On 26 March 1566, over one hundred London ministers were summoned to Lambeth Palace to face Archbishop Matthew Parker and Bishop Edmund Grindal. The ministers had been called to the Archbishop's residence in the hope of settling what historians have come to call the Elizabethan vestments controversy. The controversy swirled around the legal requirement for Church of England ministers to wear a square cap and a surplice, a white linen gown with drooping sleeves. Both of these garments were part of the traditional uniform of the Catholic clergy and few English Protestants had any enthusiasm for the "popish rags." Since the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, many Protestant ministers had refused to wear these garments and while this was illegal, certain bishops had tacitly permitted and even licensed the practice. This displeased Elizabeth from the start and on 25 January 1565 she chided Parker and the bishops for their laxity and demanded the enforcement of the laws governing clerical vestments. Parker's ensuing efforts would produce a furor, especially in London. Prominent Protestant clergymen were deprived and imprisoned, some ministers refused to admit clergy who wore the surplice into their churches, conforming ministers faced jeering and sometime violent crowds, and both sides waged a very public and acrimonious

\[\text{1} \text{ On Elizabeth's early frustrations, see the 12 August 1561 letter from Secretary Cecil to Archbishop Parker in} \textit{Correspondence of Matthew Parker}, 148-149; \text{for the Queen's 25 January 1565 letter to Parker, see} \textit{Correspondence of Matthew Parker}, 223-227. \text{There is some debate about whether the push for conformity in 1565 originated with the Queen or with Parker himself; for the former, see J. H. Primus,} \textit{The Vestments Controversy: An historical study of the earliest tensions within the Church of England in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth} (Kok & Kampen, 1960), 93-94; \text{for the latter, see William Haugaard,} \textit{Elizabeth and the English Reformation: The Struggle for a Stable Settlement of Religion} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 212-213.\]
pamphlet battle in the summer and autumn of 1566. At Lambeth, Parker had hoped to settle the matter with a minimum of debate. The choice facing the assembled London ministers was made exceedingly clear when former non-conformist Robert Cole was presented as a living mannequin bedecked in the required uniform, and Parker directed the assembled ministers to come forward and simply state whether they conform: “Be brief: make no words.”2

Both then and now, the vestments controversy has produced a sea of words. While the "Elizabethan vestments controversy" is not necessarily a household term, it is a crucial moment in the history of something with which early modernists are quite familiar: puritanism. The word "puritan" was coined during the controversy as a term of abuse for the vestments' opponents and it was in the vestments controversy that the puritan movement emerged as a force in Elizabethan England. Recounted in dozens of textbooks and the subject of many specialized studies, the vestments controversy was a formative moment in the religious and political history of early modern England. What was at stake? The answer has typically been authority.3 In his magisterial Elizabethan Puritan Movement (1967), Patrick Collinson characterized the controversy as "essentially a debate about the limits of public authority in the sphere of ‘things indifferent’ – adiaphora – and about the definition of the adiaphora themselves."4 Were clerical vestments prohibited by scripture or were they indifferent? If they were indifferent -- the position taken by practically everyone in the debate -- who (or what) possessed the authority to determine their proper use? While most

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4 Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 71.
Protestants would have preferred to abolish the vestments, "conformists" affirmed the queen's ultimate authority to order the use of things indifferent. As Parker rhetorically asked Secretary William Cecil some years after the controversy, “Does your lordship think that I care either for cap, tippet, surplice, or wafer-bread, or any such?” It was only “for the laws so established [that] I esteem them.”

By contrast, newly-minted "Puritans" insisted that scriptural rules governed the use of "things indifferent," severely limiting the magistrate's power to command the use of adiaphora and ruling out the use of vestments in the Elizabethan Church of England. In this now-standard analysis of the controversy, Puritanism emerged in Tudor England as a defense of biblical authority against royal authority, and as the culmination of a series of earlier debates within Protestantism over ceremonial conformity and the nature of authority in the church. Following precedents cited by the controversialists themselves, virtually every study of the vestments controversy places it and the development of puritanism at the end of an arc that began with the "proto-puritan" John Hooper's refusal to be ordained in traditional episcopal vestments in during Edward VI's reign, continued in the refusal of "proto-puritan" exiles to use the Book of Common Prayer at Frankfurt during Mary's reign, and then exploded into permanent puritan dissent under Elizabeth.

