r}.

163 C.H. Davis (ed.), *The English Church Canons of 1604* (London, 1869), p. 64; Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 172–3.

164 William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference* (1605), p. 96.

(1583), the reading whereof drew him to Catholicism.[165] Alabaster held a Cambridge post and was examined by university authorities as well as by representatives of the church.[166] Tobie Matthew, the son of Archbishop Matthew of York, converted to Catholicism in the 1600s, partly through the efforts of Persons and again by study of Rainolds's *Refutation* – returning to England, he submitted himself to Richard Bancroft at Lambeth, to offset any 'offence' his conversion might cause, but then resisted conference.[167] Walsingham, a deacon drawn into doubt on reading Persons's *Defence of the Censure*, was examined by Bancroft in 1604, after trying to deliver a copy of that work to the king.[168] All three would ultimately be sent to confer with a range of divines, and their narratives offer an indication as to what the authorities, and the converts themselves, took to be an effective form of discourse, aimed at conversion.

None of their accounts describes these exchanges as meeting the structural ideals of disputation: citation of authorities is preferred on all sides above logic form.[169] The events' personal, private nature, their examinatory emphasis and the significance of a lay convert compared to that of a captured Jesuit, places them on the outer reaches of that spectrum in Chapter 2. But for the converts themselves this is a source of disappointment, and signifies error and evasion. Walsingham recalls telling William Covell, 'Syr, I would gladly make triall of the truth [of Persons's *Defence*]', to little avail: he was met with 'wrathfull speeches'.[170] When sent to George Downame, he found only 'light, and fantasticall' points on Protestant history, with 'bitter' anti-Catholic invectives.[171] Tobie Matthew's refusal to be convinced is said to have made Bancroft angry, and their exchanges bear little relation to the disputation process.[172] Nor, when Matthew is sent to face other divines, is the process applied. Once, with

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165 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, pp. 114–18; Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 88–93; Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 98–109; Murray, '"Now I ame a Catholique"', pp. 189–206.

166 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, pp. 131–58.

167 Matthew, *True Historical Relation*, esp. pp. 24–34, 60–70; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, pp. 115–19. On Rainolds's *Refutation*, see Murray, '"Now I ame a Catholique"', pp. 198–200.

168 Francis Walsingham, *A Search Made into Matters of Religion* (1609), pp. 26–52; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, pp. 109–15.

169 Matthew, *True Historical Relation*, pp. 67, 72–5, 84, 87, 91–2, 95–101, 104–9; Walsingham, *Search*, pp. 40–41, 48–50, 64, 66–70; Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, pp. 134, 135, 140–41, 144–7.

170 Walsingham, *Search*, pp. 41, 46, 49.

171 Ibid., pp. 63–72.

172 Matthew, *True Historical Relation*, pp. 75–83.

Lancelot Andrewes, he urges formal debate, on listing the marks of the true church: 'I besought him to let me say, because I thought it, and conceived also that I could prove it, if need were, that all these signs and marks did most absolutely belong to the Catholic Church'; but this gets lost in an unstructured discourse on a visible Protestant succession.[173] Alabaster is the most vocal in lamenting the gap between disputation and the 'conferences' he encountered.[174] His Cambridge examiners offered 'no reasoning at all', and when visited in prison by John Overall he recounts, 'to no bickering of disputation we ever came'.[175] He had also been sent to Lancelot Andrewes – because the bishops 'had fownd by experience that ther was little hope of a change in me, except they could convince my judgment by force of argument' – and, while he reports 'conference and disputation' with him, this was without structure.[176] In each case, conference soon gave way to official proceedings.

The authorities involved, however, display great faith in the efficacy of 'learned' discourse. Andrewes reminds Alabaster of the example of St Paul: 'yeat wanted ther on[e] thing in this your convertion, to witt, to have gone (as St Paule did after his convertion) [to] Jherusalem and conferr with Peeter, I mean … with some learned ministers'.[177] Bancroft, then bishop of London, expresses a hope that Alabaster 'was not yeat so farr gonn, but that I might be reclamed', and would later tell Walsingham: 'It is good you conferred with some that be learned'.[178] Matthew relates the point from Bancroft that 'I did … owe an equal and indifferent consideraton of all that which could be said on both sides', and an offer to meet with him twice a week.[179] There was also some awareness of the dangers, however. Alabaster recalls being introduced to the wavering priest Ralph Ithall, who had been brought to live with Bancroft in the hope that he might convert:

> he tolde me of hym, and saide he would have us talke together … but we had scarce begane to talke, but the B. repenting himselfe and thinkinge belike that I might rather move the preest to repentance, and to retorne to his ould life againe, [than] he me to retorne to protestantes Religion he came running backe in great hast, and saide that now he had thought of it, he would not have us talke together.[180]

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173 Ibid., from p. 96. See Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 144; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 27; Chapter 6 below.

174 Rodda, '"Condition and State"', pp. 394–5.

175 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, pp. 132–4.

176 Ibid., pp. 134–8, 142–5, 149; Rodda, '"Condition and State"', p. 395n.

177 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 143.

178 Ibid., p. 134; Walsingham, *Search*, pp. 50–51.

179 Matthew, *True Historical Relation*, pp. 62, 63.

180 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 136.

This belief in the potential impact of learned discourse is matched by the converts themselves, but they present a range of views as to its precise role. Walsingham depicts his encounters with English clergymen as a genuine *Search*, maintaining a hope that disputation will settle his conscience.[181] By contrast, Tobie Matthew is settled, grounding himself on the church: 'I must not hang my soul upon the cunning craft of a disputer', he insists.[182] But, earlier in his narrative, learned conference is presented as a positive force:

> the truth and certainty of Catholic doctrine is such that I hold it at this day the greatest miracle of the whole world that a man who is in any way of a judgment and will which is not mightily depraved, can forbear to subscribe entirely to the truth of Catholic doctrine … upon that kind of conference and proof, which he may easily hear thereof, within the space of a very few hours, from any Catholic learned man.[183]

Urging the truth (by disputation) is both worthy and effective; urging falsehood (again by disputation) is unnecessary and deceitful.[184] Alabaster takes this further – although he was not converted through debate with Wright (though he was, in part, by scholarship), on his conversion, following Augustine, disputation became a means of persuading others; a duty in holding truth: 'I imagined myself to speake with the protestantes and dispute for the Catholique faith; which I was resolved to defend, even unto death itself'.[185] The impression he gives is that, if the authorities had truly been concerned (and equipped) to convince him, formal disputation is what they *ought* to have used.

In these narratives, then, we find representatives of the English Church – despite their reported attitudes – making an engaged, varied effort to reclaim Catholic converts by authorities, by learned debate and with the language of truth and 'indifferent' (which might equally be read as 'formal'; 'independent of human error') consideration of arguments. The converts, meanwhile, also extol the benefits of learned conference in persuasion. Alabaster views disputation as a means of championing Catholicism, and of spreading it; Walsingham takes it to be a way of settling questions in favour of the truth; Matthew, for all his ardent refusal of conference with Bancroft and Andrewes, is the one who allows such interactions the most complete role in conversion. There are, of course, differences between private exchanges such as these and the demonstrative, public disputations

181 Walsingham, *Search*, p. 54; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, p. 109.

182 Matthew, *True Historical Relation*, p. 62.

183 Ibid., p. 26; compare Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 128.

184 Rodda '"Condition and State"', esp. pp. 400–402.

185 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 120; Murray, '"Now I ame a Catholique"', p. 205.

to which captive priests and Jesuits were subjected: these events were not intended for polemical exploitation – the state had little interest in calling attention to the converts' views.[186] But their assumptions on the role of truth and the force of conference reflect that most undervalued aspect of the Tower debates, and match the use of disputation set out in 1582.

Reports of Conversion upon Disputation

It cannot be denied that neither Alabaster, nor Walsingham, nor Matthew was returned to the English Church by the conferences appointed for that purpose. It can, however, be said that each saw this as a procedural failure, produced by flaws in their examiners, or naturally resulting from an absence of truth. Certainty is key: it tied intellectual debate and a decision between institutional churches to the pursuit of grace. The radical *Epistle, or Apologie* argued for the positive effects of conference, but it understood that 'Faith is the guift of god alone … none may be compelled to the faith'.[187] As Featley states, 'wit and learning without grace (such is the corruption of our nature) rather hinder, [than] further our conversion'.[188] Only with the truth, *and* the provision of God, could a disputation lead to conversion. But rather than rendering such efforts unnecessary, this made them essential: for the truth was known, and the provision of God to be hoped for. The search for correct proceeding in debate was thus a quest not to honour truth, but to set those fallen into heresy or doubt on the path to grace. The possibility for success was also kept alive through a steady flow of *exempla*. The journey from a demonstration of the truth into grace was itself supremely demonstrative: a convert persuaded by disputation, by the sight of truth *and* the grace of God, revealed the location of that truth more certainly than did disputation alone; for here human agency was not simply minimized, but superseded.

Following a disputation in the 1610s, one Catholic report stated that the doubting layman at the encounter's heart,

> upon the Ministers poore cariage in the dispute, and tergiversation afterwards when he shoulde have answered, disliked the Protestant Cause; (which he saw their Champion could not make good with argument in the presence of a Schollar, nor durst face to face appeare to defend it:) and soone after was reconciled unto the Church;[189]

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186 Alabaster, *Unpublished Works*, p. 148; Marotti, *Religious Ideology*, p. 106.

187 Anon., *Epistle, or Apologie*, fol. 8^{r-v}.

188 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Mm^{v}.

189 S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), pp. 191–2.

In the 1620s, John Percy would describe a similar effect in disputing for the countess of Buckingham: 'Upon this [the close of the final debate], and the precedent Conference, the Lady rested fully satisfied in her Judgment (as she tould a friend) of the truth of the Roman Churches Fayth'.[190] A subsequent debate between Featley and Percy is said by the former to have spawned claims that all those within earshot had converted:

> The higher Schollers in the Jesuites Schoole, thought it behooved them to make a *Catholick* or universall lye for the *Catholick* cause, by giving out, that the whole company of Protestants present at that Conference, was gayned to the Romish faith … on the contrary, they have openly profest, that they were much established and confirmed in the truth of the *Protestant* religion by it:[191]

The earl of Warwick, present in the event, is reported to have heard of these conversions, and his own, at Douai.[192] Of course, those repeating such tales understood their persuasive impact, but they also knew that theirs was the true church, that well-performed disputation ought to confirm the truth and that an illumination of the understanding was the precursor to conversion. Truth was known; the provision of God to be hoped for. Featley dismisses the claims above as lies, but might we also have cause to see them as *assumptions*?

After Campion: The Purpose of Religious Debate

The final decades of Elizabeth's reign did much to bring public religious disputation out of the shadow of the Tower. Polemical accounts and appropriations of the form responded to the Campion debates by restating academic and procedural ideals, and this can also be seen in puritan demands, and in reactions on this second front. In the process, those ideals were clarified, and the aim and object of a religious disputation were redefined. But we have more to go on than the assumptions underlying polemical appropriation of the practice. The role of conference in conversion, and the willingness of the English authorities, post-Campion, to apply the form in answering a variety of challenges, speaks to a genuine belief in its *force*. Disputation went beyond mere display: it could teach.

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190 A.C., *True Relations of Sundry Conferences* (1626), p. 72.

191 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. A^{v}.

192 Ibid., sig. *4^{r}; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 49.

CHAPTER 5

Disputation Distinguished

> Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devill, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.[1]

This question of purpose can be underlined further by that of meaning and significance. Previous chapters have discussed the authority of disputation with overwhelming reference to its past – the scholastic roots and academic trunk of the form, and its role in the ancient church and the early Reformation. But in this period, too, the weight of public disputation was being reinforced, by more than just the assertions of its practitioners. In the early decades of the seventeenth century, the turn of the king's mind, and the notion of reconciliation he shared in part with Henry IV of France, brought religious conference into positive contact with royal authority.[2] At the same time, accounts of disputation on the Continent, printed for an English audience, continued to demonstrate that the format, used correctly, could be a force for truth. This period saw conference and debate increasingly being elevated as a means of confuting error, settling divisions and achieving unity in the true faith: Philippe de Mornay, in a letter printed for refutation by Persons, argued that 'a conference of Religion … should tend to [reunite] and joyne togeather mens mynds, and not to disunite their affections', an effect dependent on good practice and demonstrable equity.[3] Thus, William Fulke was said to have maintained: 'If ever we must speake properly, we must do it when we dispute against heretiques', and Charke had imbued the Tower debates with a lofty, undisputed purpose: 'We stand before [the] face of God, for the maintenance of his truth'.[4] For some, a generous reading of St Paul offered justification for such debate, giving ground in scripture for what was known to be the case in questions of philosophy. Early in James's reign, the anonymous *Epistle, or Apologie* argued:

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1 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Jude 9.

2 W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 37–9.

3 N.D., *A Relation of the Triall Made before the King of France, upon the Yeare 1600 betweene the Bishop of Evereux and the L. Plessis Mornay* (1604), p. 26.

4 John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sigs Y.i^{r}, Aa.iiii^{v}.

> why should we forbid any to be heard in his interpretation whereas in this tyme of so many sects & Religions both within the Realme, & abroade we may as Paul saith better judge of the truth when we have heard with patience what every man can say & alledge in his cause?[5]

This would be answered by Gabriel Powel, not with a condemnation of the challenge, but with a reiteration of the Protestant history of disputation; incredulity that anyone could require a debate on positions so often confirmed.[6] The *Epistle*'s assertions on the required liberty and guaranteed results of disputation were, moreover, an echo of James, as reported by William Barlow, at Hampton Court.[7]

James's accession marked the pinnacle of this elevation of debate, and as hopes for reform or toleration gathered around the king, calls for disputation increased, from English Catholics and the puritan movement.[8] James's reputation for learning was the driving force: the *Epistle, or Apologie*, tending to unity but adopting radical language, cited his arrival to urge a religious debate, contrasting him with Elizabeth, whose gender (it asserts) precluded judgement, and had necessitated laws to protect the church:

> yet now in the raigne of his Majestie who is profound in learning & mature in judgement) free conference may be permitted for the libertie of the gospell, as well in the free interpretation as in free reading of it, & the contrarie lawes repealed as over violent in such a cause and prejudiciall to the bolting out of the truth,[9]

More contained versions of this idea can be found in Catholic and puritan challenges.[10] The convert Francis Walsingham described an atmosphere of

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[5] Anon., *An Epistle, or Apologie of a True, and Charitable Brother of the Reformed Church* ([1605?]), fol. 9^{r}.

[6] Gabriel Powel, *A Refutation of an Epistle Apologeticall Written by a Puritan-Papist to Perswade the Permission of the Promiscuous Use and Profession of all Sects and Heresties* (1605), pp. 68, 70, 73–5.

[7] William Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference* (1605), p. 32.

[8] Patrick Collinson, 'The Jacobean Religious Settlement: The Hampton Court Conference', in Howard Tomlinson (ed.), *Before the English Civil War: Essays on Early Stuart Politics and Government* (London, 1983), pp. 28, 36; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I', *The Journal of British Studies*, 24/2 (1985): p. 184; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 56; Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 265–7; Michael Questier, 'Catholic Loyalism in Early Stuart England', *EHR*, 123/504 (2008): p. 1133.

[9] Anon., *Epistle, or Apologie*, sig. 9^{r-v}.

[10] Matthew Kellison, *A Survey of the New Religion* (1603), sig. bvii^{v}; Gabriel Powel, *A Consideration of the Papists Reasons of State and Religion, for Toleration of Poperie in*

receptiveness to debate at James's accession: 'I conceived his Majestie to be very studious of the truth, by that I had often heard, he would dispute and reason himselfe, concerning Religion, being also … of sound judgement and learning'.[11] This reputation was not unfounded – James was to establish ties with the universities greater than those already exercised by Elizabeth, and in 1605 he asserted that, if not a king, he would have been 'a university man'.[12] He had engaged Scottish divines before acceding to the English throne, and would continue to take part in such debate after 1603.[13] Francis White, in a dedication of 1624, told James: 'I could not but admire your Princely zeale, to have true Religion maintained, as well by Disputation, as by your just Lawes'.[14] Featley would cite royal instruction in his defence of private debate that same year.[15]

It is necessary at this point, however, to return to the idea of 'Christian conference', and the distinction between 'conference' and 'disputation'. The ideals above were tempered by an awareness that improper disputing might encourage aggression or vainglory, and that oppositional debate against intractable opponents might do more harm than good. James's notion of Christian unity, while it encouraged *discourse*, hinged on his distinction between moderate critics, who might be incorporated within the church, and those puritans and priests who posed a threat to his authority and person.[16] His desire for concord was tied to his enthusiasm for debate, and he was not above involvement in such encounters when the opportunity arose; but the realities of the reign caused him to place restrictions on those groups most active in formal and controversial

England (1604), p. 125; John Lecey, *A Petition Apologeticall, Presented to the Kinges Most Excellent Majesty, by the Lay Catholikes of England, in July Last* (1604), pp. 19–20.

11 Francis Walsingham, *A Search Made into Matters of Religion* (1609), pp. 27–8.

12 David Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956), p. 290; Kenneth Fincham, 'Oxford and the Early Stuart Polity', in T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000), vol. 4, pp. 182–3; Patterson, *King James*, p. 51.

13 BL, Additional MS 32092, fols 86^{v}–88^{r}; Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 16–17, 71; Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?', *History*, 68/2 (1983): esp. pp. 188, 197, 203; Christopher Durston, 'James I and Protestant Heresy', in Houlbrooke, *James VI and I*, pp. 123–4.

14 Francis White, *A Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere to Certain Questions Propounded by His Most Gratious Ma[jesty] King James* (1624), sig. b2^{r}.

15 Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sig. H3^{r}. Daniel Featley, *An Appendix to the Fishers Net* (1624), p. 53; John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), pp. 27, 30.

16 Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', pp. 170–71; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I', in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642* (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 30–31; Patterson, *King James*, pp. 34–5, 36; Durston, 'James I', p. 134.

disputation.[17] Thomas Bell, when provoked by a Jesuit, had to plead with the king to allow such an event in 1605:

> I now prostrate upon my knees, doe most humblie beseech your most excellent Majestie, that it will please your Highnes of your most Princely favour, to graunt your Royall licence and safe conduct for any English Jesuite, or Jesuited Papist in the whole worlde, that shall have courage to appeare for the true performance of the challenge,[18]

The encounter did not, as far as records show, take place. James was aware of the dangers, as well as the benefits: in 1619, he reportedly refused a disputation between Catholic and Protestant representatives, 'because he might loose more, that would not be satisfied, [than] he could win, although the Papists side were convicted'.[19] At the same time, English puritan divines similarly began to avoid disputation in favour of conference, and to seek discourse (or private entreaty) over debate. The zenith of the practice in terms of its imagery and prestige thus engendered careful distinctions, and greater care in its pursuit.

The Monarch as Disputant

The Hampton Court Conference

James took part in a number of religious disputations during his reign, which ranged from the establishing conference that was Hampton Court, through private meetings to a quasi-formal disputation with John Percy in 1622 – the occasion for White's dedication two years later. His royal authority had a remarkable effect upon the process: as a moderator, he was firm and interventionist, and his own arguments had a natural, unanswerable finality. It was a tragic irony that the king who loved disputation could never be treated as a disputant.

The Hampton Court conference of January 1604 was intended to answer puritan appeals, and to examine the reformed boundary of the Church of England in the wake of late Elizabethan controversies.[20]

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17 Patterson, *King James*, pp. 37, 342.

18 Thomas Bell, *The Popes Funerall* (1605), sig. *^{r}.

19 B.A., *King James his Apopthegmes, or, Table-Talke* (London, 1643), p. 7.

20 The principal source is Barlow's *Summe and Substance*. Shorter relations are printed in Roland G. Usher, *The Reconstruction of the English Church* (2 vols, New York, 1910), vol. 2, pp. 331–54, including 'An Anonymous Account in Favour of the Bishops' (BL, Harleian MS 3795, fol. 7^{r-v}; Additional MS 38492, fol. 81^{r-v}) and BL, Harleian MS 828, fols 32–8. Several are printed in Barlow's account, sigs P^{r}–P3^{r}. Reports survive in letters from

But while it tackled different opposition and questions to the Westminster conference, there were similarities between this event and its Elizabethan forerunner. James was aware of the history of such occasions: as reported by Barlow, his opening speech of 14 January recalled 'the example of all Christian Princes, who in the commencement of their reigne, usually take the first course for the establishing of the Church, both for doctrine and policie', and invoked the entire Tudor line – regardless of denomination – as instances of the same.[21] On the first and the second day, he offered an equivocal statement on the purpose of the meeting, by all accounts admitting that 'the best state would gather corruptions', but in Barlow's report he makes it clear that his intention was not 'Innovation'.[22] The true purpose has, to an extent, been lost in competing reports of these speeches, intended either to claim the king for a particular position or to pacify the opposing side: the 'Anonymous Account in Favour of the Bishops' describes his purpose as 'to establishe truthe of Religion', while one puritan report has it that he 'spake much to unitie, that they might joyne against the Papists'.[23] But, given his reputation, the statements presented in Barlow's 'semi-official' report, particularly the denial of innovation, are rather revealing.[24] Despite the elevation of religious disputation at his accession, it is apparent that where the stakes were high, James was again willing to put safeguards in place, to ensure the correct outcome. Here was an instance of his royal authority, his beliefs and a concern for unity impinging on ideals of 'free' debate. Patrick Collinson describes the relationship between this type of event and disputation in the universities as a 'loose' one, citing their purpose and the balance of power. In seeking to contextualize Hampton Court, he quickly turns away from academic disputation (with little mention of form), to draw comparisons with the

James Montagu (Edmund Sawyer, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I* (3 vols, London, 1725), vol. 2, pp. 13–15), Tobie Matthew and Patrick Galloway (Edward Cardwell, *A History of Conferences and Other Proceedings* (Oxford, 1840), pp. 161–6, 212–17), and Dudley Carleton (*Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603–1624: Jacobean Letters*, ed. Maurice Lee, Jr. (New Brunswick, NJ, 1972), p. 57). On Barlow's report, see Frederick Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited: James I and the Puritans', *JEH*, 33/1 (1982): pp. 64–5; Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', p. 37; Patterson, *King James*, pp. 44–5; Alan Cromartie, 'King James and the Hampton Court Conference', in Houlbrooke, *James VI and I*, pp. 68–71.

