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Commonwealth *and the* English Reformation

*Protestantism and the Politics of Religious
Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483–1560*



Ben Lowe

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in the Gloucester Vale, 1483–1560

BEN LOWE

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ASHGATE

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Commonwealth and the English Reformation

List of Abbreviations

APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England, New Series</i> , ed. J.R. Dasent (32 vols, London: HMSO, 1890–1907).
Bodl. Lib.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
Bigland, HMGC	Bigland, Ralph, <i>Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester</i> , ed. Brian Frith (4 vols, Gloucester: Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1989–1895).
BL	British Library
CJ	<i>Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. I: 1547–1629</i> (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1802).
CPR	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office</i>
CPR, Edw. VI	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office. Edward VI</i> , ed. H.C. Maxwell Lyte and R.H.V. Brodie (6 vols, London: HMSO, 1924–1929).
CPR, Mary I	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office. Philip and Mary</i> , ed. M.S. Giuseppi, J.C. Walker and A.C. Wood (4 vols, London: HMSO, 1936–1939).
CRCG	<i>Calendar of the Records of the Corporation of Gloucester</i> , ed. W.H. Stevenson (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1893).
CSPD, Edw. VI	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547–1553 Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , ed. C.S. Knighton, rev. edn (London: HMSO, 1992).
CSPD, Eliz. I	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547–1580, Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty's Public Record Office</i> , ed. Robert Lemon (12 vols, London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1856–1872).
CSPD, Mary I	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series of the Reign of Mary I, 1553–1558 Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , ed. C.S. Knighton, rev. edn (London: Public Record Office, 1998).

- CSP, *Span.* *Calendar of Letters, Dispatches and State Papers Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives of Vienna, Simancas, and Elsewhere*, ed. M.A.S. Hume, Royall Tyler et al. (13 vols, London: HMSO, 1862–1954).
- CSP, *Venice* *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1202–1675*, ed. Rawdon Brown, H.R. F. Brown and A.B. Hinds (38 vols, London: Longman, 1864–1947).
- CUHB Palliser, D.M., Peter Clark and Martin Daunton (eds), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (3 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- ET *Epistolae tigurinae de rebus potissimum ad ecclesiae Anglicanae reformationem pertinentibus conscriptae A.D. 1531–1558* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1848).
- EW Hooper, John, *Early Writings*, ed. Samuel Carr (Cambridge: The University Press, 1843).
- Foxe, AM Foxe, John, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe of These Latter and Perilous Days* (London: John Day, 1563, Variorum edn, accessed at <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/transcript.html>).
- GA Gloucestershire Archives
- GBR Gloucestershire Borough Records
- GDR Gloucestershire Diocesan Records
- GCL Gloucester Cathedral Library
- GN&Q *Gloucestershire Notes & Queries* (London: Phillimore, 1894–)
- HA Hockaday Abstracts, Gloucestershire Archives (unpaginated)
- HMC “The Records of the Corporation of Gloucester,” in W.H. Stevenson (ed.), *Historical Manuscripts Commission, 12th Report, Appendix, Part IX, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Beaufort, K.G., the Earl of Donoughmore, and Others* (London: HMSO, 1891).
- HP Bindoff, S.T. (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558* (3 vols, London: History of Parliament Trust, 1982).
- LJ *Journal of the House of Lords, Vol. I: 1509–1577* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1802).
- LP *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–47*, ed. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R.H. Brodie (21 vols, London: HMSO, 1862–1932).

LW	Hooper, John, <i>Later Writings, Together with His Letters and Other Pieces</i> , ed. Charles Nevinson (Cambridge: The University Press, 1952).
NLW	National Library of Wales
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Howard Harrison (61 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
OL	<i>Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation</i> , ed. Hastings Robinson (2 vols, Cambridge: The University Press, 1846–1847).
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
Strype, <i>Ecc. Mem.</i>	Strype, John, <i>Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion and to the Reformation of It</i> (3 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1822).
TBGAS	<i>Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society</i>
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	<i>The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Gloucestershire</i> , ed. N.M. Herbert; Vol. 2: <i>The Religious Houses of Gloucestershire</i> (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1972); Vols 4, 11: <i>The History of the County of Gloucester</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 1976).
Wilkins, <i>Concilia</i>	Wilkins, David (ed.), <i>Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae: A Synodo Verolamiensi A.D. 446 ad Londinensem A.D. 1717</i> (4 vols, London: R. Gosling, F. Gyles, T. Woodward and C. Davis, 1737).
WRO	Worcestershire Record Office