In this chapter, I aim to revise our understanding of the vestments controversy by placing well-known arguments in new contexts and by drawing attention to little-known arguments with important implications. But first, I will argue that we need to re-cast the controversy. Catholic voices are almost entirely absent from existing accounts of the vestiarist controversy, which treat it as a wholly Protestant affair. Yet, as I will show in the first part of this chapter, Catholics were

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5 Quoted in Primus, *The Vestments Controversy*, 83.
7 A few historians have noted Catholic commentary on vestments in passing, but have treated these comments as external to the controversy, in which Catholics are seen to play no role: see Collinson,
aggressive participants in the public debate about vestments, *adiaphora*, and religious authority during the mid-1560s. English Protestants were acutely aware of these Catholic voices and concerns about Catholic opinion played a major role in shaping the different approaches that Protestants took towards the vestments. This leads to my second claim. It is indeed the case that the Queen's insistence on conformity raised very serious questions about the exercise of power and authority in the Church of England, but the controversy should not be reduced to a debate about authority. The vestiarian controversy also involved an equally significant debate about how Protestants ought to live and proclaim "the gospel" in the midst of a population that was largely indifferent or hostile to their message. While Archbishop Parker claimed that vestments would serve as a powerful tool with which to convert Roman Catholics, the puritans argued that wearing vestments would prevent the conversion of Catholics and even drive recent converts back into popery. In defending this claim, the puritans deployed arguments that were identical to the those that Protestants had been making against the practice of "Nicodemism" for much of the preceding decade. As I will argue in conclusion, focusing on this aspect of the controversy -- and the continuities it reveals with central elements in earlier Protestant thought -- enables us to develop a new and fuller understanding of the origins of puritanism.

I.

The first printed salvoes in the Elizabethan vestments controversy were not written by English Protestants, but by English Catholics. In November 1559, the Protestant divine John Jewel preached what came to be known as the "challenge sermon," in which Jewel challenged "papists" to produce a single sentence from scripture, the church fathers, or the early church councils in support of an array of Catholic doctrines. English Catholics quickly rose to the challenge and the result was

a deluge of printed polemics. A. C. Southern counted more than sixty texts produced during the 1560s in reaction or counter-reaction to Jewel's challenge, remarking that the "magnitude of this controversy is surely one of the most remarkable things in the history of English writing". While hardly unknown to historians, this extensive polemical exchange -- dubbed the "great controversy" by many -- has not been considered in the many existing treatments of the vestments controversy. This is surprising: as the vestments controversy simmered in 1565-66, the polemical output of English Catholics was peaking, with 44 titles produced by the exiles between 1564 and 1568. It seems only reasonable, then, to expect that there might be connections between the "vestments controversy" and "the great controversy" that raged back and forth across the English Channel in the 1560s.

There is ample evidence that Catholic polemics were being widely distributed and widely read in England during the 1560s. The Catholic exile Nicholas Sanders estimated that approximately 20,000 copies of Catholic polemical works were distributed in England during the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign. Even allowing for exaggeration, it is clear that Catholic works were widely available across the country. At the start of Archbishop Parker's push for conformity in March 1565 he wrote to Secretary Cecil that Catholic books were "plentifully had in the court from beyond the sea," and there is evidence to show that Catholic polemics were being read in private homes in London, at the universities (especially Oxford), and in the north, where then-Archbishop of York Edmund Grindal's 1571 visitation specifically inquired about persons possessing or distributing Catholic literature by "Harding, Dorman, Allen, Saunders, Stapleton,

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9 Southern, Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 31.
11 Southern, Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 36.
Marshall, or any of them, or by any other Englishe Papist." Indeed, the polemical exchange between Bishop Jewel and the Catholic exile Thomas Harding seems to have been so widely known that Nicholas Sanders' contribution to the debate in 1565 didn't bother to quote extensively from their works, since they were "extant in most mens handes." Of course, thanks to the formal conventions of early modern polemics -- which took great care to reprint the opponent's text accurately, interspersed with rebuttal -- anyone with access to Bishop Jewel's impeccably legal *A Replie unto M. Hardinges Answer* (1565) could also read the entirety of Harding's attack on the Church of England. This was a point of concern for Protestants and in 1572 Bishop Parkhurst of Norwich expressed skepticism about making Jewel's latest book available in parish churches, as it "might be a great occasion to confirm the adversaries in their opinions. For they having not wherewith to buy Harding's book, should find the same already provided for them; and were like unto the spider, sucking only that might serve their purposes."  