[21] Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 3–4; Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, p. 162.

[22] Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 3–6, 21–3, sigs P^{r-v}, $P2^{r}$; Sawyer, *Memorials*, vol. 2, pp. 13, 14; Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, pp. 162–3.

[23] Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 335; Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, sig. $P2^{r}$. See Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', pp. 39–44; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', pp. 171–2, 173–6, and 'Ecclesiastical Policies', pp. 25–6; Cromartie, 'King James', pp. 62–4, 80.

[24] Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', p. 37; Cromartie, 'King James', pp. 69–70.

1518 Leipzig debates and with Westminster. These occasions, he concludes, were to determine in principle, but to sell a government determination in practice.[25] Such comparisons, however, are contingent upon process, and on the role of the king.

The conference proper was spread over three days, between 14 and 18 January.[26] In numerical terms, it was already one-sided: the established church, nominally the *quæstio*, was represented by a gathering of bishops, deans and doctors, while the puritans called were John Rainolds, Thomas Sparke, Laurence Chaderton and John Knewstub – all moderates.[27] Members of the Privy Council were in attendance, an echo of Westminster, but there were several present who blurred the line between the two sides: the theologian and chaplain-in-ordinary Richard Field is listed by Barlow as a church delegate, but appears elsewhere as a puritan representative.[28] This blurring, which occurred between the sides *and* between the disputants and their observers, already sets Hampton Court apart from the more structured encounters of the period. That between the sides would have an impact on the outcome, and Collinson has made a comparison in the latter regard with Lambeth in 1584.[29]

On 14 January, both sides were initially present, but James then dismissed all but the Privy Councillors, the bishops and several of the deans, at which point, as Barlow has it, the door was closed.[30] Accounts of this meeting vary, not just in their perspective, but in the amount of debate said to have taken place. The king questioned the bishops on several points: the Prayer Book and services, excommunication in the church courts, and provision of ministers for Ireland.[31] In Barlow's narrative, however, these are handled in a manner more conversational than was typical even of public disputation. Although the bishops cite scripture, the fathers and John Calvin, there is no trace of structured debate, and the lack of defined roles makes for a conference in the purest sense, devoid of structural pretension.[32] At one point, James excepts against the Prayer Book's handling of private baptism, and this leads into a formless argument on

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25 Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', pp. 34–6.

26 Mark H. Curtis, 'Hampton Court Conference and its Aftermath', *History*, 46/1 (1961): p. 8; Stuart Barton Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft* (London, 1962), p. 59.

27 On the church representatives, see Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 1–2; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 337.

28 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 1–2; BL, Harleian MS 3795, f. 7^{v}; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 338; Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', p. 39.

29 Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', p. 35; Chapter 4 above.

30 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 2–3.

31 Ibid., pp. 6–7, sigs P^{r}–P2^{r}; Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft*, p. 65.

32 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 6–20.

the necessity of baptism by ministers, but elsewhere this day has the tone of a ruler being informed and, to an extent, reassured about the doctrine of his church.[33] Structurally, the impression is given that, while he had called the puritans to deal with their objections, the bishops were there to give advice.[34] However, puritan reports take a different view – one, reproduced by Barlow, focuses on the king's objections, stating: 'The Bishops brought foorth many popish arguments, which the King very eanestly answered, and learnedly'.[35] Another has it that the bishops 'tooke upon them to manteyne' baptism by women – in disputation, 'maintain' was shorthand for the respondent's role.[36] If the battleground of Hampton Court was the doctrine of the church, that of written reports – and subsequent interpretation – has been the attitude of the king.[37] Crucially, however, competing depictions of this first meeting do not rest upon pretended victory, but on the event's proximity to disputation – or, conversely, to counsel.

On 16 January, the bishops of London and Winchester, termed 'supervisors' by the 'Anonymous Account', arrived before the debate began. The puritans were called in before midday, with the deans and doctors.[38] Barlow reports that the king opened proceedings with 'a pithie and sweete speach', reiterating the intention not to innovate, and laying out the purpose of the event as 'to settle an uniforme order through the whole Church … to plant unitie, for the suppressing of Papistes and enemies to Religion … [and] to amend abuses, as naturall to bodies politike, and corrupt man, as the shadow to the bodie'.[39] After this statement came that of John Rainolds, the puritan 'foreman'. Kneeling, he raised objections touching the purity of doctrine, provision of pastors, church government, and amendments to the Book of Common Prayer.[40] In Barlow's account, it is from Rainolds's expansion on the first of these – excepting against a

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33 Ibid., pp. 14–19; compare BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 55^{v}–56^{r}, 58^{v}–60^{v}.

34 This meeting is similarly described in a letter of 15 January from Carleton: the king 'sent not for them as persons accused but as men of choice, by whom he sought to receive instruction': Carleton, *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain*, p. 57; Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited', p. 59; Cromartie, 'King James', p. 65.

35 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, sig. P^{v}; see sig. P2^{r}.

36 Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 342. Montagu, Matthew and Galloway, meanwhile, have James 'disputing' against the bishops: Sawyer, *Memorials*, vol. 2, p. 14; Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, pp. 163, 213.

37 For example, Curtis, 'Hampton Court Conference', p. 8; Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited', p. 58; Patterson, *King James*, pp. 45–6.

38 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, p. 21; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 337; Cromartie, 'King James', p. 65.

39 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 21–2; Sawyer, *Memorials*, vol. 2, p. 14.

40 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, p. 23; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 336.

number of the 39 Articles, including Article XVI on justification – that the exchange evolves, Rainolds's points being interrupted by Bancroft.[41] From here, Barlow describes shades of the formal process, without ever demonstrating its features directly. Rainolds opposes, essentially, by default, but Barlow shows little of Walter Travers's formulaic presentation of the roles.[42] At several points, Bancroft is said to have 'answered', but any procedural continuity is disrupted by interruptions, unstructured debate and James's role as moderator.[43] Again, there is no trace of logic form; authorities are cited, including the fathers ('Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen and others'), Calvin and Fulke, although a bible is not produced until well into the debate.[44] What is remarkable, in light of this, is James's reaction to that first interruption from Bancroft, 'there is no order, nor can bee any effectuall issue of disputation, if each partie might not bee suffered … to speake at large what hee would', and his depiction of the puritans after the fact:

> They fled me so from argument to argument, without ever answering me directly … I was forced at last to say unto thaime; that if any of thaime had been in a college disputing with thair scholars, if any of thair disciples had answered them in that sort, they would have fetched him up in a place of a reply; and so should the rod have plyed upon the poor boyes buttocks.[45]

If these comments are followed, the second day at Hampton Court is concurrently the best and worst example of the blurring of 'disputation', in language and practice. Questions of form appear only at the back of the participants' minds, while the topics and immediate context are at the forefront. It would be tempting to dismiss this lack of structural concern as a result of the purpose and abbreviation in Barlow's report, were it not for the markedly unstructured nature of the points he describes, the identical focus in alternative sources and the restrictive role of the king.

The most immediate censure of Hampton Court, Henry Jacob's *Christian and Modest Offer* of 1606, seized on the puritans' shortcomings – their official selection and moderate positions – and this has been echoed in later interpretation: Collinson builds biographically on Jacob's assertion that they 'were not of [the puritan ministers'] chosing, nor nomination,

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41 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 25–6. See Cromartie, 'King James', pp. 74–8; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', pp. 174n, 179.

42 Chapter 4 above.

43 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 32–80.

44 Ibid., pp. 32–4, 35–6, 61, 69.

45 Ibid., p. 28; Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, p. 161; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', p. 173.

nor of their judgment'.[46] However, far less has been said about their performance. In some cases, this is because there is little to say.[47] But, in comparing Hampton Court with other cases of disputation, its most striking feature is the wholly unprepossessing performance of John Rainolds, whose encounter with Hart was being held up as an example well into the seventeenth century.[48] Certainly, it is difficult to reconcile Rainolds's *Summe* with James's depiction of the puritans, or the judgement of the 'Anonymous Account' ('Dr. Reynolds and his brethren are utterly condempned for silly men').[49] Their contrast is an indication of how far the surrounding circumstances and the authorship of reports could affect a disputant's reported showing: in no account of this occasion is there any indication of those attributes Rainolds had displayed with Hart.[50] There are, of course, several potential reasons for this: Rainolds was no longer a young man, and was disputing, in part, against his king. But those relating to source and circumstance are at the heart of this event's placement in the history of public religious disputation.

Firstly, all accounts are subject to cause and consequence. They are neither tools for conversion nor educational displays (as Rainolds's *Summe* had been), but rather instruments of political persuasion, written to maintain the church, or to claim the monarch for puritan positions. Their lack of procedural concern reflects this, and individual performances suffer as a result. This leads to the purpose of the event itself. A spectrum has already been found in religious disputation, between the maintenance of national doctrine and the expression of controversy, and Hampton Court matches the former. Further to James's requirements, the history of rulers establishing doctrine placed an emphasis on this aspect which, with the king's perceived receptiveness, produced a guarded debate and a politicized aftermath. By Barlow's report, the king prevented the event from straying into controversial disputation, or – worse – an intellectual free-for-all. The debate was not intended to 'establish the truth of religion', for the monarch was well acquainted with the truth, and knew disputation

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[46] Henry Jacob, *A Christian and Modest Offer of a Most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation* (1606), esp. pp. 29–30; Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', pp. 38–9; Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited', pp. 57–8; Cromartie, 'King James', p. 65.

[47] Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 458.

[48] Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{r}. Rainolds himself compared the two, in his handling of the cross in baptism: LPL, MS 929, item 121; Peter Lake, 'Moving the Goal Posts? Modified Subscription and the Construction of Conformity in the Early Stuart Church', in Peter Lake and Michael Questier (eds), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 200.

[49] Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 338; BL, Harleian MS 3795, fol. 7^{v}; Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited', p. 65.

[50] Chapter 4 above.

well enough to know its pitfalls. Thus, Collinson's placement of Hampton Court in a political, rather than academic, tradition is understated by comparison to similar occasions, and it is unsurprising that the single academic reference he picks up on – James's depiction of the puritans' *restricted* abilities – appears in private correspondence.[51] The king himself saw the distinction, as he is depicted in Barlow's account: where Rainolds raises the 1595 Lambeth Articles on predestination, James answers, 'the quietest proceeding were, to determine them in the Universities'.[52] This event, then, shows a growing enthusiasm for disputation tempered by a lingering mistrust of its potential for abuse.

The Role of the King

At Hampton Court, James took the role of moderator, but he was more involved and had greater influence than the position would traditionally impart.[53] Ley, drawing on Barlow's report, would find its duties admirably performed, particularly in the reprimand of Bancroft and invocation of free disputation: 'this is the proper work of a President, or Moderator at a Disputation or Conference'.[54] But, if this was a model of the moderator's role, it was not in a procedural sense. The Hampton Court conference throws the division between academic and public disputation into sharp relief, because the moderator here was examining *policy*, not judging performance, and held an authority that was absolute.[55] In the universities, the disputants occupied the spotlight, but here the power of the monarchy placed James centre stage, and his intellectual forwardness made him comfortable there. As a controversialist in his own right, he blurred the line between moderator and disputant – by Barlow's account, he became a *de facto* respondent on the second day, while by puritan narratives he opposed on the first. Tobie Matthew also describes him as the respondent against the puritans: 'his Majesty … debated with them, and confuted their objections; being therein assisted now and then, for variety sake rather than for necessity, by the two bishops'.[56] If Hampton Court can be termed a disputation, it was a disputation subjugated by the moderator. His determinations were his own; he directed the debate, gave long speeches,

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51 Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', pp. 34–6.

52 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, p. 40.

53 Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', p. 35; Cromartie, 'King James', p. 65.

54 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 65–6.

55 Jane Rickard, 'The Word of God and the Word of the King: The Scriptural Exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible', in Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.), *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority and Government* (Aldershot, 2006), esp. pp. 145–6.

56 Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, p. 164.

dismissed whole arguments and once interpreted a place in Ecclesiasticus on the topic of the Apocrypha.[57] Towards the end of the second day, Barlow has James answering the puritans' objections himself.[58] This was not an isolated incident, or an echo of previous establishing debates: the king's involvement in all aspects of the process would be seen two decades later, when he encountered the Jesuit Percy for the countess of Buckingham.[59]

The conflict, in both cases, was between the king's enthusiasm for disputation, the unassailability of monarchical authority and the situation – first as regards the threat of the puritan movement, and later the countess's faith and negotiations for the Spanish Match. Percy reports that in their disputation the king opened proceedings with a sporting image: 'as fencers, before they take them to theire weapons, are wont to salute and embrase one another, soe before hee entered into argument hee would salute [Percy] with a speech'.[60] Though Francis White was ready to oppose the Jesuit, with the king presiding, James could not resist the opponent's role.[61] Percy recalls a devastating mix of enthusiasm and authority:

> his Majesty in a manner spake … soe much and soe earnestlie as my selfe coulde not freelie speake as I coulde and woulde; thinkinge it noe good manners to interrupte his Majesty or to speake longer about anie point [than] he would permitt … I coulde saie little before hee would assaulte me with some newe argument … sometime not onely askinge me a question, but withall (with out permittinge me to speake) makinge the answere himselfe,[62]

This depiction is reminiscent of James's involvement in academic disputations, which far outstripped the appreciative applause of Elizabeth.[63] In 1605, at a debate for which Richard Field was called, the king was

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[57] Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 20, 30, 31, 35–6, 38–40, 42–4, 46–8, 51–3, 54–6, 57–8, 61–3; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, p. 347.

[58] Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 64–83; Sawyer, *Memorials*, vol. 2, p. 14; Usher, *Reconstruction*, vol. 2, pp. 344–5, 346, 349, 350.

[59] A.C., *True Relations of Sundry Conferences* (1626), sig. *4^{r}; Timothy H. Wadkins, 'King James I Meets John Percy, S.J. (25 May, 1622): An Unpublished Manuscript from the Religious Controversies Surrounding the Countess of Buckingham's Conversion', *RH*, 19/2 (1988): esp. pp. 147–8; Chapter 6 below.

[60] Wadkins, 'King James I', p. 148.

[61] Percy reports a fascinating exchange between the two, in which the king held White back from emphasizing the priest's role in the sacrament: 'goe not that waye, naye if you goe that waie, etc'. Ibid., p. 153.

[62] Ibid., pp. 147–8; compare Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 61–3.

[63] Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (2 vols, Oxford, 1792–96), vol. 2, p. 160; Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): p. 339.

again said to have made frequent contributions: 'the longer he tarried the more he would interpose his Speeches … Sometimes he would distinguish or determine of a doubt, and sometimes inforce an argument'.[64] However, John Chamberlain reported that he 'was so continually interrupted with applauding, that he could not express himself so well as he wish'd'.[65] While in academic disputation James's authority, then, could be a hindrance, in public debate it gave force to his arguments and ensured an *immediate*, guarded interest in his *quæstio* and opposition. The debate with Percy was prefaced by an invocation of the Gunpowder Plot and interrogatories on the deposing of kings, and it then maintained an examinatory tone.[66] Percy was allowed the opponent's role, at the king's instruction, but this was soon revoked. Again, James had a clear idea of how the debate ought to proceed.[67] Here and at Hampton Court, as disputant and moderator, he kept control. In 1622, there were further disputations in which he was not directly involved, but in 1604 – his meeting with the puritans bookended by private counsel with the bishops – his authority only added to signs that the event was not a 'free' debate, or a formal disputation. For all the intellectual or discursive ideals expressed at his accession, for all his own interest in the academic process, the king dismissed three questions – on private baptism, lay censure of the clergy and the provision of an educated ministry – simply because he 'had taken order for [them] with the Bishops already'.[68] To puritan eyes, he had been drawn away from his intellectual instincts, open debate had not been had, and truth was the cost.

Disputation Distinguished

First Distinction: Bringing Authorities to a Balanced Table

In the aftermath, it was clear that Hampton Court had, to the puritans, been unsatisfactory. Like Westminster, like the Tower debates, its tempering of disputation with authority and close control of the structure and questions provoked new challenges, and forced opponents to state again, and with greater clarity, what kind of debate they sought. In this, their attention

64 Nathaniel Field, *Some Short Memorials Concerning the Life of that Reverend Divine Doctor Richard Field* (London, 1716–17), p. 10; John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family, and Court* (4 vols, London, 1828), vol. 1, pp. 533, 548–52, 558.

65 Sawyer, *Memorials*, vol. 2, p. 140.

66 Wadkins, 'King James I', pp. 148–50; Patterson, *King James*, p. 343; Rickard, 'Word of God', p. 137.

67 Wadkins, 'King James I', pp. 150–52.

68 Barlow, *Summe and Substance*, pp. 31, 51–2, 77–8.

was directed again to the king. On a hunting trip through the east of the country, James was presented with petitions urging reform and protesting the deadline for conformity laid out as the conference concluded.[69] On 1 December 1604, he was visited at Hinchingbrooke by a gathering of ministers including Arthur Hildersham, who had been involved in the Millenary Petition, but was (notably) passed over for Hampton Court. This group brought a petition and 'book of reasons' outlining their complaints, and James spent a morning in conference with them.[70] He asked them to set down their demands, referring them to the Dean of the Chapel Royal, James Montagu, and to their own bishop, William Chaderton at Lincoln, for further discussion.[71] This second suggestion, however, was never fulfilled, the ministers claiming that Chaderton refused a formal, public disputation:

> By [the king's] direction Mr Sherewood, Mr Hildersham, & Mr Wilkinson offered disputation to the B. of Lincolne … & D. Monteague, uppon 3 Condi[tion]s. That it should be in hearing of oth[ers] especially the rest of the ministers standing [with] them for reforma[tion]. 2 That there should be Notaries on both sydes to sett downe arg[uments] and answeres, and 3 that there should be no by-discourses but argum[ents] or aunsweres to the poynt in hand: For these Condi[tion]s it was rejected[72]

The pattern after Hampton Court was set: the king's learning and eagerness for disputation were held back, held to ineffective discourse, by the worldly weakness of the bishops.

Again in reaction to Hampton Court, Henry Jacob's *Christian and Modest Offer of a Most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation* (1606) would direct itself to the king's intellectualism, emphasizing disputation in the formal sense. Its dedicatory epistle repeated the call of the Millenary Petition for controversies to be settled by a conference, with the reminder that 'Your Majestie professed before you came to the Crowne, that you did *equally love & honor the learned & grave men of either of these opinions*'.[73] In a detailed echo of the complaint against Chaderton, the *Offer* calls for free choice of puritan representatives, equal time in the roles (clearly termed 'Opponent' and 'Answerer'), adherence to logic form, and faithful

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69 B.W. Quintrell, 'The Royal Hunt and the Puritans, 1604–1605', *JEH*, 31/1 (1980): pp. 41–58.

70 Ibid., pp. 47–8; BL, Additional MS 8978, fol. 16^{r-v}; Samuel Clarke, *A Generall Martyrologie* (London, 1651), p. 377.

71 Quintrell, 'Royal Hunt', p. 48.

72 BL, Additional MS 8978, fol. 16^{v}.

73 Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, sigs *^{v}, *2^{r}.

reporting in the aftermath. These requirements are set down at length: a 'reasonable and just course of composing these controversies', derived entirely from the academic formula.[74] Appetites for debate had not been dulled. The *Christian and Modest Offer* shows that formal disputation retained its authority. Like Hildersham and his companions, Jacob draws a line between the partial 'conference' granted, and the formal disputation that would set all parties on equal terms, and thereby confirm the truth.

Though aimed at the king's academic turn of mind, these calls found little success. For James, the distinction between questions of controversial theology and those of church policy was very clear, and for the latter Hampton Court was intended to be definitive. Following his determination, further dissent was treated as defiance.[75] Accounts on the bishops' side also undermined subsequent challenges by presenting the puritans' arguments at the conference as underwhelming, and the authorities, including the king, felt no need to engage calls for reform in this manner again. In the years after Hampton Court, there was an allowance for what Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake term 'discussion and deliberation', to persuade moderate puritans to conform – as was attempted, with little success, with Rainolds.[76] But, as had been established in prior moments of conflict, such private entreaty did not intend public disputation – each ultimately had its place. Indeed, James's enthusiasm in academic (or, as with the Lincoln godly, unexpected) encounters can be partly explained through that restraint which led him to refuse formal or public challenges. Jenny Wormald has suggested that, due to the differing style of leadership in England, James had fewer opportunities to engage in direct negotiation and discourse after 1603.[77] He believed in disputation, even by Barlow's account of Hampton Court, and clearly desired to take part in such. But his authority, and the dangers of the reign, forced him to settle for the limits of conference and the subdued means of private discourse. The puritans, meanwhile, carried the Aristotelian-medieval standard of disputation further, as a route to the truth, and a method for bringing authorities to a balanced table.

At a diocesan level, there were exceptions that proved this rule. In Peterborough, Thomas Dove claimed to have grappled with puritan challengers in 1604, briefly resorting to disputation: 'I have *exposed*

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74 Ibid., pp. 3–7.

75 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 461; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', p. 176; Lake, 'Moving the Goal Posts?', p. 180; James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (2 vols, Oxford, 1973–83), vol. 1, p. 70. On the outcome of Hampton Court, see Collinson, 'Jacobean Religious Settlement', pp. 44–8; Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft*, pp. 68–73; Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited', pp. 66–71.

76 Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', p. 176; Fincham, 'Oxford and the Early Stuart Polity', p. 185.

77 Wormald, 'James VI and I', pp. 203–5.

myself to disputations both privately and publicly and many have yielded themselves' [my emphasis]; again, for 'two whole days in the cathedral church, in the hearing of 200 people, I took on me the place of respondent and answered all objections propounded by the factious ministers of my diocese'. Dove depicts himself as a man trapped between the 'obstinacy' of the nonconformists and the king's instruction to deprive all who refused subscription.[78] Thomas Morton, bishop of Chester, also conferred publicly with puritan ministers, 'and endeavoured by many Arguments to reduce them to conformity with the Church of *England*'.[79] But Morton's aims did not match those of his adversaries.