Preface

Originally, this project was to look at the work of Bishop John Hooper in his diocese, with the goal of trying to see how he might have put his reform ideas into action, and what kind of support or resistance he likely would have encountered in the process. As I looked through the archives, however, it became apparent to me that the Reformation in the Gloucester Vale (the more populated area of Gloucestershire, mostly around the Severn River and valley) was dependent on a large number of local gentry and town leaders. As a result, I decided to conduct more of a prosopographic study that looked at the various interactions of local leaders, not just while the reformer was in the diocese, but also leading up to his arrival and then after he left the city. To do this I soon came to realize that it was crucial to examine the various religious institutions with which these elites had affiliations as well as the nature of those relationships. At the same time, I wanted to see if ideas had much of an impact on all of those in power who were caught up in this tumultuous time of religious change. To weave together all of the various elements without being too confusing or tedious, I decided to add a narrative structure to what is mostly an analytical work.

Whether I have succeeded in this perhaps overly ambitious goal is up to the reader but nonetheless I have benefited from the invaluable assistance of a number of people, too many for me to mention them all. While all errors in fact and judgment are completely my own I wish to offer a great many thanks to those who have so graciously assisted me in this work all along the way. I must first acknowledge the scholars to whose work I owe a great debt, including Diarmaid MacCulloch, Bob Tittler, Sharon Arnould, Judith Maltby, Andrew Pettegree, Alec Ryrie, Eamon Duffy, Norman Jones, Christopher Haigh, David Loades, Dale Hoak, Euan Cameron, Ethan Shagan and Peter Marshall. Many of them generously have given me their time and expertise in both written form and through discussion, especially Ethan Shagan, who provided me with invaluable advice on the first section.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to the many archivists and librarians I encountered along the way at the National Library of Wales, Bodleian Library (Oxford), British Library, National Archives (London), Worcestershire Record Office and above all at the Gloucestershire Archives, where Andrew Phillips, Katrina Keir, Helen Timlin, Shaun Carroll and Paul Evans were particularly obliging with all of my requests. The highlight of

my visits to Painswick, Quedgeley, Newent and Prinknash Park came from the many residents there who helped me find my way around. Gloucester has come to hold a special place for me as the enthusiasm of its inhabitants for their history was infectious. Many thanks to Phil Moss, for showing me around and giving me an informative English Heritage tour of Blackfriars; to Angela Smith and the Gloucester Museum for permission to use their the civic portraits; and to the parishioners of St. Mary de Crypt church and school, who let me explore parts of the church not usually open to visitors.

A one-semester sabbatical in 1999 and a two-course time release from Florida Atlantic University in spring 2007 aided my research, for which I am grateful. I also appreciate my colleagues in the History Department for supporting me with a research stipend in 2006; my former chair, Stephen Engle, for doing all he could to facilitate my progress in this research; and Shawn Pennell for helping design the genealogical chart in the appendix. Ruth Love and Diane Henderson at FAU's Computing Center also kindly worked with me to complete my charts and tables. The students in my graduate seminars in Tudor-Stuart and Renaissance/Reformation history also made valuable contributions through our many discussions. Last but not least I wish to thank the editors, readers and staff at Ashgate, including Andrew Pettegree, Tom Gray, Anne Keirby, Lianne Sherlock and Jessica Cuthbert-Smith for their help and insights into the various ways I could improve this book. Most of all, I owe the greatest gratitude to Benoît Mailloux, for keeping me from getting lost in the Gloucestershire countryside, and without whose encouragement and patience this research could not have been completed.

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Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida
April 2010

For I do not think that a Christian is born for himself, nor ought he live for himself; but that whatever he has or is, he should acknowledge as originating from God and not himself, and as such consider everything that he possesses to be common to all, according to the necessities and needs of his brethren.¹

John Hooper

¹ John Hooper to Henry Bullinger (27 January [1546]), in *ET*, p. 22.

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A Note on Dates and Text

The year is assumed to have begun on January 1st, and abbreviations in early texts have been expanded into full words. As to currency, I have used the modern symbols for pounds, shillings and pence. In a few instances I have added clarifying punctuation and given modern renderings of obsolete words in brackets, but otherwise kept the original spelling and sentence structure.