While modern scholars have sometimes tended to view the Protestant-Catholic polemics of the 1560s as a "repetitive, sterile exchange of pamphlets back and forth," this was certainly not the way that contemporaries viewed them. Protestants felt threatened by the exiles' books and the Elizabethan regime sought to repress and rebut Catholic literature, with the government sponsoring

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Protestant rejoinders and specific Catholic authors denounced from the pulpit at Paul's Cross. Catholic polemics could be frighteningly persuasive, especially given that the bulk of the English population was sympathetic to their stance. Protestant controversialists like Thomas Norton lamented that the Queen's subjects not only read the Catholic exiles' books but that they "geve them great praises for learning and substantialnesse as matters unanswerable." The sheer volume of Catholic print was also troubling to Protestants. In his 1565 response to a book by the Catholic exile Thomas Dorman, Alexander Nowell wrote of the "hauocke of booke" that "came sodenly abroade," and while he claimed that it was "simple soules" that "may muche meruell at suche plentie of Englishe booke," Nowell and his learned Protestant associates seem to have been equally stunned. Describing the Catholic books as "dartes" thrown at Bishop Jewel and the Church of England, Nowell described the pressures that Protestants faced from both friend and foe to respond quickly in print, since the lack of an answer would be interpreted as meaning that "thei were not answerable." Norton and Nowell's comments brings an important aspect of Elizabethan religious polemics into focus. As Jesse Lander has recently pointed out, the fact that sixteenth-century polemics appeared in print "create[d] the imagined possibility, if not the reality, of a vast and potentially distant readership," and produced the assumption that polemics "must be answered."

This was certainly how Bishop Jewel felt about the many responses elicited by his challenge sermon,

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16 Southern, *Elizabethan Recusant Prose*, 34; also see Matthew Racine, "A Pearle for a Prynce: Jerónimo Osório and Early Elizabethan Catholics" *Catholic Historical Review* 87:3 (2001), 407. On the denunciation of Catholic polemicists from Paul's Cross in 1565-66, see the extensive sermon notes in Bodleian Tanner MS 50, 25v, 27r, 32r, 34v, 41v, 44v-45r.

17 Quoted in Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, 38.

18 Alexander Nowell, *A reprooufe, written by Alexander Nowell, of a booke entituled, A proufe of certayne articles in religion denied by M. Iuell, set furth by Thomas Dorman, Bachiler of Diuinitie* (London: Henry Wykes, 1565; STC 18741), quotes at a2r, b1r, a2r.


writing that he was "always battling with these monsters," and lamenting to Heinrich Bullinger and Lewis Lavater in a February 1566 letter that "I am again pelted at. What would you have? He [Thomas Harding] must be answered."  

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that Catholic polemics occupied an important place in the intellectual culture and religious politics of early Elizabethan England. There is also evidence to link many of the leading participants in the vestiarian controversy to the Catholic polemics of the 1560s. John Barthlet was a lecturer at St Giles Cripplegate in London and one of the ministers suspended for non-conformity by Archbishop Parker at Lambeth in March 1566. In the wake of his suspension, Barthlet published two works: *The Fortresse of the Fathers* (1566), probably the most aggressive published piece of non-conformist polemic, and *The pedegrewe of heretiques* (1566), an anti-Catholic polemic. The latter work attacked in detail a translation by the Catholic exile Richard Shacklock of a text by Stanislaus Hosius -- one of the most famous Catholic theologians in Europe -- and Barthlet also criticized translations by Shacklock's fellow exiles Lewis Evans and Thomas Stapleton.  

Another example is provided by Oxford's Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, James Calfhill. Calfhill was linked with the leaders of non-conformity at Oxford, Thomas Sampson and Laurence Humphrey, and he was a vocal critic of vestiarian conformity in London during 1565-66.  

In the midst of the vestiarian controversy, Calfhill published *An aunswere to the Treatise of the crosse*

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21 Jewel to Bullinger and Lavater, 8 February 1566, in Hasting Robinson (ed.), *The Zurich Letters*, vol. i (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1842), 148.  
23 ODNB; also see Brett Usher, "The Deanery of Bocking and the Demise of the Vestiarian Controversy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52:3 (July 2001), 434-455.
(1565), a response to a 1564 book by the Catholic exile John Martiall. In addition to attacking Martiall's treatise, Calfhill discusses several of "the famous Pamphlets that come from Louain," including works by Thomas Harding, Thomas Dorman, John Rastell, Thomas Stapleton, and Lewis Evans. More examples could be given, but the point is that Catholic polemics were not only being read by Archbishop Parker and other defenders of the regime's vestrian policy, but also by many of those who would lead the opposition to vestments in 1565-66.