Second Distinction: 'Christian conference' Revisited

Distinctions were also being drawn within godly circles, although here it was disputation itself that took on negative characteristics. In 1611, the London minister George Walker initiated a lengthy exchange with the older and more experienced divine Anthony Wotton, on the topic of justification.[80] Their dispute has been considered in detail by Professor Lake, but its face-to-face elements – and Walker's preferences therein – are worth revisiting in this wider context of disputation.[81] Having identified a Socinian note in Wotton's writings, Walker called for a conference directly and through the godly figurehead Alexander Richardson.[82] His narrative reproduces a missive of 1614, reminding Wotton of their dispute, in which he described a desire 'to reason and dispute the question … to conferre in a kinde and friendly manner', and noting the scorn with which the older man turned him away.[83] As the controversy progressed, this theme – avoidance of debate – would become a central feature of Walker's works, and as a series of meetings was arranged between the

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78 HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury* (24 vols, London, 1883–1976), vol. 17, pp. 46, 58–9; see HMC *Salisbury*, vol. 17, pp. 15–16; Quintrell, 'Royal Hunt', p. 51; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', p. 179; Lake, 'Moving the Goal Posts?', pp. 189–90.

79 R.B., *The Life of Dr. Thomas Morton, Late Bishop of Duresme* (London, 1669), pp. 56–8.

80 Accounts include Thomas Gataker, *Mr Anthony Wotton's Defence against Mr George Walker's Charge, Accusing him of Socinian Heresie* (Cambridge, 1641); George Walker, *A True Relation of the Chiefe Passages betweene Mr Anthony Wotton, and Mr George Walker* (London, 1642); Thomas Gataker, *An Answer to Mr George Walkers Vindication, or Rather Fresh Accusation* (London, 1642).

81 Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy', 'Heterodoxy' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 221–42.

82 Ibid., pp. 221–2; Walker, *True Relation*, pp. 2–3, 4, 5–6, 16.

83 Walker, *True Relation*, p. 12; see Gataker, *Answer*, pp. 19–20, 23–4.

two men, he increasingly phrases it in terms of formal disputation. An initial exchange was set up by a number of Wotton's acquaintances, after Walker delivered two sermons on justification, terming Wotton's views '*Socinian* heresie'.[84] Walker's report of this first meeting accuses his adversary of numerous evasions, but in particular it highlights his refusal to deal in 'strict forme of disputation' – a complaint Walker would make frequently, and with identical phrasing, in anti-Catholic encounters.[85] In urging a disputation, Walker adopts its procedural weight to enhance the image of a challenge unanswered, and presents it as a theological necessity. His letter reminds Wotton: 'Did I not beseech you with teares to be silent in these points, till you had further sifted them, and throughly disputed them with others?'[86] In the aftermath, he accused Wotton of further evasions, which – with the distribution of false reports by Wotton's 'disciples' – drew him to issue a second challenge, this time to a hearing before eight ministers.[87] Again, patterns of challenge and refusal are significant: the accounts of Walker and (on behalf of Wotton) Thomas Gataker each state that their party had wanted a debate: Wotton turning down a private hearing in favour of a public trial, and Walker accusing the older man of trying to have any such event banned.[88] The final hearing was, by Walker's report, abortive: though held in private, the moderators (including Gataker) expressed a preference for personal entreaty over formal disputing, and Walker was again denied a chance to debate using 'strict syllogisms'. Frustrated, he left to issue further challenges, and Wotton was cleared of heresy.[89]

In considering this and other controversies, Lake identifies a remarkable approach among the London godly: an effort to avoid oppositional and damaging controversy by defining boundaries of orthodoxy within which 'disputable' points might be discussed.[90] The hearing arranged to consider Walker's dispute with Wotton, he suggests, had the goal of 'silence or, failing that, at least tact … and a tacit agreement to live and let live'; a

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84 Walker, *True Relation*, pp. 6, 13; Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 222.

85 Walker, *True Relation*, pp. 6–7; Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 222; George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), sigs A3^{r-v}, A4^{v}, C^{r-v}; George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), pp. 9, 18–19, 43.

86 Walker, *True Relation*, p. 13.

87 Walker, *True Relation*, p. 14; Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 224–5.

88 Gataker, *Mr Anthony Wotton's Defence*, pp. 5–6; Walker, *True Relation*, pp. 15, 19; Gataker, *Answer*, pp. 23–5.

89 Walker, *True Relation*, pp. 5, 19–21, 24, 33; see Gataker, *Answer*, p. 9.

90 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 233–4; David Como, 'Puritans, Predestination and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Early Seventeenth-century England', in Peter Lake and Michael Questier (eds), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 65, 66.

goal expressed in subsequent works.[91] Moreover, Lake highlights the role of church authorities in maintaining this approach: John King passed on arbitration of the Walker dispute, and such clashes were further restrained by the bishops' chaplains, including Daniel Featley, through the licensing of accounts.[92] Theoretically, this would allow for productive, private discourse – a middle way between polarizing polemic and 'Christian conference' – and it places such interactions at the heart of the relationship between the church and its puritan fringes. Indeed, this method of inclusion and negotiation might give an alternate framework for the Lambeth conference of 1584.[93] But such an approach did not necessitate structured disputation, and in fact it represents an early reaction against its potentially aggressive and polarizing nature.[94] Allowing such room for manoeuvre militated against the schools' fine distinctions and proposition-to-conclusion forms, and those advocating moderate dealing had a separate concept of beneficial argument. Gataker, for one, preferred manuscript and private exchanges, intended to edification and truth, to the exclusion of both disputation in public and printed accounts thereof.[95]

Walker's attitude illustrates the separation between this ideal and the aggression and wrangling that could, if unchecked, develop in a disputation: it is indeed worth noting that with Wotton he never got the format he required.[96] Gataker's frustration with the younger man stemmed from his immodest approach. Walker was factious and difficult; his selective arguments and labelling a stumbling block for productive debate.[97] But, in addition, he was an adherent of scholastic disputation, which in the wrong hands might become the engine of such antagonism and vainglory; an examination, tending to exclusion over persuasion or reform. Lake ties the 'pandora's box' Walker represented to logic form: 'The point at which amicable disagreement … became open conflict, arrived when that process of assimilation and name calling, and the systematic syllogistic terrorism that went with it, was loosed by one side upon the other'.[98] While Gataker and others like him do not represent a godly consensus on such debate, their concerns do reflect growing

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91 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 229–32.

92 Ibid., pp. 226–7, 230–31, 233, 242; Gataker, *Mr Anthony Wotton's Defence*, p. 6; Patterson, *King James*, p. 238.

93 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 240; Chapter 4 above.

94 Walker terms his proposed hearing with Wotton 'Christian conference': Walker, *True Relation*, p. 10.

95 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 235, 241; Como, 'Puritans', pp. 73, 74, 87.

96 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 239.

97 Ibid., pp. 185–6, 200, 234, 236–7.

98 Ibid., p. 239.

objections to disputation, and question its role in the community of the godly.[99] Here, in Gataker's alternative, was a type of consultation in which disputation increasingly had no place.[100] The question, then, was whether, and in what circumstances, the form might be beneficial; whether it could ever be detached from Walker's antagonistic style and put to good use. Most illuminating in this is the identification of Featley as a facilitator of such peaceable conference, drawing on his licensing work as chaplain to George Abbot.[101] In his later years, Featley would 'say with *Nazianzen*, *a godly discord is better than an ungodly concord*; *it is better to dissent for truth*, *than consent in error*'.[102] And, while he maintained the rhetoric of 'Christian conference' and distance from aggressive disputing, in anti-Catholic encounters Featley was a greater adherent of the full process than Walker himself.[103] Perceptions of the form in godly circles were therefore tied to circumstance: while Hildersham and Jacob saw it as a means of bringing authorities to a balanced table (and this was, no doubt, how young Walker saw his adversary), the 'heat of disputation' might to others be a disruptive, oppositional means of settling disputes.[104] The printed results of the Walker controversy postdate critiques to disputation – and defences thereof – in the 1620s and 1630s, but at the same time they repeat opinions voiced by the Elizabethan puritan movement.[105] That which had advanced the truth, and now continued to affirm it, had to be handled carefully, lest it tear the advocates of truth apart.

Anti-Catholic Disputation on the Continent

It was thus in cross-confessional controversy that disputation had its most secure mandate, as here it was applied to defend fundamental truth against absolute error (although Walker might not accept this distinction). Where the battle for reformation was being undertaken on a national stage, it was of vital importance. In England, a number of conferences with Catholics continued into the seventeenth century, but again these often went unreported.[106] However, in those moments when religious protectionism, Catholic divisions and the fears of individual divines restricted public

99 Ibid., pp. 238–41; Como, 'Puritans', p. 72.

100 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 227.

101 Ibid., p. 241.

102 Daniel Featley, *Roma Ruens, Romes Ruine* (1644), p. 22.

103 Chapter 6 below.

104 Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 221–3, 227–8, 240–42.

105 Ibid., p. 238; Chapters 4 and 6.

106 For example, John White, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church* (1614), sig. *3^{v}.

disputation of religion in England, the practice was still being taken up on the Continent, at times in close connection with royal authority.[107]

Setting an Example

During the prohibition of controversial disputation from 1559 until the 1580s in England, Geoffrey Fenton translated and printed a report of a disputation at the Sorbonne in 1566, between two Catholic doctors and two Protestant ministers.[108] In dedicating the account to Elizabeth Hoby, he stated that it exposed 'the rude sophistrie of the Papistes, and milde simplicitie of the reformed side', articulating a connection between learning and assurance.[109] This meeting had been occasioned at the highest level: intended to return the duchess of Buyllon to Catholicism, it was arranged by her father, the duke of Montpensier, and required (and gained) the support of the king.[110] The result was a six-day debate on the Mass, with tangential digressions to the Apocrypha and the nature of church authority. The conditions, though requiring a restricted audience, included a defined *quæstio*, moderators and notaries.[111] Where the question of an opening prayer stalled the debate, the Protestants reportedly argued 'that the purpose of the Conference, was to reveale the true sense of the Scripture, and deliver it to the understanding of the Hearers, which coulde not be done without the spirite of God, who cleareth the understanding of men to comprehende it'.[112] Here was an expression of the force of a disputation, at a time in England when debate on such questions was prohibited, but conference with recusants was actively encouraged. The Catholic side, it is reported, did attempt to draw a line between their points for the duchess and disputation with heretics, forbidden by Trent.[113] But the exchange itself is reported as a disputation in the full sense. The arguments proceed by objection and answer – a form to which the ministers in particular are keen to demonstrate their adherence.[114] On the third day, there is an attempt to set out a written form similar to that suggested at Westminster, but here it is the Catholics

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107 Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. X.iiii^{v}.

108 Geoffrey Fenton, *Actes of Conference in Religion* (1571). Translated again in John Golburne, *Acts of the Dispute and Conference Holden at Paris, in the Moneths of July and August. 1566* (1602).

109 Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sigs A.ii^{r}–A.iii^{r}.

110 Ibid., sigs A.iiii^{r}, B.i$^{r–v}$.

111 Ibid., sig. A.iiii^{r}.

112 Ibid., sigs A.iiii^{r}–*A.ii^{r}, *A.ii^{v}, B.i^{v}–B.ii^{r}.

113 Ibid., sigs B.i^{v}, D.ii^{r}, G.i^{v}.

114 Ibid., esp. sigs B.ii^{r}, B.iii^{v}, B.iiii^{r}, C.ii$^{r–v}$, E.ii^{v}, I.iiii^{v}.

who restate disputation. As for the alternative, 'they never hearde that any suche was practised, neither is it needeful to assemble in one place for that pourpose'. The places of 'respondentes' and 'arguers' are soon re-established.[115] There is use of syllogistic reasoning throughout, and a concern not to deviate.[116]

These debates took place at Montpensier's residence. Later events were performed before Henry IV. In 1600, a disputation was held between the bishop of Evreux, Jacques du Perron, and the Huguenot writer Philippe de Mornay, occasioned by a written dispute over the Eucharist. Urged by petitions from both divines, but cautioned by the papal nuncio, Henry called the two together at Fontainebleau, to hear the proofs Evreux had accused de Mornay of falsifying and the Protestant's replies to the same. English reports would appear within the year, including a work by Persons, of which an expanded edition was printed at the same time as his *Review of Ten Publike Disputations*.[117] Presenting the debate to an English audience, Persons described it as 'a matter of so notorious memory & done in the presence of so great a King, and of so many Princes, and so neare to our countrey'; an association he extends throughout.[118] By Protestant accounts, meanwhile, royal authority both exalted and hindered the debate: De Mornay, in a foreshadowing of John Percy in 1622, recalls having expressed understanding for Henry's position, but also his determination to continue:

> if the question were but of his life and honor; he would cast them at his feete … But in that he was bound to the defence of truth, wherin Gods honor was in question, he humbly besought hys Majesty to pardon him, if he sought just and reasonable meanes to warrant and defend himselfe:[119]

The arrangements here were not, by the Protestant accounts, promising. De Mornay's request that his every citation be examined was rejected, as was his suggestion that those places untouched by Evreux be accepted as correct. The Protestant was not allowed to look over the bishop's points beforehand, and of the 'interpreters', few were Protestant, and the final

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115 Ibid., sigs E.iiii^{r}–F.i^{r-v}; Chapter 3 above.

116 Fenton, *Actes of Conference*, sigs B.iiii^{v}–C.i^{r}, C.i^{v}, C.ii^{r}, E.iii^{r-v}, F.ii^{r}; F.iiii^{r}, L.iiii^{r}.

117 Anon., *A Discourse of the Conference Holden before the French King at Fontainbleau* (1600); Philippe de Mornay, *A Briefe Refutation of a Certaine Calumnious Relation*, trans. Matthew Sutcliffe (1600); N.D., *Relation*. Further, see Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 45, 50–52. For an overview, see N.D., *Relation*, pp. 3–7; Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1977), pp. 139–42.

118 N.D., *Relation*, p. 9; de Mornay, *Briefe Refutation*, sig. Bb7^{v}.

119 Anon., *Discourse*, p. 6.

determination rested with the king.[120] The occasion is thus reminiscent of prison debates, but de Mornay naturally attributes this to the counsel of Evreux, rather than malign intent in Henry himself.[121] Persons counters this with the assertion that both men had been well liked by the king, and thus his manner of proceeding must reflect the truth; and that de Mornay had himself chosen to hold to the points he thought 'most defensible'.[122]

At the outset, the king 'declared that he had no meaning that they should dispute of the Doctrine, onely … they should examine the allegations of the places' – it was this that satisfied the papal nuncio.[123] Similarly, Evereux had insisted in the preliminaries:

> this disputation shall not be like to the others of former tymes, wherin were examined matters of doctrine, & the truth therof, as also of the true interpretations of holy scriptures, and other such like: In examination wherof, the shifts and sleights of the disputers … might make the truth uncertayne to the hearers. But heere all questions in this disputation, shall only be questions of fact, whether places be truly alleaged, or no;[124]

As translated by Persons, however, the bishop applies the term 'disputation' throughout, only distinguishing truth from wrangling, and he urges reason, charity and an avoidance of bitterness as his ideals.[125] Again, formal elements sneak into the debate: de Mornay has his adversary informing the interpreters, 'it was in vaine for them to dispute, if they wold not judge'.[126] The consideration of de Mornay's citations has all the features of a conference by authority: hermeneutic rules are applied, in open (though unstructured) debate, to scripture and the fathers. The king took up the place of determinant, once – by de Mornay's account – declaring 'that both sides had reason', on a point against idolatry. But Matthew Sutcliffe insists that the king was a disputant against the Protestant, at Catholic urging.[127] The debate was then cut short when de Mornay fell ill – an effect Ley would later attribute to poison.[128] What is interesting in these reports

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120 Ibid., pp. 5–15; de Mornay, *Briefe Refutation*, p. 19; N.D., *Relation*, pp. 16–17, 70–74.

121 Anon., *Discourse*, pp. 4–5, 6–7, 8, 12–13.

122 N.D., *Relation*, pp. 12–14, 17, 76–7.

123 Anon., *Discourse*, p. 15; N.D., *Relation*, pp. 69–70, 78, 123–4; Ley, *Discourse*, p. 45.

124 N.D., *Relation*, p. 23.

125 Ibid., p. 24.

126 Anon, *Discourse*, p. 25.

127 Ibid., pp. 11, 41; de Mornay, *Briefe Refutation*, pp. 19, 29, 30; N.D., *Relation*, pp. 93–4, 101.

128 Anon, *Discourse*, p. 52; N.D., *Relation*, pp. 117–19, 120; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 50–51.

is their difference in procedural association: while de Mornay and Sutcliffe describe an examination by authority, it is Persons again who presents this as an exemplar of 'disputation'. He translates a letter written by Henry in the aftermath, which declares that 'the sweet manner of proceedinge that hath byn used, hath taken away all occasion to any *Hugenot* whatsoever he be, to say, that any force hath byn used, beside the only force of truth'. Debate founded in church authority, enforced by royal power, and then held to truth, is a confrontation devoutly to be wished. In a marginal note, the Jesuit laments: 'would god these meanes were used in England'.[129]

Such reports continued to appear. In 1615, John Barnes published a translation of a report by the Huguenot controversialist Pierre du Moulin of a disputation against the Jesuit Gontier and – more remarkably – the baroness of Salignac, who is named as a disputant on the Catholic side.[130] Ley would present this as one of several encounters between du Moulin and Jesuit priests.[131] Du Moulin describes the debate as an impromptu one, occasioned by a chance encounter, in which he was pressed by a gathering of ladies to reply on an article of the reformed confession – by du Moulin's account, one of them told him, 'we ought at all times be readie to give an account of our faith'.[132] While for the Protestant this was clearly an ambush, he states that Gontier arrived with two assistants, and laden with books.[133] What ensued, by the Protestant's account, was a ramshackle exchange over the duties and calling of the clergy (for the ladies desired du Moulin to justify his ministry), and this developed, briefly, into a dispute on the Mass. There is use of syllogistic reasoning on the Jesuit's part, suggesting that he intended a disputation, but the event soon ground to a halt.[134] Towards the close, du Moulin reports that 'all the Ladies to gratifie [Gontier] entreated them to talke of some other subject, and said that this matter was to[o] deepe for their capacities' – a moment to be echoed in England into the 1620s.[135] After the debate, Gontier wrote of it to the king, prompting du Moulin to protest loyalty and – via the Gunpowder Plot – to tie the authority of Henry to that of James.[136] The English publication of this debate thus reflects a range of considerations – the relationship du Moulin enjoyed with James I and the English Church, the image of

129 N.D., *Relation*, pp. 30–31; Milward, *Elizabethan*, pp. 139–40.

130 Pierre du Moulin, *A Conference Held at Paris between Father Gontier a Jesuite, and Doctor Du Moulin* (1615), esp. sig. A2^{v}.

131 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 46.

132 Du Moulin, *Conference*, p. 1; Chapter 1 above.

133 Du Moulin, *Conference*, pp. 2, 16.

134 Ibid., pp. 6–9.

135 Ibid., p. 9.

136 Ibid., pp. 17, 19–20.

Jesuits leading gentlewomen astray, the threat of Catholicism and the intellectual competition inherent to controversy, as expressed through disputation.[137] In this account, the Catholic representative is shown to be a fool, unworthy of the charges he had somehow gained. As the 1610s turned to the 1620s, English Protestants would themselves have wished to God that such methods be used more readily at home.

Daniel Featley in Paris, 1610–1613

In the spring of 1610, the assassination of Henry IV confirmed James's fears, provoking a further restriction on the activities of Catholic priests in England. But, within a month, the young Daniel Featley arrived in Paris, as chaplain to the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Edmondes.[138] A forward Calvinist and the keenest of disputants, Featley had preached at the funeral of John Rainolds in 1607, and was recommended to Edmondes by John King at Oxford.[139] In Paris, he would be drawn into formal, and public, disputation with a litany of Catholic divines – events that were attended by large, predominantly lay audiences, and were to be reported in England across three decades.[140] Featley's outline of these debates describes a gathering of English priests centred on the new Collège d'Arras, who worked to convert travellers and sought confrontations with the ambassador's chaplains. For a while, he refused to meet any such, citing his own lack of experience and a mistrust of Catholic reporting, but he was then 'drawne into the lists' with the priest Christopher Bagshaw, who had been student at Cambridge, a fellow at Oxford and a prisoner at Wisbech Castle.[141] Few details of their first disputation are given, save that it was called by a Scottish Catholic named Alexander, and held after dinner at his residence: 'At the last service, M. *Alexander* blew the coale, and D. *Bagshau* presently tooke fire: and immediately after dinner we fell to it with great

137 Chapter 6 below.

138 Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 16; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policy', p. 186; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 57–8. See Michael Questier, 'Loyalty, Religion and State Power in Early Modern England: English Romanism and the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance', *HJ*, 40/2 (1997): p. 323; Michael C. Questier (ed.), *Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkhead*, Camden 5th series, vol. 12 (London, 1998), pp. 80–81.

139 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.47, fol. 129^{r}; Hugh Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies: Daniel Featley, Anti-Catholic Controversialist Abroad', in Hugh Adlington, Tom Lockwood and Gillian Wright (eds), *Chaplains in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 86–7.

140 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 16–25; John Featley, *Featlæi Paliggenesia* (London, 1660), pp. 9–10. Featley's Paris activities have more recently been considered in Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 83–102.

141 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 17–21; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', p. 90; *ODNB* Baghsaw, Christopher.

vehemency for many houres.'[142] However, as later reports demonstrate, the chaplain was a close adherent of the full disputation process, and in Paris he had found an environment where such encounters were encouraged.