Introduction

The famed martyrologist, John Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*, related a poignant episode on the eve of John Hooper's execution for heresy on 9 February 1555. Hooper, the evangelical bishop of Gloucester and Worcester was lodged in the home of the Gloucester couple Robert and Agnes Ingram the night before he was scheduled to die. While there, he was visited by Sir Anthony Kingston, a member of the local gentry who had a reputation for fearlessness and a violent temperament. Just three years earlier, Kingston had been fined £500 for striking the newly arrived bishop after Hooper had rebuked him for adultery. His mood now, however, was much changed. As Foxe told it, the Catholic Queen Mary had appointed Kingston to be one of the commissioners put in charge of seeing that the execution was carried out. (It was not unusual for the queen to make those who may have sympathized with heretics take part in their deaths.) Upon being admitted to Hooper's room, Kingston found him in prayer and immediately burst into tears, asking the bishop if he recognized his "olde frend." In the conversation that followed, the knight wanted Hooper to recant in order that he "for life hereafter may do good." Hooper replied that, while "life is swete," he feared not his death because God had strengthened him "to passe through the tormentes and extremityes of the fyre, now prepared for me, rather then to deny the truth of his word." Accepting the wisdom in this, Kingston departed, but not without commending the bishop for the role he had played in Kingston's own recent reformation:

I thanke God that euer I knewe you: for God did appoynt you to cal me, being a loste child, and by your good enstruptions, where before I was both an adulterer and a fornicatoure, God by your ministerye hath brought me to the forsakinge and detesting of the same.¹

While Foxe must have known of Kingston's earlier indiscretions and may have used some literary license in recounting this touching exchange between bishop and knight, there is other evidence of Kingston's having turned over a new leaf, from being simply a supporter of the royal supremacy to an avowed Protestant. What could have brought about such a transformation?

¹ Foxe, *AM*, p. 1059.

In Gloucester itself one of the city's most influential political leaders, Sir Thomas Bell, underwent a similar metamorphosis. Bell, three-time mayor and a capper by trade, during his stint as sheriff in 1536 fell foul of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister responsible for enforcing royal supremacy. Bell may have been fine with Henry assuming the headship of the English church but he was definitely not sympathetic to evangelicals the way Cromwell was. In fact, Bell was greatly incensed at the reforming preachers sent into Gloucester by his bishop, Hugh Latimer. The sheriff complained in a letter to John Stokesley, Bishop of London, that one of Latimer's chaplains preached against purgatory and masses for the dead, which had alienated many parishioners. It appears, however, that the bishop paid little attention to the matter and simply passed on the letter with Bell's grievances to Cromwell.² By the time he wrote his clearly evangelical will in 1559, however, this powerful city leader had embraced fully the Reformation, bequeathing his soul to God, "my onelie savior & redeemer trustynge to his graciouse mercie to be savyd through the mooste precieuse bloode and passion of his moost wonderfull sonne Jesus Christe."³ As early as 1539, when he acquired properties that became available as a result of the dissolutions of the monasteries, Bell devoted himself to charitable works by converting one abandoned chapel into an almshouse that he endowed for "sixe poore folke," and the Blackfriars monastery into a cap-making factory that "employed a large number of hands."⁴ On the surface this may not seem overtly evangelical, but Bell was doing these things at the very time when the Protestant intelligentsia were calling on all true Christians to commit themselves to the common good, which included providing for the poor and needy. Bell's own epitaph, while obviously overly laudatory, still reflects this preoccupation. It commends him most as one who:

gave foode to many a one, And eke behynd provision for the same Haithe
left in store, for ever to be hadd, Amonge the poore that here in towne shall
dwell. Of lime and stone an Almshouse hath he made for six poor folkes,
and buylt the same full well, Here in this street, fast by the southeren gates,
And hathe the same with ljuelyhood endewede, That aye shall last, and never
shall abate.⁵

² TNA SP 1/104/157 (LP 10:1099).

³ GA Gloucester Wills, 1566/150.

⁴ "Proceedings at the Annual Summer Meeting at Gloucester," *TBGAS*, 26 (1903): p. 62.

⁵ G.W. Counsel, *The History and Description of the City of Gloucester from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Gloucester, 1829), p. 138.