Featley's second Paris disputation was a longer affair; occasioned by a gentlewoman drawn to Catholicism through poverty and Catholic benefactors. The chaplain suggests that it was this that led her to call for a disputation, 'that she might not be thought to be drawne to them for temporall respects', and while this is to highlight Catholic enticements, it also suggests that a disputation was a credible engine of conversion.[143] The priest appointed for the debate was one Dr Stevens, and he and the gentlewoman approached Featley several times for the other part. After questioning their motives, Featley accepted in response to a direct challenge.[144] As he would later point out, it was far better to meet such an opponent than refuse: 'It is a shame for me to be silent, when Priests and Jesuites are so clamorous … for the Ministers of Christ to be backward to defend, when the Agents of Antichrist are forward to oppugne our most holy faith'.[145] To this we can add the authority of disputation. Again, few details of the event are given, though Featley notes his adversary's performance: he recalls an 'eloquent' oration, but reports that when the elderly Stevens 'came to dispute, and was tied to propound his arguments in a syllogisticall forme, and so propounding them received some unexpected answers, he quite lost himselfe'. He also notes the reaction of the gathering.[146] Featley – and, he indicates, the audience – valued the disputation process above the 'variety of learning' presented in Stevens's opening speech.

This occasion extended to a second meeting, in which Bagshaw was substituted for the faltering Stevens. Featley's *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638) includes a full account of the debate, detailing arrangements and audience.[147] It is described here as 'more solemne'; attended by 'L. *Clifford*, Sir *Edward Summerset*, and divers other persons of great quality both English and French'.[148] The subject was transubstantiation, as defined by Trent, and the arguments are clearly described as following the academic format: Featley opposes for much of the way, and Bagshaw is asked to assume this role towards the close.[149] Given this, it is noteworthy that the

142 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 21–2.

143 Ibid., pp. 22–3; Chapter 4 above.

144 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 23; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', p. 91.

145 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs ¶4^{r}, H*4^{r}.

146 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 23–4.

147 Ibid., pp. 24, 231–76.

148 Ibid., pp. 24,231; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 91–2.

149 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 233, 240, 266, 271; Chapter 2 above.

audience are said to have taken a great interest, and exerted some influence over proceedings. At the moment where the roles switch, Featley has it that he was 'called off from farther objecting'.[150] The origin of this command is never specified, but if it came from the gathering – a possibility, given certain attendees' education – it shows a significant level of engagement.[151] The outcome of this event, as Featley has it, was a separation of the gentlewoman from her benefactors: after the debate, he had heard that she was imprisoned for debt, and upon visiting her found her settled in reformed doctrine. But, for the purposes of this study, the more significant outcome was that a report of the second meeting, drawn up by the notaries Arscot and Ashley, was sent back to England. The recipient was George Abbot at Canterbury: a vigorous advocate of anti-Catholic debate, and Featley's subsequent employer.[152]

In September 1612, Featley opposed Richard Smith, later bishop of Chalcedon and then head of the Catholic controversialists gathered at Arras.[153] Again, this event centred on a doubting individual, although Featley indicates that the encounter came at Smith's urging: 'for reasons best knowne to your selfe, you dealt with *M. John Fourd* by *M. Knevet* his halfe brother to draw us together to a friendly conference'.[154] The Catholic account indicates that Knevet was 'put in minde, that he was mistaken in the matter of Religion', but Michael Questier, whose work locates Ford and Knevet in a specific English Catholic circle, echoes Featley – he describes the disputation as an 'inaugural display' for Arras; a demonstration that the secular priesthood were as practised and eager for such debate as were the Society of Jesus.[155] Disputation with Protestant divines thus remained a Catholic priority, though the impetus came from reformed efforts.[156] This debate, whose subject was the presence of Christ in the sacrament, took

150 Ibid., p. 265.

151 *ODNB* Clifford, Henry.

152 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 24; Anthony Milton, 'A Qualified Intolerance: The Limits and Ambiguities of Early Stuart Anti-Catholicism', in Arthur F. Marotti (ed.), *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 87; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', p. 92.

153 The Protestant account is contained in Daniel Featley, *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), pp. 285–306. Smith's chaplain Edmund Lechmere responded in S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), of which an edition was presented in *The Relection of a Conference Touching the Reall Presence* (1635), attributed to John Lechmere. These sources are detailed in Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 377n; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 87–8, 89. Featley later responded with *Transubstantiation Exploded*.

154 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 25.

155 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, p. 7; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, pp. 376–7; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 83, 90.

156 Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 384; *ODNB* Smith, Richard.

place on 4 September, the Catholic report stating that Smith was given only one day's notice.[157] Once again, a large crowd was present, including Ford and Knevet, the playwright Ben Jonson (only recently returned to the English Church), the Catholic polemicist and poet Henry Constable and the priest Thomas Rant. Pory arrived with Featley, to serve as his notary, and with Smith came a relation and colleague at Arras named William Rainer.[158] In the Catholic report, there is a suggestion that Featley had sent for Pierre du Moulin to serve as his second, but this is dismissed by the chaplain.[159] Several others, both English and French, were in attendance.

For this well-attended dispute, the academic process is again referenced heavily, on both sides. Three conditions were proposed: peaceable argument, adherence to the *quæstio*, and also that 'M. *Featly* at this time should onely oppose, and D. *Smith* onely answer'.[160] A second meeting was suggested, to give equal time in the roles, but this would never take place.[161] The arguments proceeded by syllogism and authority, antecedent and consequent: a model of disputation, with a concern for the fundamentals of the form expressed in both sides' accounts.[162] The outcome, however, is contested. Featley asserts that, at the close, his copy of Smith's answers was snatched by a 'friend' of the priest, to be replaced with edited points in Smith's own hand.[163] The Catholic account, meanwhile, states that Knevet died a Catholic, driven from Protestantism by Featley's poor conduct: again, an assumption that a disputation *could* prompt conversion. But Featley describes this as falsehood, invoking the testimony of Knevet's acquaintances to support his own assertion that he 'was constant in the truth of his Religion'.[164] There is also a disagreement over the proposed second debate. The Catholic report asserts that Featley avoided it, asking instead to continue as opponent because he 'did exceedingly feare to undertake the part of defendant'.[165] Featley invokes his other disputations, in France and England, to show that he was not afraid to respond.[166]

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157 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 287; S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 8–9, 17.

158 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 306; S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, p. 9; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 377; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 83, 84, 88.

159 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 33–4; S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, p. 12; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', p. 88.

160 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 287.

161 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 18–19.

162 Ibid., pp. 29, 60; Chapter 2 above.

163 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 39.

164 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 191–2; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 218–20.

165 S.E., *Conference Mentioned*, pp. 180–88.

166 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 221–4.

This debate can tell us a great deal about Catholic attitudes toward disputation, and details connections between English Catholic communities at home and abroad; and when Featley, Pory and their fellows are included in this picture (and Featley's other debates are considered alongside), the image is built up of a community that spanned the confessional divide.[167] This network, it seems, could engage in disputation, in public, with greater liberty than was evident at this time in England. This situation, encouraged by the intellectual and cultural heritage shared by Catholic and Protestant disputants – to say nothing of educated audiences – cuts through the fear and restriction in England to give a clear picture of the continuing authority of disputation.[168] In the wake of the Gunpowder Plot, as in that of the Westminster conference, there are very few reports of public, anti-Catholic disputation in England. But in Paris we find evidence of its continued presence, and – more importantly – its growing significance for the laity. Abbot had directed Featley to a necessary task, but also to a favourable audience.[169]

Public Disputation

These encounters suggest trends that would emerge in public disputation in England into the 1620s. Their focus on doubting individuals, with the role of lay audiences, points to a new, more public application of the process, whose component parts had developed in England, but required a different climate for proper application and reporting. Thomas More, agent in Rome for the English secular clergy, had been informed in the early 1610s that there was 'a strong and growing interest … in matters of controversy' among the educated laity; but for this interest to be revealed in disputation, and in disputation reports, priests and Jesuits required the freedom to dispute before such individuals.[170] In the heightened, but liberated, climate surrounding the Spanish Match, this would appear, and English Protestants would finally gain access to an arena where full, scholastic disputation, of the type favoured by Featley and Walker, could be put to profitable use. This, however, would expose its limitations.

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167 Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, pp. 376–7; Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', p. 90. In addition, see Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 243–4.

168 Milton, 'Qualified Intolerance', pp. 91–5.

169 Adlington, 'Chaplains to Embassies', pp. 89–90, 92–3.

170 Hugh Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1559–1790* (London, 1966), p. 252; Milton, 'Qualified Intolerance', p. 105.

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CHAPTER 6

Disputation Opposed

> For it is written, I will destroy the wisedome of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.[1]

When Henry Jacob made his offer of a disputation after Hampton Court, he did so in the knowledge that not everyone favoured such an event. His recommendations are as much a defence of public religious debate as an assertion of its efficacy. The 'oppositions' he works to pre-empt include claims that debate had already been undertaken, that it was dangerous or disloyal to question religious policy, that it would open the door to Catholic, Anabaptist and other unacceptable challengers, and – crucially – that there could be no common judge. 'They name none; And when they have been heard to oppose and Answer what they can, they will not stand to any mans definitive sentence, but will continue obstinate still.'[2] This last stemmed from the puritan rejection of Hampton Court, but it also raises that question of determining authority which plagued all religious disputation. Reading Jacob's *Offer*, the Catholic priest Edward Mayhew seized on this as evidence that papal determination (in the church, with the aid of a general council) was essential.[3] Jacob's answer was that all should judge, though none individually. He puts his faith in disputation: 'It may please God, that by the evidence and force of those Arguments or Answers that shal be propounded, both sides may thinke themselves satisfied, and one side yeeld.'[4] But while he offers optimistic solutions, Jacob's work shows the range of opposition that might be voiced to such events, on practical *and* religious grounds. The following chapter will oppose its forerunners' thesis, by pursuing these oppositions through two avenues. First, the disputations centred on the Jesuit Fisher (John Percy) will be taken as an inductive study into the impact widening use and intractable divisions had on the process. Objections against public religious disputation throughout the period will then be considered, and answered with reference to contemporary opinion.

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1 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Corinthians 1:19.

2 Henry Jacob, *A Christian and Modest Offer of a Most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation* (1606), pp. 23–42.

3 Edward Mayhew, *A Treatise of the Groundes of the Old and Newe Religion* (1608), pp. 130–31.

4 Jacob, *Christian and Modest Offer*, pp. 40–41.

The Fisher Controversies

A great number of the disputation reports that survive for this period originate from the mid-1620s, as the climate during and after the pursuit of the Spanish Match allowed for an expansion of cross-confessional debate, and then for publication of the proceedings. The treatment of English Catholics had become a central part of James's negotiations, and into the 1620s a measure of toleration – including the partial liberation of imprisoned priests – was put into effect.[5] The result was an increasing, and increasingly visible, connection between Catholic clergymen and prominent members of the laity – a connection typified by Percy, who used the favourable climate to minister to the countess of Buckingham and others at court.[6] The Jesuit was known to be an effective Catholic evangelist – in an epistle printed in 1630, Daniel Featley would find him peddling 'the [f]ickle state of your Catholike cause with your collapsed Ladies' – and his involvement in disputation in the 1620s reflects this endeavour.[7] Again, these were exercises in persuasion; an attempt to try controversial points in a scholarly manner, in the hearing of those seeking assurance. Called for wavering members of the laity, these encounters represent 'public' religious disputation in its most private aspect: the emphasis on assuring a third party would inform the methods used and the questions tackled, and it brought with it a critical audience, a more tangible objective and a clearer means of determining success.

Featley, too, would assign these events a positive role, painting them as a fulfilment of the directive laid out in Canon 66 in 1604:

> I speake not of publick disputations (within a State settled and resolved many yeers in point of Religion, as ours hath been, and is, God be thanked), but of private occasionall conferences, for the satisfaction especially of persons of quality: which … without great offense to God, and scandall to his Truth, cannot sometimes be avoided;[8]

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[5] S.N., *A True Report of the Private Colloquy betweene M. Smith, alias Norrice, and M. Walker* (1624), pp. 9–10; Timothy H. Wadkins, 'The Percy–"Fisher" Controversies and the Ecclesiastical Politics of Jacobean Anti-Catholicism, 1622–1625', *Church History*, 57/2 (1988): pp. 154–5, 160; Brennan C. Pursell, 'The End of the Spanish Match', *HJ*, 45/4 (2002): p. 702; Michael C. Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics, 1621–1625*, Camden 5th series, vol. 34 (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 6, 30–31, 32, 34–5, 36, 43.

[6] A.C., *True Relations of Sundry Conferences* (1626), p. 13; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 155–6; Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 394–5; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 49.

[7] Daniel Featley, *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), p. 281. See Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 53–65.

[8] Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sigs H3*v–H4*r; Daniel Featley, *An Appendix to the Fishers Net* (1624), p. 53.

For clergymen like Featley and George Walker, the climate of toleration surrounding the Spanish negotiations further mandated anti-Catholic works. Behind this lay confidence in truth and a fear of Catholic influence, exemplified in a sermon by Richard Sheldon in 1622, which urged that, if the state should 'connive' with Catholics, those troubled should turn to learned ministers, 'who, by the rule of reason, by the Authoritie of venerable Antiquitie; but, above all, by the sacred Word of God (the rule of our Faith) may prearme you against all their superstitions, and sophistical vanities'.[9] While this position was not wholly viable during the negotiations, divines of Featley's stripe were still spurred on by the apocalyptic context of the Thirty Years War, and by the activities of the enemy: 'shall we suffer Wolves to enter into our Folds, and worry our dearest Lambs'; is this 'to stop *the mouth of those who subvert whole houses*, *by leading away captive simple women loaden with iniquity*'.[10] In describing June 1623, prior to the young Prince Charles's return from Spain, Walker recalls:

> the Priests and Jesuites those hot lovers of the Romish Babylon enraged with the lusts of that proud whore, and puffed up with hope of prevailing in this Land, were as busie as waspes and hornets about our bee-hives, and as wolves about our folds seducing our flocks, and sending generall challenges of disputation to our Shepherds every where.[11]

Featley's justification was also, arguably, an appropriate one: through the lord keeper, John Williams, the state encouraged those lay Catholics who benefitted from toleration measures to accept 'conference with learned preachers' as an expression of gratitude.[12] For a brief period, an indulgence of Catholic activities cohabited with redoubled anti-Catholic efforts. This, with the growth of lay interest in controversy, allowed cross-confessional disputation to venture into the dining halls of the nobility and gentry. But this was not simply a change of location: for the Protestants, as for Percy, this was disputation as *counsel*, and the role of laymen as moderators and beneficiaries would exert pressure on its forms.

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[9] Richard Sheldon, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse* (1625), p. 45; Anthony Milton, 'A Qualified Intolerance: The Limits and Ambiguities of Early Stuart Anti-Catholicism', in Arthur F. Marotti (ed.), *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 98.

[10] Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. H3*$^{r-v}$; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Titus 1:11.

[11] George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), pp. 1–2; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 5, sig. Cc^{v}; A.C., *An Answer to a Pamphlet* (1623), p. 13.

[12] Michael Questier, 'Catholic Loyalism in Early Stuart England', *EHR*, 123 (2008): p. 1157.

Prelude: Daniel Featley and George Musket

Over two days in April 1621, Percy took a minor role in a disputation between the priest George Musket (whose *real* name was Fisher) and Featley, now chaplain to George Abbot at Canterbury.[13] The occasion was emblematic of these private disputations – a preliminary letter reveals the involvement of a 'learned Knight'; at least connected with one of Featley's doubting 'persons of quality'.[14] The questions proposed covered transubstantiation, merit of works, and that preferred instrument of Catholic evangelists (and bane of disputation), the authority and succession of the true church. But, in the event, only the first was discussed.[15] The preliminaries further suggest that the debate was intended to be equitable, and tied to the full process: the state of the question is outlined on both sides, and Featley requests equal opportunities to oppose.[16] This, with the questions listed, indicates a more significant event than the tussle over transubstantiation that would finally take place. Featley's lone account is thus a good first step in assessing how such an event might fall short of expectations.

The first day opens with a reiteration of both sides' tenets on transubstantiation.[17] Featley outlines 'a twofold change' and 'a threefold presence' in the sacrament, presenting in common, Aristotelian terms the Protestant belief in accidental, rather than substantial, change and a presence that was 'real' in a spiritual sense. Musket replies that he 'might have spared these distinctions', himself stating the Catholic belief in a real, substantial presence through transubstantiation.[18] Featley, opposing at this first encounter, then offers a point withoutform and, for all his urging of correct disputing, has to be prompted, 'Conclude something syllogistically, and then I will answer you.'[19] This antagonism continues: where Featley triumphs over Musket, his respondent pronounces it 'featly spoken', garnering the rebuke: 'leave these speeches, and urge somewhat to the

[13] The principal account is contained in Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 49–112. Here, I have referred to neither man as 'Fisher', using Percy's real name and Musket's alias in order to avoid confusion.

[14] Ibid., pp. 50, 111.

[15] Ibid., pp. 49–51, 53.

[16] Ibid., p. 51.

[17] Peter Milward places the debate in the New Prison, where Musket was held for a portion of the 1620s, though in February 1621 he had been exiled by the Privy Council, but had nonetheless remained in England: *ODNB* Fisher [*alias* Musket, Muscote], George; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 144n.

[18] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 53–5; see Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), pp. 50–52.

[19] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 56–7.

purpose. If I knew your name, peradventure I should not be indebted to you for a jest.'[20] Should it be thought that this is but Featley presenting his adversary as frivolous, where the jest is repeated it is countered with this retaliatory barrage: 'I dare say, that the whole company wil witnesse for me, that I am Musket-proofe'. Featley's second, Thomas Goad, adds: 'Heere hath been no Musket-shot discharged, but onely small hayle-shot.'[21] But on the second day, the most antagonistic exchanges are tied to process. At the commencement, Musket's desire to revisit a previous answer leads into some unstructured discourse, at which Featley – in a reversal of the first debate – asks that he proceed 'according to our appointment'.[22] Further in, another formal digression prompts Goad to exclaim: 'For shame urge you some Argument. All this while you have trifled but the time, and put the Answerer to make Arguments, contrary to the Law of all good Disputation.'[23]

The disputants' handling of transubstantiation also places a strain on the debate. In opposing, Featley emulates the approach of John Rainolds, urging a range of arguments, but even by his own report, this does not appear comprehensive, so much as peremptory.[24] Citing Bellarmine and Francis Coster, he states that a deficiency in the priest's intentions might lead communicants to worship only bread, but where Musket makes the analogy of certainty in one's own baptism, this is only briefly opposed, and dismissed as a digression.[25] Concluding an argument from Gratian, Featley refers the place 'to all Grammarians, and to common sense'.[26] He takes only two responses on the wording of the Catholic Mass before stating, 'I will not dwell upon the Canon of your Masse'.[27] To Featley's eyes, one of them on the audience, these instances show disputation working: he disproves Musket's position, and moves on. But there is no uncontroverted victory. Elsewhere, he pushes his adversary into half-admissions that remain contested.[28] In other words, this disputation has not been grounded. The question does not contain the parameters for a commonly accepted victory, except on basic principles of reason and grammar, and Musket's

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20 Ibid., p. 65. Of course, had Featley known Musket's *real* name, he would certainly have had something to say, as evidenced in his dealings with the Jesuit 'Fisher': see Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Z4*r.

21 Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 99–100.

22 Ibid., p. 79.

23 Ibid., p. 88.

24 Chapter 4 above.

25 Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 56–60.

26 Ibid., p. 64.

27 Ibid., pp. 65–7.

28 Ibid., pp. 58, 66.

dismissal of those opening distinctions has a lasting impact. This conflict was not, in contemporary Protestant minds, insurmountable: in a treatise translated by Elizabeth Russell in 1605, it was said:

> it is a marveilous matter to see, how in other controversies we be *Aristotle* men, and oftentimes take hold of distinctions more curious [than] necessary: and in this disputation of Sacraments we admit no difference, we allow no equivocation, although both the nature of the thing requireth it, and the authoritie of the old writers doe … point us to it.[29]

The fault here is not in the disputation process: Featley presents himself as making the best of a bad job, against a disorderly disputant who clings to fundamental errors. In subsequent debates, meanwhile, the Catholic side would make an attempt to set common ground.

A central incompatibility lies in the disputants' use of authorities, despite Featley's urging of shared hermeneutic rules. Musket's first syllogism as opponent on the second day concerns the literal interpretation of *hoc est corpus meum* in the Institution, and he states that there is no scriptural basis for a figurative. But Featley tells him that to argue for an explicit mandate in scripture was to argue against transubstantiation itself.[30] This exchange places them on shared ground, disputing at cross purposes, and Featley then justifies his position through the progression of Musket's syllogisms. They move on to the fathers, and the final points focus on Hilary.[31] Featley applies accepted rules to Musket's citations, distinguishing positive doctrinal profession from controversy, and finding corruptions. He states that on transubstantiation, 'you have verie ill luck with many Tractates, from whence you draw testimonies'.[32] But the most important incompatibility remains one of interpretation and language: to Musket's use of one passage in Hilary, '*Of the truth of Christs flesh and bloud*, *there is no place left for doubting*', Featley responds: 'Did ever any protestant doubt of the truth of Christ's body and bloud?'[33] Again, the ground has not been laid; the terms of the question have not been commonly accepted.

A final stumbling block appears to have been the influence of outside parties, wary of this form of encounter – at least, such is Featley's interpretation. At the opening of the second day, he reports that Musket

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[29] Elizabeth Russell (trans.), *A Way of Reconciliation of a Good and Learned Man* (1605), p. 102.

[30] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 80–83; John White, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church* (1614), pp. 515–18.

[31] Simon Birckbek, *The Protestants Evidence* (1635), p. 76.

[32] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 103, 105, 108–9; White, *Defence of the Way*, p. 518.

[33] Featley, *Appendix*, p. 107.

arrived late, having sent the message 'that hee might not conferre any more with D. *Featly*, without an Assistant assigned unto him by those of their Society, which Assistant was M. *Fisher* [Percy]'.[34] Though this cannot be taken at face value, Percy's presence can be established by his own works.[35] The request implies Jesuit interference, though Musket's biographers have not identified him as one of the Society.[36] Featley states that he assented to the request, on condition that he might also have an assistant, in the form of Goad. Musket again voices the interest of outside parties as this second day began:

> I have been traduced by diverse Catholiques, touching my Answers at our last Disputation: and therefore … I intreat you, M. Doctor *Featly*, to doo me right, and to cleer me from certain aspersions cast upon me; as namely, that I should confesse Papists to bee idolaters, and to adore they knowe not what.[37]

This answer had been drawn by Featley's urging of Coster, and Featley does not allow the change, because the answer had been accepted and set down in the notes. If accurate, this wider concern again indicates an event of some importance, while suggesting a reason for its premature conclusion. At the close of the day, Featley reports that a third was arranged, for him to pursue his oppositions, but that when it came neither Musket nor Percy arrived, explaining that they ought not dispute while parliament was in session. When pressed, they added 'that the last night they had a meeting with the rest of their Societie, and that it was there concluded, that they should not meet any more out of their lodging'.[38] It is certainly Featley's intention to suggest Jesuit reluctance, and the prominence of John Percy in later debates argues against this, but the note of reservation is still interesting, given subsequent Jesuit objections.

Fugue: Disputations for the Countess of Buckingham

In May 1622, three disputations were arranged to counter Percy's influence on the countess of Buckingham and those around her, and to

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[34] Ibid., pp. 76–7.

[35] Percy confirms his presence in answering the charge that he had falsified his notes: Chapter 2 above.

[36] There was, however, contemporary confusion as to his affiliation: Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978), p. 203; Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests, as Well Secular as Regular* (2 vols, London, 1741–42), vol. 2, p. 295; Charles Dodd, *The Church History of England, from the Year 1500, to the Year 1688* (3 vols, London, 1737–42), vol. 3, p. 98.

[37] Featley, *Appendix*, p. 77.

[38] Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 111–12; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 22.

return the countess to the English Church. These meetings took place before a select audience, comprising members of the countess's household and the authorities, including John Williams. The king took a prominent role at the second debate.[39] On 24 and 25 May, Percy's nominal adversary was Francis White, royal chaplain and dean of Carlisle, and for the final day White was replaced by William Laud. Although these debates have previously been examined, their use of the disputation format has yet to be fully considered, and any discussion of its perception and validity demands a revaluation of their purpose and outcome.[40]

In the delicate climate that had grown around the Spanish negotiations, the debates of 1622 were intended to be private affairs.[41] This is reflected not just in their audience, but in the restrictions placed on reports. The debates were not immediately printed; rather the developing international situation and the fortunes of the participants resulted in a gradual proliferation of accounts over two decades.[42] The earliest were prompted by an exchange at the end of the second day, in which James set out nine points for Percy to answer, moving the debate into written controversy.[43] Percy, however, states that he was 'charged, upon his Allegiance, from his Majesty … not to set out, or publish what passed in some of these Conferences, untill he gave Licence', suggesting a continuing need for privacy.[44] Each side would accuse the other of spreading unsanctioned accounts: when White's extension of the first debate appeared in 1624 – after the collapse of the Spanish Match – it presented itself as a response to 'Hundreds of Papers' from Percy's side.[45] Appended to this treatise was an account of the third debate, credited to '*R.B.* Chapleine to the B. that

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[39] A.C., *True Relations*. p. 13; Francis White, *A Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere to Certain Questions Propounded by His Most Gratious Ma[jesty] King James* (1624), sigs b3^{r}, b4^{v}; Timothy H. Wadkins, 'King James I Meets John Percy, S.J. (25 May, 1622): An Unpublished Manuscript from the Religious Controversies Surrounding the Countess of Buckingham's Conversion', *RH*, 19/2 (1988): pp. 146, 147; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 30n.

[40] Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 155–64; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 163–5, 190–93, 296–9; W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 342–4; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 395; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 30n.

[41] Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 156–7.

[42] Milward, *Jacobean*, pp. 143–4, 216–27.

[43] White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, esp. sig. b3^{v}; Wadkins, 'King James I', p. 152; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 395n.

[44] A.C., *True Relations*, sig. *3^{v}.

[45] White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. *4^{r}; A.C., *True Relations*, sig. *3^{v}; William Laud, *A Relation of the Conference* (1639), sig. A2^{v}–A3^{v}; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 166–7; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 30n.

was imployed in the Conference'.[46] Percy's *True Relations* followed in 1626, omitting the second day,

> because in a manner all the speach of that meeting, was betweene his Majesty, and *M. Fisher*, who beareth that dutifull respect to his Soveraigne, that he will not permit any thing sayd by him, to be published now after his death, which he had so specially forbidden to be published in the tyme of his life.[47]

The last account appeared in 1639: an expanded edition of the report attributed to Laud's chaplain. In its dedicatory epistle, Laud revealed himself to have been the author: 'for some *Reasons*, and those then approved *by Authority*, it was thought fit I should set it out in my Chaplain's Name, R. B. and not in my owne. To which I readily submitted.'[48]

The story of these accounts' production, and the language used therein, is crucial to our understanding of the disputations' purpose. The intention here – by all accounts – was not publicly to discredit the Jesuit, but privately to convince the countess. These debates are an extension of those actions taken with Catholic converts; precisely the type of private conference Featley would justify through Canon 66 and royal command. Laud reports that the third debate 'was both Commanded, and acted in private'.[49] The intention to persuade is further confirmed in the participants' outlines of the occasion: White was 'called, by my Lord Duke of Buckingham, to conferre with an Honourable Person, who as then began to make Revolt from the true Faith and Religion professed in our Church'.[50] Percy reports: 'The Occasion of this Conference, was a certaine writte[n] Paper, given by *M Fisher* to an Hon[ourable] Lady, who desired somthing to be briefly writte[n], to prove the Catholique Roman Church, & Faith, to be the *only* right.'[51] Both parties again show faith in the ability of such efforts to convince; a faith derived from the independent authority of disputation, and from their personal religious assurance.

The extent to which the format was observed in these 'conferences' still needs to be considered, however. For the first, Percy opposed White, the role falling to him as a result of his paper to the countess. Here, Percy had

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[46] R.B., *An Answere to Mr Fishers Relation of a Third Conference betweene a Certaine B. (as he Styles him) and Himselfe* (1624), sig. A^{r}; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', p. 167.

[47] A.C., *True Relations*, sig. *4r. Percy's manuscript report of the second day is printed in Wadkins, 'King James I', pp. 147–53.

[48] Laud, *Relation*, sig. A3^{v}.

[49] Ibid., sig. A2^{v}.

[50] White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. b3^{r}; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 30n.

[51] A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 1–12.

set out arguments in syllogistic form, and he was quick to introduce the first of these, retaining its structure.[52] The use of formal logic was not, of course, exclusive to disputation, but the citation of *pre-formed* arguments is rarely noted in debate. By setting out syllogisms in advance, Percy had pre-emptively laid claim to the opponent's role, in case of a disputation. For all his criticism of the formal process – and, indeed, that note of reluctance identified by Featley – the Jesuit believes in the power of disputation to persuade, and to illustrate (though not produce) truth. Echoing Alabaster and Persons, he recognizes disputation as the tool for discussions of this kind. And so the form is utilized, initially, for the countess. By the Jesuit's account – the only full narrative of the 24th – the roles switched at the midpoint, becoming blurred as the debate wore on: in the opening stages, White 'answers' and the Jesuit 'replies' syllogistically, but Percy is then said to have 'answered' several times, and all trace of formal logic disappears.[53] Recounting the second day, Percy's manuscript account eschews dialogue *and* disputation form, giving the impression of an examination conducted by the king. The initial debate had centred on Percy's paper, and what followed, continuing into this second day, was an attempt to refute its arguments. As Percy tells it, however, he was still allowed to introduce arguments.[54] For the third day, Percy opposed Laud, but their debate was not held to formal logic: by Percy's account, his argument was conducted through questions, not syllogisms, and Laud's account makes no objection to this presentation of the format.[55] This debate was also diverted by audience interjections: here we see disputation moving into a personal, as much as a public, sphere.[56] Though academic ideals remain, in all parties' reports, these debates are broadly indicative of one objective (assurance for the listeners) beginning to subsume or replace another (the scholarly pursuit of consequents and conclusions).

As Percy describes the question for debate,

> a Continuall, Infallible, Visible Church … was the chief and onely point in which a certaine Lady required satisfaction, as having formerly setled in her mind, that it was not for her, or other unlearned persons to take upon them to judge of particulers, without depending upon the Judgment of the true Church.[57]

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52 Ibid., pp. 8–11, 17.

53 For the switch, ibid., p. 28.

54 Ibid., p. 13; Wadkins, 'King James I', p. 149; Chapter 5 above.

55 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 41–69; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 32.

56 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 44, 53–5, 63–4, 68–9; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, pp. 37, 66, 72; see G.R. Evans, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 102.

57 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 41.

In his paper to the countess, this was expressed through four propositions on the ground and authority of the church, followed by two central syllogisms.[58] First:

> If it be needfull, that there should be one, or other continuall succession of *Visible Pastors*, in which, and by which the unchanged word of God, upon which true, divine, infallible Faith is grounded, is preserved and preached; and no other succession besides that of the *Roman Church*, and others, which agree in Faith with it, can be shewed (as if any such were, may be shewed) out of approved Histories, or other ancient monuments; Then without doubt, the *Roman Church* only, and such as agree with it in Faith, have that true, divine, infallible Faith, which is necessary to salvation.
>
> But there must be one, or other such succession of *Visible Pastors*; and no other can be shewed out of approved Histories or ancient monume[n]ts, besides that of the *Roman Church* only, and such others as agree with it in Faith. *Ergo*.
>
> The *Roman Church* only, and such others as agree with it in Faith, hath true, divine, infallible Faith, necessarie to salvation.

This is followed by a second syllogism:

> If the *Roman Church* had the right Faith, and never changed any substantiall part of Faith; Then it followeth, that it hath now that one true, divine, infallible Faith, which is necessary to salvation.
>
> But the *Roman Church* once had the right Faith, and never changed any substantiall part of Faith. *Ergo*.
>
> The *Roman Church* now hath the right Faith; and consequently *Protestants*, so far as they disagree with it, have not the right soule-saving Faith.

In these arguments, we find the principal stumbling block for this and other debates on the succession question, for in their conditions and potential answers they describe a familiar, circular dispute.[59] Percy's emphasis would rest on the first: as he saw it, the more effectual means of resolution.[60] In his initial encounter with White, he reports having argued that 'to erre in any questions defined by full authority of the Church, is to shake the foundation of Faith', asking 'how can ech particuler

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[58] Ibid., pp. 8–11.

[59] The church proved by scripture; scripture interpreted by the church: Chapter 2 above.

[60] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 270.

Protestant rest assured, that he believeth … so much as is necessary'.[61] But, while Percy tries to fix the debate on the authority of the church and the consequent need for visible pastors, White works piecemeal to answer his second point on consistent doctrine.[62] Laud similarly notes the Jesuit's occasional omission of the word 'infallible' from his question.[63] Introducing his account of their last debate, the Jesuit complains that his prior encounters with White had concentrated only on 'particuler matters', but this was a clear response to his paper.[64] Nor would it be the last time that the visibility question was dealt with in a manner of which he did not approve.

Much has been made of the selection of White and Laud for these encounters over more aggressive anti-Catholic controversialists like Featley.[65] Featley had at least considered throwing his hat into the proverbial, producing his own paper for the countess: 'a free will offering … to build and farth[er] establish you in your most holy faith'.[66] In his manuscript *Trial of Faith by the Touchstone of Truth*, Featley compared himself to a king's food taster, in an invocation of private debate and religious counsel.[67] But the delicate international situation was driving James and Buckingham towards more conciliatory voices.[68] Their use also adds a corroborating optimism to these conferences' focus on counsel over polemic. But the use of moderate disputants also had an impact on the manner in which the *quæstio* was pursued. Though White's deflection of the succession question was Percy's greatest impediment, Laud's position on Rome would offer an opportunity. The final questions of this third day came from the countess: she asked Laud whether he 'would grant

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61 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 18, 19. See pp. 22–5, 31, 44–5; White, *Defence of the Way*, p. 363.

62 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 17, 29–30. See Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 31–3. Twice, White presents two answers on the succession question: first that one cannot be shown, then that alternatives existed in the Greek *and* Protestant churches: A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 22, 28; Anon., *A Reply to D. White and D. Featly* (1625), pp. 66–70; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 296–9.

63 R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 3.

64 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 41.

65 Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', esp. pp. 161, 162–4; Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 395; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, p. 30n.

66 Bodl., Rawlinson MS D.47, fol. 15^{r}.

67 Ibid., fols 1^{r}–2^{r}.

68 Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 162–3, 164; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I', *The Journal of British Studies*, 24/2 (1985): pp. 198–202; Anthony Milton and Alexandra Walsham, 'Richard Montagu: "Concerning Recusancie of Communion with the Church of England"', in Stephen Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 77–8.

the Roman Church to be the right Church'; at which Percy reports that he both granted it *and* admitted that the Protestants 'made a Rent or Division'.[69] Laud denies this, but the Jesuit counters that he took 'speciall notice of this passage, in regard it concerned a most important point'.[70] As the company rose, the countess asked 'whether she might be saved in the Roman Fayth', and again Laud's answer varies with the account followed.[71] Percy recalls a simple 'Shee might', while Laud retorts that this was applied to 'the ignorant, that could not discerne the Errors of that Church'.[72] Where the countess asked the question of Protestantism, Percy states that there was 'but one saving Fayth, and that is the Roman'.[73] On the first day, Percy notes a similar exchange, on the question of whether salvation was possible for those who erred in points indifferent. White answers in the affirmative; Percy takes the assured stance: 'it is damnable to hold the like errours wilfully and obstinatly, against the known judgment, and conscience of the Church'.[74] This surety is worth noting, given the outcome of these events. The countess's Catholicism was assured, and while Laud works to curb the Jesuit's triumph, arguing that nothing he had said would be sufficient to convince 'unlesse in some that were settled, or setting before', Percy's absolutes cannot easily be dismissed.[75] With a wavering individual at the centre, disputation was a *focused* persuasive effort. Percy's denials are never countered; his adversaries and his conviction gave him the upper hand. When his turn came, Featley would not be overcome so easily.

Oratorio: George Walker and the Jesuits

If White and Laud were intended to be a measured, reassuring presence in 1622, that of George Walker the following year was incendiary. His return ties those distinctions voiced in the 1610s to the wider reaction against disputation, and the exposure of its flaws. Printed reports survive for two debates involving Walker in 1623: on the last of May, he faced the Jesuit Sylvester Norris (going by Smith), and the following month he

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69 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 53–5.

70 Ibid., p. 55; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 148.

71 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 63.

72 Ibid., pp. 63–4; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, pp. 66–7; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 163–4.

73 A.C., *True Relations*, pp. 68–9.

74 Ibid., pp. 25–7; Wadkins, 'King James I', p. 147n.

75 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 72; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 73; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', p. 158; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 167; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, pp. 147, 175, 182.

engaged Percy, whom he had approached in prison several years before.[76] By Walker's account, the debate with Norris was arranged for a kinsman of Sir William Harrington: the Jesuit had challenged him to summon any English minister to debate on the English Church, and though Walker was not Harrington's first choice, he was recommended as 'a man ready for such a purpose'.[77] Norris, formerly a secular priest and a prisoner at Wisbech Castle, was now Jesuit superior to Hampshire.[78] Percy's notoriety was more immediate, and the disputations of 1622 cast a shadow over Walker's account of their June encounter.[79] The occasion for this latter event, as Walker describes it, was the bragging of a 'disciple' of Percy, who praised his learning in opposing White, and proclaimed him 'a challenger of all Preachers in *England*'. This man had two brothers – one Protestant – who are said to have asked that Walker meet Percy to silence their sibling's 'railing'.[80] Their debate is thus presented as a scholarly contest, drawn by reputation, and the influence of 1622 continues through Walker's account. He answers Percy's opening thus: 'wee shall easily answer you, and make it appeare that you are not the man which flying fame reports you to be'; and where Percy appears unable to read a book in Hebrew, 'some of the standers by … wondred whether this were *Fisher* the Jesuit, and made a question of it'.[81] At the close, Walker states that one audience member asked Percy 'whether he were indeed that *Fisher* the Jesuit who disputed with Doctor *White* before the King'.[82] Such assertions are an attempt to injure the Jesuit's reputation, but in them Walker assumes that clerical reputations might be built in a disputation. Norris would describe his own debate with the minister as 'lesse famous' than that between Percy and Featley.[83]

In the second of these debates, then, the focus was already on the disputants, but at the first it was their conduct that would distance the event from its audience and purpose. By Walker's *Summe*, Norris called for 'loving' and 'sweet' argument, and the minister's reply confirms his own view of the lines in disputation: 'he desired to byte and gall no

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[76] The Norris debate is reported in George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), to which Norris responded in S.N., *True Report*. The sole account of Walker's confrontation with Percy is Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*.

[77] Walker, *Summe*, sig. A2^{r-v}; see S.N., *True Report*, p. 9.

[78] Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols, London, 1877–83), vol. 2, p. 482n; Dodd, *Church History*, vol. 2, p. 402; *ODNB* Norris, Sylvester.

[79] Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 2.

[80] Ibid., pp. 2, 4.

[81] Ibid., pp. 7, 21.

[82] Ibid., p. 44.

[83] S.N., *True Report*, p. 6.

adversary but with sound reasons … as for other speeches, he promised for his part to be milde or sharpe, according to the behaviour of his Adversaries'.[84] It is interesting to note Walker's justification of aggressive practices against a different foe.[85] Having set out the customary rule of 'mildness', the disputants then descend – by both accounts – into the most violently antagonistic disputation of any recorded in the period. Norris finds Walker 'in a monstrous rage' towards the close, this stemming from intellectual pride, and he presents it as a natural progression from the man's attitude throughout.[86] The minister makes the accusation more often: Norris argued 'as one full of anger … with vehemency of words'.[87] Temperance and modesty ought to be the default approach, but in his allowances for anger (where the topic demanded, or an adversary crossed the line), Walker reflects the gulf between oppositional 'disputation' and productive 'conference', and embodies those objections against disputation that were to develop in clerical *and academic* circles through the seventeenth century.

Nor were Walker's questions conducive to a debate. Against Norris, he pronounced Rome the Whore of Babylon, the Pope Antichrist and Peter's position as bishop of Rome 'a forged fable contrary to the Scriptures' – questions the Jesuit deemed 'unseemely'; 'not fit to bee named, much lesse to be disputed'.[88] But Walker's insistence on these questions was not, from his perspective, a mistake: indeed, the fact that he maintained them while at the same time urging equity in the roles says much about the relationship between faith and disputation. Walker then reports asking Norris whether he would oppose or respond first, to which the Jesuit replied that he would oppose on his own question (that the Protestants had neither faith nor church), before answering on Walker's.[89] Like Percy, he takes the role of opponent in order to steer the debate, on a question that – to his eyes – hinged on the issue of succession.[90] But when Percy faced Walker the following month, he deviated from this pattern of Jesuit opponent and Protestant respondent. Walker tells Percy:

> If you be pleased to oppose any speciall article of our faith, I will defend it, or if you will take upon you to answer, I will prove against you, That your father the Pope is Antichrist, That the Church of Rome is the whore of Babylon: That

84 Walker, *Summe*, sigs A2^{v}–A3^{r}.

85 Chapter 5 above.

86 S.N., *True Report*, p. 55.

87 Walker, *Summe*, sigs B2^{r}, B2^{v}.

88 Ibid., sigs A2^{v}, A3^{v}–A4^{r}. Confirmed in S.N., *True Report*, p. 10.

89 Walker, *Summe*, sig. A3^{v}.

90 Ibid., sig. A4^{v}; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 11, 15.

> your doctrine of merit of justification before God by your owne workes is hereticall; And that your Image-worship is damnable idolatrie.[91]

Percy too shows scorn for the questions, but he accepts the respondent's role; as he would again on the visibility question, in his encounter with Featley.[92]

Another progression from earlier debates was the insistence of Norris *and* Percy on laying the ground for the disputation, exchanging questions on which the arguments might be based. In this, they work to achieve that demonstrable victory absent in Featley's debate with Musket. Norris asserts, 'I desired we might both agree in some generall positio[n]s, or irrevocable Tenents, as grounds of our ensuing dispute'.[93] In accepting Walker's questions, Percy adds: 'But that we may have some ground to build on; First, I will propound some questions to you in writing, to which I require your answer in writing also, that there bee no mistaking or misreporting hereafter of that which passeth between us.'[94] In both cases, Walker proves a barrier: with his steadfast allegiance to disputation and logic form, he was the worst possible adversary to attempt this with. In his eyes, Norris's questions derailed the debate: 'let us have some disputation by way of strict Arguments and Syllogismes'.[95] With Percy, he recalls a more immediate reaction, against an older ploy:

> If you will set downe any question in writing, and write downe also your arguments, I will also write my answers to them, but all other kinde of questioning I refuse, as a meanes tending to prolong the time, and keepe us off from strict disputation. I remember that when I was with you foure yeeres agoe, you did trifle away a whole afternoone by ambiguous questions, and could not be drawne at all to disputation.

Percy nonetheless argues that 'Wee cannot dispute without some ground laid downe and agreed upon', and proceeds to produce numerous propositions in writing.[96] From here, the debate develops into a disputation *about* disputation, which advances into controversies ungrounded, with neither structure nor a definite question.[97] The careful preparation and

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91 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 9, 18–19.

92 Ibid., pp. 9–10.

93 S.N., *True Report*, pp. 10–11; Walker, *Summe*, sig. A4^{v}.

94 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 10.

95 Walker, *Summe*, sig. C^{r-v}; compare S.N., *True Report*, p. 23.

96 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 10–11.

97 Walker challenges Percy to dispute syllogistically, terming him 'a very idle wrangling Sophister, unskilfull in the art of Logicke, and ignorant in the rules of disputation': ibid., pp. 9, 17–18, 26–8.

awareness of the aftermath shown by the Jesuits came into conflict with Walker's manner and procedure. In both his focus (on 'speciall articles') *and* his view of disputation, he is an obstacle to their preferred manner of conference.

The role of the audience in these disputations is, therefore, intriguing.[98] On the one hand, persuasive arguments are negated by the incompatibilities above, and reputation and aggression place the participants front and centre. But, on the other, the company are still invoked as judges and witnesses, and provision is made for their understanding.[99] Walker reports that in the Norris debate, two bibles were called for: the Latin, and a translation 'for the standers by to looke upon'.[100] In the debate with Percy, comparable efforts were made, again by Walker's report – he reads one place in Latin for the Jesuit, and in English for the benefit of others.[101] These debates are not, then, wholly disconnected from other disputations of the 1620s: the audience are moderators and beneficiaries, and this raises tension between clarity of argument and formal disputing, partly reflecting divergent guarantors of certainty. At the close of his debate with Norris, Walker asserts that one Catholic called him aside, 'telling him, that he was a good Logician, a good Linguist, and well read, and that God had given him a sharpe witte and ready tongue', to which is appended the warning 'that you doe not trust to your wit and learning too much, least they deceive you, and make you triumph over the truth'.[102]

Crescendo: John Percy and Daniel Featley

Writing from prison in the 1640s, on the topic of a visible Protestant succession, Featley would make this formal point: 'a question grounded upon a wrong supposall is sufficiently answered by overthrowing the ground'. The foundation he overturns here is an assumption that records would survive for every age of the true church; but he might also have applied his rule to that great *principii*: its identity.[103] As White had attempted, 'in his way', in 1622, Featley's debate with Percy was an effort

98 For those present, see Walker, *Summe*, sigs A^{r}, A2^{v}; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 1, 9–10; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 4.

99 Walker, *Summe*, sigs A4^{v}, B3^{r}, C^{v}, C4^{r}, D2^{r}, D2^{v}; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 15, 16, 40; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 26, 28, 41.

100 Walker, *Summe*, sigs A3^{r}, E^{r}; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 37–8.

101 Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 25–6.

102 Walker, *Summe*, sig. F2$^{r–v}$; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 59–60.

103 Daniel Featley, *Roma Ruens, Romes Ruine* (1644), p. 32.

to deflect the Jesuit's call for a catalogue of visible Protestants by focusing on consistent doctrine.[104]

For some, this disputation was a direct sequel to 1622. The participants were drawn together, in part, by the memory of those events, and again there was a doubting individual at the centre. This man was Edward Buggs, an elderly gentleman who had fallen ill and had, by Featley's report, been 'solicited' by Catholics to convert.[105] Percy denies that Buggs had been pressured by any priest, and 'for Master *Fisher* in particular … hee never saw this old Gentleman, much lesse did he speake to him, in any matter of Religion'. Percy claimed to have visited Buggs once, to meet with Lynde about the possibility of a disputation.[106] The initial choice for the Protestant side was not Featley, but Francis White: Percy states that Buggs was 'desirous to heare D. *White* and him dispute', and this suggests that the meeting was intended to be a third chance for White to confront him.[107] As Featley has it: 'D. *White* prepared and provided to encounter M. *Fisher*, his former Antagonist; and D. *Featly* was intreated as an Assistant, to deale in a second place with M. *Sweet* [Percy's second], if occasion were offered'. Featley attributes the subsequent reversal to 'a cunning trick of the Jesuite', but there is also a suggestion of outside influences: 'it was then on the place of the meeting, resolved otherwise by some that were principally interes[t]ed in the businesse, that D. *Featly* should beginne with M. *Fisher* … and D. *White* (as there should bee cause) should take off M. *Sweet*, if he interposed'.[108] This use of the vigorous Featley over the moderate dean of Carlisle is remarkable, given the Calvinist stance of Lynde (the occasion's principal organizer).[109] There were some – including Lynde and Archbishop Abbot – who might well have *preferred* to hear the chaplain dispute against Percy, despite (indeed, because of) the Jesuit's history with the moderate White.

Days before the debate, in negotiation with Lynde, Percy had set out his questions, and in this he avoided that syllogism which had proved costly in 1622:

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104 Ibid., p. 33. The first account was Daniel Featley, *The Fisher Catched in his Owne Net* (1623), which Featley claims was printed without his 'licence or knowledge': Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. *3^{v}. Percy responded with *An Answer to a Pamphlet*, and John Sweet in L.D., *A Defence of the Appendix* (1624). Featley expanded on his initial report in *The Romish Fisher* and its *Appendix*.

105 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 1–2.

106 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 2–3. See Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 396.

107 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 3.

108 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. R3*$^{r-v}$.

109 On Lynde, see L.D., *Defence*, p. 4; Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (2 vols, London 1721), vol. 1, pp. 603–4; *ODNB* Lynde, Humphrey.

> Whether there must not bee in al ages a visible Church, of which, al sorts must learne that one infallible faith which is necessary to salvation?
>
> Whether the Protestants Church was in al ages visible, especially in the ages before Luther: and whether the names of such visible Protestants in al ages, may be shewed out of good Authors?[110]

This emphasis on the succession question is not the only development in his approach: offered his choice of role, he suggested – by his own report – that: 'It would be requisite both to dispute and answer'; but, pressed to select one, he then chose to respond.[111] Having refined his question, he eschews an opponent's control over the course of the debate for a respondent's hold on the *quæstio* itself; selecting the part Campion had been assigned. The Protestants, to his eyes, were obliged to present a demonstration that theirs was the true church, and thus they had to introduce arguments. As respondent, he could then deny their induction.

However, as Percy's questions were introduced into the disputation, on 27 June it became clear that he had failed to cover the exits; that his phrasing left room for a range of objections. Featley repeated points raised by Lynde before the encounter: that the question required 'rather an Historical large volume [than] Syllogical briefe disputes', that 'Divine infallible Faith is not built upon deduction out of humane Historie, but divine Revelation' (an argument suggesting that scholastic disputing, grounded in scripture, was separate from human invention) and that names of Protestants in previous ages might have been lost.[112] Featley concludes: 'yet we will not refuse to deale with you in your owne question, if you in like maner will undertake the like taske in your owne defence'. For 90 minutes, he was to oppose Percy on the continual visibility of the Protestants' church, before Sweet replied against White on the Catholics' succession.[113] As Featley began, however, he at once found another weakness in the *quæstio*:

> Whether the Protestants Church was in al ages visible, especially in the ages before Luther: *and* whether the names of such visible Protestants in al ages, may be shewed out of good Authors? [my emphasis][114]

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110 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 4.

111 Ibid., p. 5.

112 Ibid., pp. 9, 14–15. Compare Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 6–7.

113 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 6–7.

114 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*. p. 4; Anon., *Reply to D. White*, p. 4.

Whereas Percy had intended this to be a single question, Featley approached it as two.[115] By his report, he began his opposition by defining induction and the syllogism, before deciding to proceed with the latter. He proffered the true faith as a guarantor, *a priori*, of perpetual visibility; attempting to answer the first half of the question syllogistically, while treating the second – the call for an induction – as unnecessary, impossible and inconclusive. To this, Percy answered, 'you conclude not the question'.[116] While Percy had refocused on the succession, he was again met with an adversary arguing for continuity of doctrine.[117] It was here that he turned to his second adjustment – the choice of roles: 'They are my words, and I am best able to expound my owne meaning'; and in the aftermath: 'The Question being mine, it pertaineth to me to tel the meaning'. And yet Featley could still protest his adherence to the *quæstio* as it was written down.[118] Percy would accuse him of *petitio principii*, in treating visibility as a natural corollary of being the true church, but Featley replied that he was arguing from a causal point: 'Is it not a sounder argument to prove the visibilitie of the professors from the truth of their faith, [than] as you do the truth of your faith from the visibilitie of professors?'.[119] Thus, neither Percy's framing of the question, nor his choice of role, nor his arguments were sufficient to pre-empt (or prevent) Featley's approach. When this was achieved, it came from another direction entirely.

The stalemate again arose from competing *loci* of certainty, but was expressed in the disputants' methods. It has been asserted that Percy's preferred mode was syllogistic, but Featley's urging of the form here is refused on several grounds, in favour of induction.[120] In this, methods are tied to question and audience, and to the authority of the church, all of which is expressed by Percy through the disputation's purpose.[121] He invokes the figure of Buggs in justification of his approach: in opposition to Featley's academic method, Buggs is the symbol for the

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115 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 13, 49; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs T4*$^{r-v}$, Z3*^{v}–Z4*^{r}, CC^{r}–Cc2^{v}, Dd4^{r}–Ee2^{r}.

116 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, esp. pp. 11–12, 14–17; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, esp. pp. 13, 17–26; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs Hh2^{v}–Ll2^{v}.

117 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 16, 67. Once, Lynde interjected on transubstantiation – a point Sweet dismissed as 'not now to the question'. But his challenge in fact forms part of this strategy. Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 10–11; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 16–17; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs Bb3^{r}–Bb4^{r}; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 28.

118 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 12; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 17; L.D., *Defence*, p. 14; Anon., *Reply to D. White*, pp. 13–14; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. K4*^{r}.

119 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 14–15; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 20–24.

120 Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 16, 33.

121 Anon., *Reply to D. White*, pp. 12–13.

unlearned, who need the church for assurance; those who would be lost were its authority invisible.[122] Featley's urging of logic form was not, to Percy, appropriate; nor did it answer the question. In the aftermath, the Jesuit recalls 'arguments, exceeding the capacity of the common sort of auditors'.[123] In an addendum to his report, this is presented as a clear dichotomy:

> Perhaps D. *Featly* will reply saying: Sith a Theologicall demonstration, especially à Priori, doth breed an act of Theologicall science, which is more certaine [than] the act of morally certaine humane Fayth which is breed by Histories, why should not [this method] be thought a more certaine way … [than] by requiring Names out of Historyes? I answere, that the Question is not now in generall, what is the best method *Speculativè* in itself, but what was proposed in the Conference, as being then for that Matter & Co[m]pany *Practicè* thought to be the best Method to make all sorts, and especially unlearned men … and namely the old Gentleman for whose sake the Co[n]ference was made, to see, whether or no, the Protestant Church had been in all Ages so visible, as Names of the Professours might be produced out of good Authours,[124]

The line drawn between theoretical and practical means reflects the Catholic determinant of all controversy, and describes the variety of disputation prevalent in the early 1620s: an accessible endeavour, both public and private, directed to assurance.

The audience played a significant role. Percy asserts that a large, mostly Protestant crowd was present: his adversaries had allowed the house 'to be so filled, as he complained to Sir *Humfrey* of the inequalitie'.[125] Again, there is the suggestion of wider interest.[126] But it was the Catholic attendees who were instrumental in driving the debate forward. As Featley pressed his syllogistic arguments, there rose a chant of 'Names, names, names', and Featley cried, 'What, will nothing content you but a Buttery booke? you shall have a Buttery booke of names, if you will stay a while.'[127] Michael Questier finds a 'polemical inconsistency' in Featley's assertion first that there was no need to show a visible Protestant succession, and later that he was able to produce one, presenting this as an instance of moderate Calvinism being left exposed by the implications (and Catholic

122 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 17; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 27, 29, 48.

123 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 49, 61, 63.

124 Anon., *Reply to D. White*, pp. 86–7.

125 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 12; L.D., *Defence*, p. 15.

126 See Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 46.

127 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 13; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 34.

overstating) of its idea of 'relative' invisibility.[128] A comparison of this debate with those of 1622 supports this, but Featley's inconsistency was not, in fact, occasioned by his standpoint: as he and Lynde had made clear, a list of visible Protestants was not *necessarily* possible. His motives can be explained only when the demands of the audience and the weight of disputation are taken into account: his offer of a 'Buttery booke' is one of several indications that he was willing to yield a position for the good of the debate. He accepted Percy's 'copulative' question because he was 'desirous to bring the disputation to some better issue'; he began his induction because the company desired it.[129] In this, the Jesuit had certainly forced him into a corner, but through the ideals of private disputation. For all his loyalty to the disputation form, Featley had fallen victim to its growing personal application.

After 90 minutes, White attempted to take over, but it quickly became clear that Percy would accept nothing short of an answer to *his* question, and soon thereafter, Featley began his induction.[130] He started by (syllogistically) announcing his intention to proceed one age at a time, before naming the Protestants of the first age as Christ and his Apostles, Paul and Ignatius the Martyr. This was to be the final stumbling block.[131] Percy urged him to proceed to the next age, but Featley asked to dispute on those named. As Featley tells it, the Protestant side drew him away, saying that 'he ought not to talke any longer with such a one who refused to answer Christ and his Apostles'.[132] But Percy states that Featley called out in triumph to the audience, '*He grants Christ and his Apostles to be Protestants*', and (when Percy complained) asked again whether he would dispute on the first age. Percy agreed, taking his arm, at which the chaplain departed in an 'abrupt manner'.[133] In the aftermath, Featley has it that Buggs was satisfied, but Percy retorts that 'there was no cause given … of any such effectuall resolution'.[134] Ironically, the Jesuit invokes Buggs's

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[128] Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 33–5; Anthony Milton, 'The Church of England, Rome, and the True Church: The Demise of a Jacobean Consensus', in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642* (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 189. This echoes A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 55–6; Anon., *Reply to D. White*, pp. 79–80. In addition, see John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), pp. 59–61.

[129] Featley, *Fisher Catched*, esp. pp. 13–14, 23. Confirmed in A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 34–5.

[130] Featley, *Fisher Catched*, pp. 20–23; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 40; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 32.

[131] Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 23; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 35–6.

[132] Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 25.

[133] A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 36–7; Anon., *Reply to D. White*, pp. 14–15, 94–5.

[134] Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 26; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 43; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs I3*$^{r-v}$, Y4*^{r}, Bb4^{v}, Nn4^{v}.

ability: in describing him as 'well resolved', Featley assigned him 'a very mutable nature'; announcing satisfaction after the debate 'would argue to to[o] much want of capacity.'[135]

Controversial and Academic Reactions

Safety, and Suitability to Audience

'Him that is weake in the faith receive you, but not to doubtfull disputations.'[136] In 1616, Thomas Beard cited these words of Paul, alongside Aquinas's assertion that '*it is unlawfull to dispute of matters of faith, in the presence of those that are ignorant and simple*'.[137] It was this concern that, in part, led the audience at the Campion debates to be restricted, and caused Barrow's debate in 1590 to be drawn into a closed room at the Fleet: the participants and organizers worried about the influence the arguments might have on the unlearned. Certainty in truth did not always equate to clear presentation, and with a belief in the efficacy of disputation came the fear that well-argued falsehood might seduce an audience with the 'show' of truth. Featley describes Percy as one who 'will goe about to face a man out of his beliefe, and dispute him out of that peace and comfort which hee feeleth in his conscience.'[138]

'But what disputations?' Beard continues:

> about needlesse questions, touching matters indifferent … as the Apostle explaineth himselfe in the same Chapter: Or foolish, and unlearned *questions that ingender strife*, and are *not profitable to edification*. But if the disputation bee concerning matters of salvation, and disquisition of a necessary truth, then are none to bee excluded either from reasoning, or hearing.

He goes on to cite 1 Peter 3:15, and his discourse is directed against Catholic prohibition of lay disputation – or attendance to disputation – of religion.[139] The potential for the practice to do *good*, therefore, cannot be discounted, particularly given its longevity and occasional sanction, or the range of divines involved.

Compounding the concern that those present might be drawn into error was that need for clarity and understanding we find in the 1620s,

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135 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 43–4.

136 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Romans 14:1.

137 Thomas Beard, *A Retractive from the Romish Religion* (1616), pp. 362–3.

138 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. Oo^{r}.

139 Beard, *Retractive*, pp. 362–4, citing 2 Timothy 2:23, 1 Timothy 1:4.

where Jesuits and lay members of the audience are said to have objected against linguistic and structural subtleties. The intent behind Catholic reports of such was to urge that certainty enshrined in their church, but, while Protestants too had an agenda – in their depiction of Catholicism as building on (and encouraging) lay ignorance – these objections more generally concern a basic accessibility.[140] Percy's attacks on Featley's use of syllogistic reasoning were, by all accounts, on grounds of understanding: '*because the company understands not Logick Forme*'.[141] In the disputation between Walker and Norris, where the disputants turned to the Old Testament in Hebrew, a clash over the marks made and terms used caused Sir Edward Harwood and others to ask 'that these disputations about the Hebrewe text, which they could not understand might cease'. The company plead their 'capacity'; in Norris's account, they distinguish the gathering from 'the Schooles'.[142] The fears expressed here are that disputants are mistaking their audiences either for subjects of authority, to receive their conclusions no matter how misguided, or for learned scholars, to determine their arguments no matter how complex. Here we find a last bastion of scholastic argument tested by public application.

The dangers of public disputation of religion to the security of the confessional state have been considered in relation to the form's 'exploitation'.[143] However, it was not just the authorities who acknowledged that such an encounter might prove hazardous. Featley's clear distinction between 'publick disputations' and 'private occasionall conferences' was echoed by those priests who shared John Feckenham's concern for the law: they emphasize privacy in the name of safety.[144] Norris recalls asking Walker,

> that there should be no more [than] five or six persons at the most on a side: to the end the Conference might be verie secret, and private, without concourse of people, or noyse abroad, for feare of affoarding disgust unto the State, in that our quiet tyme of peace and connivencie.

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140 John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 76; Peter Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642* (London, 1989), pp. 75–6; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, pp. 5–6.

141 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, p. 8; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 49.

142 Walker, *Summe*, sig. E^{r}; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 37–8. On lay ability, see Barbara Donagan, 'The York House Conference Revisited: Laymen, Calvinism and Arminianism', *Historical Research*, 64/3 (1991): pp. 317–18; Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 14–15, 16, 18.

143 Chapter 3 above.

144 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. H3*^{v}; William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sig. A5^{r-v}.

It was a condition, he states, that Walker did not observe.[145] Percy also tells his readers to consider 'how great care' he took to keep his debate with Featley secret, for the sake of the meeting's purpose, and that of Buggs.[146] Featley reports that Percy and Musket refused the sequel to their 1621 debate because 'they knew not what construction might bee made of a meeting of this kind'. Though Featley termed this 'but a pretext', he himself had questioned the inclusion of Percy because it 'would be an occasion to draw more Company than were fit or safe'.[147] This caution and 'connivancy' in the early 1620s can be equated with that of Paris in the 1610s. There, Featley was accused of making a private debate for a doubting layman 'more publike [than] it should have beene'.[148]

Tertullian's 'Prescription'

The principal Catholic objective in such 'private' cross-confessional debate was to bring the person at the occasion's heart to their church, wherein they would find certainty.[149] Though they trusted logic form and the disputation process to support them, their reliance on the determining authority of the true church served as a caution against the practice (for fear of impertinent questions and persuasive falsehoods), a check to its purpose and a counter to the Protestant image of disputation as having a positive role in reform. Thomas More had argued that debate was necessary where doctrine was 'doubtful and ambiguous', but further held that uncertainty implied error.[150] It was this view that led the Catholics at Wisbech – as described by William Fulke – to reject the offer of a debate: 'It is our faith, it needeth no disputation'; 'Our cause is past disputation, it is concluded already by the Church.'[151] At Paris in 1566, Catholic disputants refused 'disputation of things received into the universall Churche, since the Apostles till our time, decided and already determined by the holy Councels *Ecumenike* and general, holding them most certaine and undoubted'.[152]

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145 S.N., *True Report*, pp. 9–10.

146 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 12.

147 Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 111–12.

148 Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 35–6; S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), pp. 11–12.

149 A.C., *True Relations*, sigs *2^{v}–*3^{r}.

150 Thomas More, *The Complete Works of Thomas More* (15 vols, New Haven, 1963–97), vol. 6/1, pp. 345–6; R.R. McCutcheon, 'Heresy and Dialogue: The Humanist Approaches of Erasmus and More', *Viator*, 24 (1993): p. 358; Susan Schreiner, *Are you Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford, 2010), p. 204.

151 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sigs A7^{r-v}, B3^{r}.

152 Geoffrey Fenton, *Actes of Conference in Religion* (1571), sig. D.ii^{r}.

The ancient writer most often cited against disputation of controversial religion was Tertullian, whose *Prescription Against Heretics* invoked the legal terminology for a position so erroneous as to preclude disputing.[153] In the aftermath of his encounter with Featley, Percy focused on Tertullian's warning that 'Heretikes … should not be admitted to dispute out of Scriptures', and that the true church must be determined as sure ground, *before* any such debate was admitted. In Percy's words, when dealing with heretics, 'we may … examine them'. This, Percy relates to the topic of succession: he uses it to justify his demand for an induction.[154] But Tertullian's objections were also being interpreted in a wider sense, and in a more qualified one than that urged by the Jesuit. For one thing, claiming the *Prescription* in this manner was a case of *petitio principii*. For another, John Jewel in 1567 had drawn this from the writer: '*Truthe feareth nothing, but lest shee be hid*.'[155] Tertullian championed education, and had himself engaged heretics, and his concern related more to a *misuse* of debate than its use *per se* (something of a recurring theme).[156] Moreover, the point that heretics' debates '*weary those that be firme … overcome those which be weake, and those which be in a middle disposition, they dismisse with scruple or doubt*' had a practical equivalent, presented by William Rainolds: in his *Refutation of Sundry Reprehensions*, Rainolds opposed all controversy, 'the end whereof (as Tertullian of old noted) is commonly no other, but to wearie our selves, offend the readers, and exasperate the adversarie'.[157] Thus, beyond the question of the church, we can tie such weariness in 'fruitles' disputing to Featley's outburst against Bagshaw – 'you will make good any absurdity in reason by your faith'.[158]

Indeed, what is most remarkable about Tertullian's opposition to disputation is that Protestants cite it almost as often as their Catholic counterparts, and to similar ends – the avoidance of impertinent and dangerous wrangling. However, they also respond against it. Featley cites Tertullian twice after his debate with Percy; only once as a feature

153 Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic and Reason in the Church Fathers: A Study of Tertullian, Augustine and Aquinas* (Hildesheim, 1979), p. 28.

154 Tertullian, 'On Prescription against Heretics', in C. Dodgson (trans.), *Tertullian* (Oxford, 1854), pp. 465, 466–8; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 68–71; Anon., *Reply to D. White*, p. 92.

155 John Jewel, *A Defence of the Apologie of the Churche of Englande* (1567), p. 41.

156 Ayers, *Language, Logic, and Reason*, pp. 24–9, 33; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 87.

157 Tertullian, 'Prescription', p. 465; A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 68; William Rainolds, *A Refutation of Sundry Reprehensions, Cavils, and False Sleightes* (1583), p. 6; Thomas M. McCoog, '"Playing the Champion": The Role of Disputation in the Jesuit Mission', in Thomas M. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Oxford, 1996), p. 125.

158 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 68; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, p. 257.

of Catholic reluctance. He admits that disputations had often confirmed Tertullian's objection:

> What wilt thou gaine by conference … [since] whatsoever thou shalt defend, is denied of the contrary party; whatsoever thou shalt deny, is defended; and thou truely shalt lose nothing, but thy voice in contending; thou shalt gain nothing, but choler through their blaspheming?[159]

But here, and elsewhere, he offers counter arguments, and in *The Romish Fisher* he presents this as a Catholic excuse: 'say they in the words of *Tertullian*, *Quid promovebis; disputator, &c?*'.[160] Like Beard, he answers with 1 Peter 3:15, adding ecclesiastical and royal orders, the benefit to those in doubt, the impact of debate in the early Reformation and the responsibilities of holding truth.[161] This last would be the most important for our purposes here, were it not for the fact that Featley – like Henry Jacob – also puts his faith in the disputation form:

> Of writing many Books, especially of Controversie, there is no end: in which, wee have an Argument without an Answer, and an Answer without a Reply. But, in a Conference orderly carried, the force of every Argument, and sufficiency of every Answer, is brought to the Test; and Truth and Error, by grappling together, try their utmost strength.[162]

Featley answers Percy *and* Rainolds with scholarly confidence: disputation, 'orderly carried', *will* confirm the truth.

The argument on the early Reformation is, naturally, the most direct expression of a confessional divide on disputation. Fulke's Wisbech report has Feckenham railing against such events:

> I like no disputation: I never knew good come by disputation. In the beginning of Queene Maries time there was a disputatio[n] in the Convocation house: What good came of it? There was an other disputation in the beginning of the Queenes raigne at Westminster, there came no good of it … therefore I like not these disputations.[163]

This, however, stands with the Protestant argument that yes, Catholics had achieved little – and *could* achieve little – from the practice. Featley

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159 Featley, *Appendix*, pp. 52–3; Tertullian, 'Prescription', p. 467.

160 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. H4*$^{r-v}$.

161 Ibid., sigs H3^{r}–I^{r}; Featley, *Appendix*, p. 53.

162 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*^{v}.

163 Fulke, *True Reporte*, sig. B2^{v}.

notes, 'So little did the Papists gaine … by disputation with those noble Fore-runners of our Protestant Faith: and far lesse have [their] successours gained by their disputations in *Germany*, *France* and *England*.'[164] William Charke, answering challenges after Campion, asserted: 'As for disputation, for which you cal so fast, and so often, whensoever you come to it, you shal gaine as little by it, as your predecessours have done'. He went on to list Luther's disputations, the Colloquy of Poissy, Martyr's debates on the Eucharist and the examinations of Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer to prove his point.[165] Catholic writers and disputants could not let this stand.

Flaws in the Disputants

Throughout this discussion, on matters of authority, certainty and the potential impact of a disputation, the blame for unprofitable argument has fallen not on the disputation process, but on the disputants. This was the answer to every objection: disputation, correctly used, was necessary, helpful and would confirm truth; where it failed, this was due to some fault in the participants – deliberate, to subvert the process, or accidental, as a result of holding indefensible error.[166] This qualified Tertullian's objections: Laud, no combative Walker or Featley, nonetheless interpreted the *Prescription* thus:

> It was not to denie, that Disputation is an opening of the Understanding, a sifting out of Truth; it was not to affirme, that any such Disquisition is in and of it selfe unprofitable … No sure: it was some abuse in the Disputants, that frustrated the good of the Disputation.

The 'abuse' Laud concentrates on is '*a Resolution to hold their owne*, *though it be by unworthie meanes and disparagement of Truth*' – this directed against Percy.[167] John Ley would similarly describe one perceived danger in disputation as the 'polemicall contestations of such as are too *stout to stoop to the truth*, and so *pertinacious in their opinions*, *as not to recede from what they have pronounced*, *nay though they see their error*'. This was drawn from Erasmus, who attributed such an attitude to 'most men'.[168]

It was thus not only intellectual competition, but also the purpose of debate that lay behind accusations of poor practice. In addition to structural deviation, weak argument and deliberate falsehood, an excess of

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164 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs I2*^{v}–I3*^{r}; H2*^{v}–H3*^{r}; Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded*, pp. 17–21.

165 William Charke, *An Answeare for the time, unto that Foule, and Wicked Defence of the Censure* (1583), fol. 21^{r}.

166 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 27–8; Evans, *Problems of Authority*, p. 29.

167 R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 37.

168 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 8.

aggression was seen to undermine its 'profitable' effects. Catholic accounts of the Campion debates accused his opponents (with some justification) of such behaviour, and Nowell and Day state that 'Campion … did knocke and beate upon his booke at every other worde, with an exceeding lowde voyce and sharpe countenance'.[169] Following the disputation between Laud and Percy, there was a dispute as to whether Percy had said that he would '*wring and extort*' from Laud anything that was not granted. Percy replied that he never used such words, 'eve[n] to his meanest Adversaries'.[170] Such concerns would recur through the seventeenth century, in critiques of disputation in the universities, but for controversy in this period John White was not alone in declaring: 'when the cause it selfe is Gods … I would not by despising a meane Adversary forsake it'.[171]

Academic Reactions

Despite the paradoxical nature of faith, the contest over authority, and the intractability of religious divisions, therefore, the most significant objections, in terms of the future of the practice, were those shared by all sides, reflecting its dangers. These criticisms, by reason of subject and circumstance, pre-empt those levelled against disputation in the universities by several decades. They partly reflect an objection to all contention, as self-perpetuating and unprofitable. Ley would cite Sir Henry Wotton's comment that 'the Itch of Disputing will prove the Scab of Churches', tracing this to the humanist Vives ('*those who scratch the truth too much by disputation, wound it*').[172] The danger was that debate might breed debate, and that a disputant might argue too well for falsehood, or urge falsehood knowingly for the sake of their argument. In 1653, the minister John Webster was to describe academic disputation thus:

> all verbal force, by impudence, insolence, opposition, contradiction, derision, diversion, trifling, jeering, humming, hissing, brawling, quarreling, scolding, scandalizing, and the like, are equally allowed of, and accounted just, and no regard had to the truth, so that by any means … they may get the Conquest, and worst their adversary.[173]

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169 Alexander Nowell and William Day, *A True Report of the Disputation or Rather Private Conference had in the Tower of London, with Ed. Campion Jesuite, the Last of August. 1581* (1583), sig. F.iii^{r}; John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sig. H.iii^{v}.

170 A.C., *True Relations*, p. 44; Laud, *Relation*, p. 24.

171 White, *Defence of the Way*, sigs *3^{v}–*4^{r}.

172 Ley, *Discourse*, p. 18.

173 John Webster, *Academiarum Examen, or the Examination of Academies* (London, 1653), p. 33, in Mordechai Feingold, 'The Humanities', in T.H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols, Oxford, 1984–2000), vol. 4, p. 300.

Such a dispute was more about the participants than the *quæstio*; more about victory than revealing truth. In our period, Richard Bancroft, in claiming Jerome against puritan critics, emphasized those places where the writer 'stoode not uppon everie thing that might give anie advantage, as the man[n]er is in disputation'.[174]

Henry Barrow's objections to formal logic and disputation – as opposed to the ideal of 'Christian conference' – extended to the universities. His *Pollution of Universitie-Learning* attacked those 'Collegiat' divines whose customs (including disputation) were not derived from scripture, and who favoured Antichrist by 'fighting with their Schoole-learning, vaine arts, philosophie, rethoricke, and logicke against the truth and servants of God'.[175] He takes the observations of Jacob further in asserting that students 'for their further credits often times will undertake to defend … such *Propositions* as are most odious to all men, in whome is any light, conscience, knowledge, or feare of God'; adding:

> Neither are these questions discussed in the *English* tongue, before those multitude of people and strangers, but in the *Latine* tongue after their *Syllogisticall* and *Romish* manner lest the folly of these *Prophets* should be laid open unto all men, and these gamesters be hissed off the Stage by the people.[176]

This last adds a religious angle to calls for accessibility, in criticizing the 'Romish' practice of separating arguments from the people; but it also negates the confidence of disputants like Featley in the abilities of their audiences. Not only can demands for matters 'easier for our understanding' be linked to contested *loci* of authority, therefore; they also have a connection to the inverse intellectual competition puritans drew from 1 Corinthians 1:19, and to Christian modesty.[177]

The Reaction to Come

Opposition to religious disputation could thus be confessional, practical or academic; but it was always tied to error, weakness or abuse on the part of the participants. Disputation was not itself unworthy to religious questions, but its use in explicating or demonstrating truth was an effort to which many were themselves unworthy. Ley would echo the sentiments of the earlier period in listing 'fancy', 'custome', 'cupidity of glory', 'hatred',

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174 Richard Bancroft, *A Survay of the Pretended Holy Discipline* (1593), p. 336.

175 Henry Barrow, *The Pollution of Universitie-Learning* (London, 1642), p. 1.

176 Ibid., pp. 5–6.

177 S.N., *True Report*, p. 38; Barrow, *Pollution*, p. 8.

'subtilty' and pride in constancy as barriers to productive debate, along with poor ordering or management.[178] The disputations of the early 1620s showcase these impediments; but similar encounters would occur into the reign of Charles I. Informed by their training (itself adapting, but not yet giving way, to public application) and compelled by the conviction that they were in the right, divines were not yet ready to abandon this authoritative set of intellectual apparatus.

The suitability of controversy was a different matter. By the early 1620s, objections to disputation were being folded into fears around the immodest, antagonistic handling of opponents. The outcome of Featley's encounter with Percy was a sign of this development: the Jesuit called for a second debate, confident that Featley had more to answer, but this was prevented not by his adversary, but by the king. Percy ostentatiously refuses to assign blame: 'I will not Censure … that the Protestant party laboured to have all future meetings, touching this occasion, forbidden, because they cannot make good that which they have undertaken about naming of Protestant Professors in all ages; yet I can[n]ot hinder men to have such like suspicion'.[179] English Protestants were certainly troubled by the question, but Featley explains in detail: James had heard of the disputation in its aftermath, and – using Richard Neile of Durham as his mouthpiece – had asked that further meetings be 'staid'.[180] In late June 1623, negotiations for the Spanish Match had reached a point of acute delicacy, and were to collapse within the year. The year 1624 would resound to parliamentary triumphalism and proclamations against Catholic priests – a climate that would allow for the publication of Featley's *Romish Fisher* and Walker's reports. Though James was not enthusiastic about such measures, and toleration would be considered again as he and Charles turned to the French marriage prospect, the situation to 1623 was not to be repeated.[181] In 1624–25, the London house of the French ambassador was to be the setting for disputations involving Pierre du Moulin and Jesuits including Percy, but this was now the exception.[182] Still deeper trends were at work in the hierarchy of the church: James's turning to the moderate Neile to hold Featley back – rather than Abbot, the logical choice for an ultimatum to his own chaplain – demonstrated the marginalization of the archbishop

178 Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 52–4.

179 A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 38.

180 Featley, *Fisher Catched*, p. 26; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 165–6.

181 Pursell, 'End of the Spanish Match', pp. 713–26; Wadkins, 'Percy–"Fisher" Controversies', pp. 166–7; Patterson, *King James*, pp. 349–56; James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (2 vols, Oxford, 1973–83), vol. 1, pp. 591–3; Questier, 'Catholic Loyalism', p. 1158; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, pp. 96–7.

182 Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy*, pp. 70, 294, 295, 351.

in the Spanish negotiations, and Abbot's star was not to rise again.[183] From here, it was Neile's Durham circle which took the dominant role, and its attitudes towards controversy were not those of Abbot's men.

White's answer to Percy, printed in 1624, noted a need for 'some publique Worke, containing the Grounds and Arguments of his part, and the Answere and Replie on ours … wherein neither his nor our *Yea* and *Nay*, should take place'.[184] He applies the language of disputation, contrasting it again with the endless back-and-forth of controversy, but this reflects a movement away from unproductive or harmful polemic; a movement that would characterize the church under Laud. The critiques applied to intra-Protestant aggression in the 1610s were now extended to meet a concern with unity and ceremonial integrity. From this perspective, anti-Catholic polemic was at best a destabilizing influence, and at worst a cover for puritan agitation.[185] The controversial moderate Richard Montagu contrasted the world of the fathers with 'these our dayes of gall and wormwood', in which contention had a detrimental effect: 'From much and often disputing of what is True to bee held or beleeved, in the end proceeds neglect and contempt for the Truth'.[186] As it had by Thomas Gataker, disputation was now being seen as part of this approach – its leading proponents had, after all, been the Calvinist Featley and the pathologically antagonistic George Walker. Most telling are the actions of Laud, as he rose to be Chancellor of Oxford in 1630, and to Canterbury in 1633. In ending the Arminian controversy, he was reportedly instrumental in restricting public *and* university disputation on the matter.[187] The gradual disappearance of Calvinist *quæstiones* at the Oxford *Acta* was not accompanied by a move towards alternative positions, because Laud preferred peace over controversial debate.[188] His statutes also tried to curb those unprofitable, aggressive attributes developing in the academic practice.[189]

In creating the conditions and enhancing the need for anti-Catholic disputation, the early 1620s allowed the syllogistic aggression of Walker and Featley to come to the fore, and so the Laudian curtailing of controversy involved a backlash against disputation itself; prefiguring that

183 Ibid., p. 39.

184 White, *Replie to Jesuit Fishers Answere*, sig. b4^{r}.

185 Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 63–6.

186 Richard Montagu, *The Acts and Monuments of the Church before Christ Incarnate* (London, 1642), pp. 67, 383; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 63.

187 William Prynne, *Canterburies Doome* (London, 1644), p. 160.

188 Nicholas Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', in Aston, *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4, p. 585.

189 Feingold, 'Humanities', p. 304; Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', p. 582.

in the universities by almost three decades. The dominant individuals in the church no longer saw disputation as an antidote to controversy, but as a more direct – and more damaging – variety of it: far fewer accounts survive from the mid-1620s through to the congregational encounters of the revolutions. In 1625, James settled a debate over Featley's licensing of two puritan works, responding with Neile at his side. Featley notes the king's 'pithie and sinewie Arguments', and departed satisfied – all of which he recorded in a work dedicated to Charles, which emphasized the old king's learning.[190] But, from March of that year, 'Solomon slept'.[191]

[190] Daniel Featley, *Cygnea Cantio* (1629), esp. sig. A4^{r}, pp. 9–10, 19, 25–8, 30–33.

[191] David Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956), p. 446.

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Determination

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.[1]

1626

While in Spain, seeking the hand of the Infanta, Charles had partaken of disputations on the English Church. James had given permission for the prince to attend these debates, and Charles was actively involved with their arguments.[2] However, he did not share his father's academic turn of mind or his interest in doctrinal controversy, and as the years passed he would develop a more complex attitude towards the Roman Church, whose defence he was here said to have voiced some affinity for.[3] When he came to the throne, Charles withheld support for Chelsea College – a centre for anti-Catholic activities, now headed by Featley – and in public and in private he expressed disapproval for such efforts: 'too much time is spent on controversies which displease me. I would rather study were devoted to reunion'. Anti-Catholic polemic lost much of its appeal at court after 1625.[4] John Donne's first sermon for the new king, on the truth of his church, asked: 'may not this be subject to reasoning, to various Disputation, Whether wee have that *foundation*, or no? It may; but … Nothing is safer for the finding of the *Catholique* Church, [than] to preferre *Authoritie* before my *Reason*, to submit and captivate my *Reason* to *Authoritie*'.[5] In 1638, a declaration would be printed that opposed 'unnecessary Disputations, altercations, or questions to be raysed, which may nourish faction both in the Church and Common-wealth', and lest 'disputation' be taken as a turn of phrase, the

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1 *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

2 Brennan C. Pursell, 'The End of the Spanish Match', *HJ*, 45/4 (2002): pp. 707, 711, citing Francisco de Jesús, *El hecho de los tratados del matrimonion*, trans. and ed. S.R. Gardiner, *Narrative of the Spanish Marriage Treaty*, Camden Society, vol. 101 (London, 1869), pp. 58–9 (pp. 208–12 for the English translation).

3 Pursell, 'End of the Spanish Match', p. 711; de Jesús, *El hecho*, p. 211. See Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 60–63; Kenneth Fincham and Peter lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I', in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642* (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 36.

4 Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 61–3.

5 John Donne, *The First Sermon Preached to King Charles, at Saint James* (1625), p. 32.

declaration warns against innovations in public *and* university debates.[6] Political conditions and ecclesiastical appointments, meanwhile, continued to work against controversial debate. Despite Charles's impending marriage, conditions for priests were unfavourable: Parliament's drive against Catholicism was encouraged by preparations for war in Europe, and 1626 saw a proclamation against recusants and the return of prison searches.[7] But, at the same time, an atmosphere of temperance still prevailed in the church, as moderates continued to find favour.[8]

But clerical disputation did not cease. Its continuing popularity against the changing ecclesiastical backdrop is evident in an encounter of January 1626, between Featley and the elderly Jesuit and translator Thomas Everard, at the London house of Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland.[9] Featley, by his own report, was discussing the necessity of bishops with the lady over dinner, when Everard – disguised 'in the habit of a Lay-Gentleman' – interjected. The two then fell to disputation, although this was stalled by the lack of books and interrupted by the arrival of supper and the meat course.[10] The questions moved from the bishops to relative Catholic and Protestant unity, prayer for the dead and communion in one kind, all raised by the audience.[11] The debate here proceeds syllogistically, the disputants eventually taking up the formal roles. Each gives an opening statement, before Everard asks: 'Dispute then syllogistically'.[12] Where the disputants switch, it is marked in Featley's account with:

> M. *Everard*, opponent.
>
> D. *Featly*, respondent.[13]

Thus, as Featley describes it, this encounter developed into a full, formal disputation, partly directed by the lay audience, and they raise no objection

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6 *Articles Agreed upon by the Arch-Bishops and Bishops of Both Provinces, and the Whole Clergie* (1638), pp. 1–2, 5–6; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', pp. 39–40.

7 W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 346–8; Michael Questier, 'Catholic Loyalism in Early Stuart England', *EHR*, 123/504 (2008), pp. 1158–9; Michael C. Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics, 1621–1625*, Camden 5th series, vol. 34 (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 113–14, 125–7.

8 Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', pp. 36–8.

9 Daniel Featley, *The Grand Sacrilege of the Church of Rome* (1630), pp. 233–78; see Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols, London, 1877–83), vol. 2, p. 408.

10 Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, pp. 233, 237–40, 246, 268–9.

11 Ibid., pp. 242, 246, 248.

12 Ibid., p. 255.

13 Ibid., p. 264.

to the practice, or to logic form – though, again, this might reflect Featley's enthusiasm more than their own.[14] It is, however, worth noting that Everard was an older, more detached disputant than Percy had been, and that Elizabeth Cary was no Edward Buggs.

Lady Falkland was a writer and translator, and her interest here can be tied to the climate of the period. That year, she would publicly convert to Catholicism (to the dismay of the king), and, in recounting his debate with Everard, Featley asserts that she was drawn thither by way of Arminianism.[15] Though he and the Jesuit were never called upon to deal directly with justification, and Arminianism was a frequent *bête noire* for the Calvinist, this is echoed elsewhere.[16] Lady Falkland had been associated with less virulently anti-Catholic divines, and Anthony Milton terms her conversion a potentially 'fatal' blow to the moderate position espoused by Laud. It is characteristic of the period's tensions that, while Featley disputed before her on questions that united all Protestant thought, his nemesis John Cosin (chaplain to Richard Neile) and the controversial moderate Richard Montagu had tried, in desperation, to return her with anti-Catholic polemical aggression, echoing John Percy: 'dying an English Papist', Montagu told her, 'she died in a state of damnation'.[17] A variety of methods for persuasion remained.

In February, Arminianism was itself the matter for two semi-public disputations at York House, Buckingham's London residence.[18] This was a conference born of clerical divisions but prompted by lay concerns, on the supposedly Arminian points laid out by Montagu in *A New Gagg* (1624) and *Appello Caesarem* (1625). The debates, occasioned by a discussion between Buckingham and the earl of Warwick, were permitted in order to address Calvinist attacks on Montagu, which were threatening to spill over into Charles's religious policy and the duke's alignment.[19] Here again

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[14] Ibid., sig. B2^{v}.

[15] *ODNB* Cary [*née* Tanfield], Elizabeth; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, sig. B2^{r}.

[16] Daniel Featley, *A Second Parallel* (1626) and *Pelagius Redivivus* (1626).

[17] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 85–6, 218; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', pp. 38–9; Michael Questier, 'Arminianism, Catholicism, and Puritanism in England during the 1630s', *HJ*, 49 (2006): pp. 59–69; Chapter 6 above. On Cosin, see Anthony Milton, 'Licensing, Censorship and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England', *HJ*, 41 (1998): pp. 633–4.

[18] Accounts survive in the British Library (Harleian MS 6866, fols 73–81; Burney MS 362, fols 86^{r}–95^{v}) and the Bodleian (Tanner MS 303, fols 32^{v}–47^{v}). Printed reports include Samuel Clarke, *A Generall Martyrologie* (London, 1651), pp. 505–11; John Cosin, *The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God John Cosin*, ed. J. Sansom (5 vols, Oxford, 1843–55), vol. 2, pp. 38–64. See Barbara Donagan, 'The York House Conference Revisited: Laymen, Calvinism and Arminianism', *Historical Research*, 64/155 (1991): pp. 329–30.

[19] Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 17, 21–2, 67–8; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 165–8; Donagan, 'York House', p. 313.

was a reflection of old forms and methods: Charles and Buckingham had already taken advice on Montagu's works, and hoped that the disputation would press their case upon the Protestant lords, concluding the controversy.[20] Though it had been called by these lay opponents of Montagu, it was managed by the sympathetic figure of Buckingham.[21] Thus, in organization and intent, it can be compared to Hampton Court and Westminster: it was an establishing conference, of sorts. But the climate and the divisions concerned produced a rather different event. The political focus was internal, for the lords and clergy (as reflected in the lack of an immediate, printed account). Buckingham himself, under increasing pressure, stressed the private nature of the events.[22] Moreover, the reports produced by John Cosin and others do not emphasize the authorities' role: the one echo of Hampton Court is an assertion that the king 'swears his perpetual patronage of our cause'.[23] Compared to *The Declaracyon of the Procedynge*, William Barlow, or Walter Travers in 1584, this is a fleeting nod to authority. But the lords took an active role: once, an objection from Viscount Saye is, by Cosin's report, answered by Buckingham and then determined by the earl of Pembroke.[24] Here, in summation, is an exploratory Lambeth, not a presentational Westminster.

The disputants here suggest balance: Thomas Morton, now bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and John Preston represented the Calvinist side, though Preston initially declined and arrived towards the close of the first session; and White, Cosin and John Buckeridge of Rochester defended Montagu, himself present only for the second day.[25] The first debate's objections covered general councils and doctrinal fundamentals (and therein the distance between the English and Catholic churches), and on the second day these were revisited, along with ceremonies, and Montagu's answers were heard.[26] These topics again distance York House from fully establishing debates – the one attempt to influence national doctrine was made by Warwick and Saye, who argued that the conclusions of the Synod of Dort should be applied in England. This was

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[20] Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 22, 68; N.D., *A Review of Ten Publike Disputations* (1604), p. 78; Clarke, *Generall Martyrologie*, p. 506.

[21] Clarke, *Generall Martyrologie*, p. 505; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 165–6; Donagan, 'York House', esp. pp. 314–15, 316.

[22] Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 20, 22; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 166.

[23] Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 167.

[24] Cosin, Works, vol. 2, pp. 30, 31–2, 33, 35.

[25] BL, Harleian MS 6866, fol. 73^{r}; Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 20, 34–5, 36; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 171; Donagan, 'York House', p. 315.

[26] Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 172–80.

opposed by White, with Buckingham's approval.[27] The last comparison to be made with conferences like Hampton Court, then, is the inconclusive nature of this event, as it appeared at the time. Nicholas Tyacke finds its impact 'in retrospect', as an affirmation of royal support for Montagu and Richard Neile's Durham group, but this was neither defined nor presented within the dispute.[28] These events were an attempt to quiet a national doctrinal conflict through disputation, but the role of such encounters – political, public and intellectual – had already changed. Lay interest had developed, the emphasis was on private conference over public disputation, the division was no longer between central and fringe parties, and the king did not play an active role.

York House also offers an epilogue to the question of lay involvement in religious disputation. Barbara Donagan finds in it a reminder that the laity did not share 'the refined difficulties of theological academics' – the new engagement of those present meant that the disputants had to adapt their approach and questions to suit a non-specialist audience.[29] In Cosin's account, the assembled lords express weariness with formal debate, at a moment of acute distinctions and syllogistic reasoning, and voice a preference for those matters which directly relate to doctrine, but as Donagan emphasizes, 'weariness' did not equal 'inability': these were not the 'unlearned' gentlemen John Percy invoked.[30] This event, then, completes the developing relationship between the educated laity and scholarly religious debate: indeed, Donagan is unknowingly trying to chart the truth behind those competing claims of ability and interest observed in the debate between Percy and Featley – echoed here by White and Buckeridge.[31] York House included elements of formal disputation: Cosin terms Montagu's critics 'opposers', and there is syllogistic argument.[32] On the first day, Buckingham spoke to lay ability in judging religious questions (while elevating 'substance' above what Donagan terms 'polemic and dialectic'), and pressed the right of the state to contain such debate.[33]

Thus the disputations of the 1620s return us to Renaissance tensions. Scholastic formulae were already being questioned, in practical and aesthetic terms, and here, in these private, lay-centred debates, such

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27 Cosin, *Works*, p. 38; Clarke, *Generall Martyrologie*, p. 508; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 176–7, 179.

28 Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 180.

29 Donagan, 'York House', pp. 312–14; see Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 22.

30 Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 23, 24–6; Donagan, 'York House', pp. 318, 319, 320–21.

31 Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 25n, 26.

32 Ibid., pp. 19, 24, 25, 31.

33 Donagan, 'York House', p. 317.

concerns are writ large in the reactions of disputants and audiences.[34] Percy urged the difficulty of logic form, and despite their learning the lords at York House favoured certainty over formal wrangling.[35] The drawbacks of disputation were no longer a simple matter of tone: they were procedural; a sign of things to come.

'Dayes of gall and wormwood'?

But disputation could not yet be abandoned wholesale. The authority of the format held up well into the seventeenth century. The last of Featley's anti-Catholic accounts were printed in 1638, and in the 1640s he would describe a disputation against a cadre of Anabaptists.[36] Laud would reproduce his report of his debate with Percy in 1639, in an attempt to display his anti-Catholic credentials.[37] At the root of this longevity was the foundation of the form in scholarly practices and assumptions – disputation was not simply a type of controversy, to be applied or discarded, it was a manifestation of the engines driving controversy: truth through discourse; the shared expectation that arguments would be answered.[38] It was for this reason that public, controversial disputation was seen as a unique phenomenon, whose role in supporting truth was worthy of the histories produced by Persons and Featley, and by Ley as late as 1658.[39] The terminology used could vary, and here questions of equity and purpose came into play. Disputants at the mercy of the authorities distinguished the events to which they were subjected from true disputation: Campion emphasized proximity to the universities; Barrow placed 'Christian conference' in opposition to 'examination'.[40] Featley, meanwhile, felt able to distinguish the fundamentals of the procedure from the minutiae of academic custom, and could uphold the authority of his church while allowing for 'private occasional conferences', still tantamount

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[34] Chapter 1 above.

[35] Cosin, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 27.

[36] Daniel Featley, *Katabaptisai Kataptysesoi* (London, 1646), sig. B^{v}.

[37] William Laud, *A Relation of the Conference* (1639), esp. sigs A3^{r}–§2^{r}; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 86.

[38] Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 303.

[39] See the Introduction above.

[40] John Field, *The Three Last Dayes Conferences Had in the Tower with Edmund Campion Jesuite* (1583), sig. H^{r}; Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certain Letters and Conferences Lately Passed betwixt Certaine Preachers & Two Prisoners in the Fleet* (1590), sig. A.ii^{r}; Henry Barrow, *A Collection of Certaine Sclaunderous Articles* (1590), sig. C^{r}.

to disputation.[41] The practice was thus being defined and redefined in this period in terms of participants, location, purpose and (on occasion) method, but these distinctions only reinforced shared, central ideas. In the opening chapters of this book, it was suggested that a clear range of events could be enclosed in the phrase 'public religious disputation', and, for all the care that must be taken with individual instances, the accounts considered here confirm that contemporaries shared that view.

The authority of the disputation form – an authority recognized across confessional lines – lent it great demonstrative potential. For divines on the margins of the established church, and for those who opposed it, here was a means of bringing authorities to account; a shared field, wherein truth was sought over victory and privileged over force. Disputation had to be 'fair' and 'free'; God's truth should be allowed to naturally and evidently triumph. This was an opinion that had increasingly to be accepted after 1581, and one that informed challenges from Catholics and puritans alike. It was the ultimate expression of those shared imperatives behind controversy – the potency of a challenge issued or refused – and in this it offers an explanation, drawn from philosophical commonplaces, for the perpetual nature of doctrinal controversy and polemic as a whole.[42] For those in authority, these same ideals made disputation a necessary tool, not easily dismissed, that could lend intellectual weight to their determinations. Thus, it was applied, with uneasy qualification, to present doctrine at Westminster and at Hampton Court, to respond to the Jesuit mission, and in attempts to dissuade Catholic converts. The format was also a means of demonstrating or undermining the credentials of individual clergymen – the response to Campion being a prime, at times surprisingly subtle, example. It must be remembered here that disputation played a role in intellectual, as well as religious, developments and divisions; and that these were connected, as accusations of poor scholarship reflected on the authority and veracity of competing churches. But, even against this changing intellectual backdrop, it can be argued that the real power of the format lay in its recognition by all sides, and (in part) by audiences: in 1624, George Walker noted a claim from Sylvester Norris that he could disprove the tenets of his church by 'disputation, and by invincible arguments'; a challenge recorded by a forward Protestant, attributed to an English Jesuit and set in the hearing of an educated gentleman, and whose significance – it is implied – would have been evident to all involved.[43] For both Catholics and Protestants, such was the authority of disputation that

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41 Daniel Featley, *Transubstantiation Exploded* (1638), p. 15; Daniel Featley, *The Romish Fisher Caught and Held in his Owne Net* (1624), sigs H3*v–H4*r.

42 Chapter 1 above.

43 George Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624), sig. A2r.

refusal equated to an admission of error or defeat.[44] Resort to the form was assumed, even by its critics: a reason was needed *not* to take it up.[45] This was down to more than just academic custom.

Objections were raised against the practice, but these confirm its inherent authority by focusing on the flaws and the potential abuses of the disputants. In short, a disputation had to be performed correctly to reach or present the truth, and where it did not, it had not been properly performed: 'they ded not produce the effects expected, bycause they erred in ther course of proceading'.[46] None of this took away from the weight of the process itself: as disputation came under attack and declined further into the seventeenth century, it was the aggression of the participants and the understanding of audiences that were the driving forces.[47] Scholarly objections, meanwhile, hoped to prevent wrangling and aim disputation towards clear, evident truth. Those who were evangelical in their approach to conversion questioned the complexity of the procedure – Renaissance concerns about scholastic logic coming to the fore with a new setting for such debate – and its oppositional nature caused it to be marginalized by those seeking a productive and communal means of addressing controversial divisions. But these were exceptions still based on human failings. The most effective argument against disputation of religion was an assertion that human learning and reason were no certain route to faith. For Catholics, the rule of the church could preclude disputation: Persons, while appropriating the process, also argued that it was 'not alwayes sufficient to resolve [a man's] judgement, for that yt moveth more doubts [than] he can aunswere or dissolve', and this was to persist into Percy's citations of Tertullian.[48] Nor was it exclusive to Catholic divines: John Rainolds, that most learned of reformed disputants, acknowledged that learning was the entry point for pride, and beyond this were reactions like that of Henry Barrow, with a more general acceptance that reason could not grasp the divine.[49] But the significance of these views to disputation – and to all controversy – must continue to be reconsidered. First, because an imperative to convert and conversion itself formed part of two different conversations: presentation and acceptance of truth were

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[44] A.C., *An Answer to a Pamphlet* (1623), p. 42; George Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded* (1624), pp. 18–19; John Ley, *A Discourse of Disputations Chiefly Concerning Matters of Religion* (London, 1658), p. 29.

[45] For example, Henry Barrow: Chapter 4 above.

[46] Matthew Pattenson, *The Image of Bothe Churches* (1623), p. 336.

[47] Chapter 6 above; John White, *A Defence of the Way to the True Church* (1614), sig. *7^{v}.

[48] N.D., *Review*, pp. 19–26; Chapter 6 above.

[49] Chapters 1 and 4 above.

two different questions. Second, there was a shared and inherent need to answer reason with reason, and for some:

> *Reason* can goe so high, as it can proove that *Christian Religion*, which rests upon the Authoritie of [scripture], stands upon surer grounds of *Nature*, *Reason*, *common Equitie*, and *Justice*, than any thing in the World, which any *Infidell*, or meere *Naturallist*, hath done, doth, or can adhere unto, against it,[50]

Third, as the instances above and their focus on abuses indicate, objections against human learning did not equal distain for disputation itself. Persons's solution to the dangers of the practice? It must 'be rightly used, & with due circumstances'.[51]

Even within objections to disputation, then, we are confronted with assumptions as to its authority, purpose and efficacy: the need for good practice and argument. There was a long history on all sides of disputation, properly ordered, having a positive effect, and this was connected to the *quodlibetal* origins of the format – its use in ending controversies and attaining (and, by extension, demonstrating) truth. The purpose of these encounters cannot, therefore, be reduced to polemic, though this was a force in the production of accounts. In the context of Campion, William Fulke's Wisbech conference might well have been *printed* for demonstrative or polemical purposes, but his interactions with the prisoners suggest a more complex aim in the event. The same can be said for Rainolds's debate with Hart, and even the Tower disputations – Campion's opponents report losing hope for his conversion only at a third debate, their expressions of prior optimism fuelled by imperatives beyond (though including) polemical necessity.[52] These debates were, in short, thought to have the potential to work some good, and this can be confirmed by study of their focus, the role of the laity, disputants' use of language, and the assertions of contemporary commentators.

To contemporaries, the focus in a disputation was a direct indicator of purpose, and there was a general agreement as to what was acceptable. The separatist Barrow described the objective of such an event as the equal consideration of both sides, that the truth might emerge, and criticized his conformist opponents for making the separatists themselves the subject.[53] At Lambeth in 1584, Walter Travers depicts all involved as being focused

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[50] R.B., *An Answere to Mr Fishers Relation of a Third Conference betweene a Certaine B. (as he Styles him) and Himselfe* (1624), pp. 20–23.

[51] N.D., *Review*, pp. 3, 23; R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 37.

[52] Alexander Nowell and William Day, *A True Report of the Disputation or Rather Private Conference had in the Tower of London, with Ed. Campion Jesuite, the Last of August. 1581* (1583), sig. C.i^{r}; Field, *Three Last Dayes*, sig. O.ii^{r}.

[53] Barrow, *Letters and Conferences*, sig. A.ii^{r}, p. 16; Barrow, *Sclaunderous Articles*, sig. C^{r}.

on the questions, and it is this that gives his account its tone of a thwarted scholarly inquiry.[54] The disputations of the Jacobean period, meanwhile, are directed to doubting members of the laity, who are to be confirmed by the truth. Where the focus fell on the disputants, this was a distraction.[55] These encounters are aimed at the transmission of truth – they are exercises in persuasion. Members of the laity commissioned and attended debates to have points of controversy determined in their own minds, to contribute to the defence of the truth, or for wavering associates.[56] Those criticisms levelled at disputation in the 1620s, focused on lay understanding, similarly assume that it should be tangibly effective; a firm confirmation, learned counsel or an imperative to conversion.

The language and imagery surrounding public religious disputation was that of the trial, the tourney and the battle, and the last of these was the most prevalent.[57] Each can be associated with a purpose: a tournament was a comparison of champions, while a trial was directed to the truth, and a battle – crucially – to the claiming or defending of a clear prize or cause. Points of controversy, and disputation itself, are frequently termed a 'field' – the Catholic account of Featley's debate with Richard Smith has the latter 'leaving that his fort … and comming out into the open field'.[58] These images cover a broad chronological and confessional range, and they present a disputation as a challenge or duty, underpinned by a definite concept of victory. If the purpose behind disputation was the attainment of truth through discourse, in addressing *fundamental* truth this shifted to its demonstration. Truth was no longer the object – instead, it was the weapon by which victory (encouragement to conversion) could be achieved. It is the real conviction on display in these encounters that separates them from controversial university disputations, hidden behind their procedural mask, and because of this, their battle images are genuine indicators of purpose.[59] Justifying such debate in 1624, Featley invoked the convert Caecilius, in

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[54] BL, Additional MS 48064, fols 50^{r}–63^{r}.

[55] Chapter 6 above.

[56] See BL, Additional MS 48064, fol. 50^{r}; Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, pp. 2–3; Featley's Paris disputations in Chapter 5 and that between Walker and Norris in Chapter 6; the earl of Warwick in A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, pp. 38, 40, 42, 44; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. *3^{r}, pp. 142–7.

[57] For the others, see Walker, *Fishers Folly Unfolded*, p. 2; S.N., *A True Report of the Private Colloquy betweene M. Smith, alias Norrice, and M. Walker* (1624), p. 56. Featley and Percy compare their disputation to a hunt: A.C., *Answer to a Pamphlet*, p. 65; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. V2*^{v}.

[58] S.E., *The Conference Mentioned by Doctour Featly in the End of his Sacrilege* (1632), p. 21. John Rainolds, *The Summe of the Conference betwene John Rainolds and John Hart* (1584), p. 150; S.N., *True Report*, pp. 15, 61; Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sigs H2*^{r}, Bb^{v}, Ff2^{r}; Featley, *Grand Sacrilege*, p. 282.

[59] Chapters 1 and 2 above; compare Debora Shuger, 'St. Mary the Virgin and the Birth of the Public Sphere', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72/3 (2009): p. 326.

Octavius by Marcus Minucius Felix: 'We are both, saith he, winners in this Game; you have wonne mee, and I have won the Truth … We are both Conquerors: you have conquered me, and I triumph over my owne error'.[60] The purpose of a religious disputation, as perceived by contemporaries, can be determined only by considering its intellectual intent through the lens of faith. In 1635, the Scottish minister David Dickson interpreted Hebrews 11:1 thus: 'The word *Evidence*, in the Originall, is a tearme of Logicke, importing, that it is the nature of Fayth, by Disputation, to convince'.[61]

But where did this force and authority come from? Quite simply, disputation was the answer to human error; the means of crossing confessional bounds and testing doctrine by way of common, established authorities. It was impartial, scientific; the scales on which arguments and evidence were measured, and by which truth and heresy were determined. This is why adherence to the accepted process was essential, why protection of a debate in the eyes of some was seen as artifice or tyranny by others, why a caution against human learning did not restrict the pursuit of disputation, and why it was held up, and genuinely perceived, as an answer to the feedback loop of controversy. For a disputation of religion to reach or confirm the truth, it had to be grounded in certainty – so, for example, Thomas Jackson in 1625 argued that it was no way to protect against atheism, for: 'To dispute with such as deny manifest and received *Principles*, were to violate a fundamentall law of the Schooles' – or, to put it another way, 'if the premisses in a syllogisme bee not sometimes certayne … there will bee no ende of making syllogismes'.[62] The events in this volume were all grounded in certainty; a certainty that not only allowed for learned debate on matters of controversy, but made it absolutely necessary in the face of vocal, deceitful and – worse – overtly scholarly error. Fulke told the Wisbech prisoners that 'the end of the conference is, that the trueth may be tried, and you may yeelde to the trueth, or shewe your selves to be obstinate'.[63] At the dawn of the seventeenth century, the puritan *Epistle, or Apologie* called for a debate in the absolute knowledge that 'truth cannot be overcome'.[64] From this certain foundation, found in scripture for reformed divines, in the rule of the church for Catholics, and in the spirit for both, the formal process – which, if followed without

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60 Featley, *Romish Fisher*, sig. I*$^{r-v}$; Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 36–7.

61 David Dickson, *A Short Explanation, of the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrewes* (1635), p. 249; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (1611), Hebrews 11:1.

62 Thomas Jackson, *A Treatise Containing the Originall of Unbeliefe, Misbeliefe, or Misperswasions Concerning the Veritie, Unitie, and Attributes of the Deitie* (1625), p. 8; Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike* (1588), fol. 98^{r}.

63 William Fulke, *A True Reporte of a Conference had betwixt Doctour Fulke, and the Papists, being at Wisbeche Castle* (1581), sig. A3^{r}.

64 Anon., *An Epistle, or Apologie of a True, and Charitable Brother of the Reformed Church* ([1605?]), fols 12^{v}–14^{r}.

flaw, antecedent to consequent and minor to conclusion, was an authority unto itself – would then draw out and make plain the truth, the truth each side already knew, and was eager to defend. This is clear in Ley's recommendations: '*How the disputation should be ordered*, that the truth and those who are advocates for it, may be clear and secured from circumvention and slander'.[65] In a report of disputation from this period, then, we are not just looking at a polemical exercise, a careful, 'cynical' parsing of statements or construction of parodies; we are instead dealing in a consciously scholarly, quasi-Thomist interplay between the absolute surety of faith – or at times the expected or necessary surety of faith – and the absolute, 'scientific' surety still enshrined in the scholastic process.[66]

Attention to the practice of disputation – public or academic – proves invaluable to a study of religious controversy, during and after the Reformation. Its mechanics add depth to reactions to the Jesuit mission in the 1580s, its roles underline the position of Whitgift (as Travers would have it) at Lambeth in 1584, and its architecture details the self-imposed and political restraints affecting James I in addressing national doctrine. The performative and academic elements provide an insight into lay engagement with controversy, and reveal good practice as a level of competition beneath theological argument. These events further describe a convergence of scholarship with religion and state power – while they shed light on religious arguments, they also show how those arguments were processed through logic, rhetoric, history and philosophy, at a time when the authorities placed a high premium on such arts. In this, they also prove an invaluable tool for exploring the fractious relationship between faith and reason in contemporary thought. As a bridge between intellectual and ideological narratives, they demonstrate in clear detail how authorities were set upon, and how certainty allowed for partial confrontations. Disputation reports can no longer be seen as but a variety of polemic: their formulae and customs fuelled controversy, and informed realms of discourse beyond the religious. It is here, too, that we must seek the force of the polemical dialogue and the activities of an educated public sphere. The events considered in this volume reflect a desire to engage, prove and understand that was more fundamental than the duties of faith; but one that nonetheless propelled reform, threw cautions to the wind and tested the faith-based initiatives of the period.

Come *Mephastophilis* let us dispute again.[67]

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[65] Ley, *Discourse*, pp. 6, 57; Susan Schreiner, *Are you Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford, 2010), *passim*.

[66] R.B., *Answere to Mr Fishers Relation*, p. 23.

[67] Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragicall History of the Horrible Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (1609), sig. C3^{r}.

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