What were these Catholic polemics about? For the most part they focused on the main points of doctrinal contention in Reformation Europe, especially Eucharistic doctrine, purgatory, justification by faith, papal supremacy, and the nature of religious authority. In the course of debating these issues, and especially these last two points, both Catholic and Protestant authors had much to say about which ceremonies should be used in Christian worship and who possessed the authority to make this determination -- questions which stood at the heart of the vestments controversy. Catholic authors argued that the Roman Catholic Church had been given almost unlimited authority from Christ to institute, alter, or abolish ceremonies for Christian worship. Thomas Harding, the leading Catholic polemicist of the 1560s, wrote that "Christ hath scarcely commaunded any outward thing, the moderation, qualifying, and ordering whereof, he hath not lefte to his churche, as according to the condition of the tyme, it hath ben sene most expedient for the common preferment and edifying of the same." On ceremonial matters, therefore, "every man is bownde to folow the order of the churche". These ceremonies could be changed, but Catholics like Harding denounced Protestants for thinking that they had the authority to institute such

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25 Quotation at Calfhill, *An answere*, 119r; on the Catholic polemics, see a2v-a3r, 156v. Calfhill also attacked Dorman in his Paul's Cross sermon of 10 February 1566; Bodleian Tanner MS 50, f. 41v.
26 Thomas Harding, *An answere to Maister Iuelles chalenge* (Louaine: John Bogard, 1564; STC 12758), 37v.
changes: ceremonies could only be altered by the Roman Church, which made these decisions about \emph{adiaphora} "for thauoyding of unreuere, periles, offences, and other weighty and important causes".\footnote{Harding, \textit{An answer}, 47v.} Those who abolished traditional ceremonies or used ceremonies in a way that contradicted the Roman Church's use were therefore "auctoures of schisme, and breakers of unitie."\footnote{Harding, \textit{An answer}, 47v.} From this perspective, the observance or rejection of Catholic ceremonies was heavily freighted with implications concerning one's relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. The observance of the Church's ceremonies was an important sign of allegiance; conversely, the rejection of the Church's ceremonies was an act of schism.

Taking this view of the matter, Catholics glossed the use of traditional ceremonies by Protestants as a gesture of unity with Rome and even as a sign that Protestants intended to end their schism. This line of argument can be found in the afore-mentioned translation by Richard Shacklock of a text by the Polish Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius.\footnote{Stanislaus Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise of the begynnyng of heresyes in oure tyme, compyled by the Reuereund Father in God Stanislaus Hosius Byshop of Wormes in Prussia...Translated out of Laten in to Englyshe by Richard Shacklock M. of Arte, and student of the civil lawes, and intituled by hym: The hatchet of heresies}. In the book, Hosius discussed the bitter battles that Lutherans had recently waged over ceremonies in the wake of Charles V's Interim. The Lutherans had been fighting about "order or ceremonies" that were \emph{"indifferentia}, that is, thinges which of theyr owne nature be suche, that it skylleth nothyng to soule healthe, whether one leaue them or receaue them."\footnote{Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 59v.-60r.} The ceremonies in question were not essential for salvation, therefore, but "these outwarde cerimonies haue thys propertye, that where so euer they be obserued a lyke of all men, they be wytnesses of a certayne agreement and consent."\footnote{Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 60r.} The use of \emph{"things indifferent"} was important, therefore, because it was a way of signaling unity with others who also used them. Given

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\item \footnote{Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 59v.-60r.}
\item \footnote{Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 60r.}
\end{itemize}
this theoretical explanation of ceremonies and their value, Hosius provided an intriguing interpretation of the Lutheran debates over ceremonies. Hosius wrote that the "neuters" or "Adiaphoristes" of Wittenberg, led by Philip Melanchthon, "thought good to take away certayne new orders, which he [Martin Luther] had brought in and to restore most of the olde orders".\(^{33}\) Melanchthon and the Wittenberg Adiaphorists allegedly restored traditional Catholic ceremonies because they "thought good to consent to yᵉ Christians, that by them [the indifferent ceremonies] they myght gyue it oute to be understood, that they began a lyttell to inclyne from Luther to Christ, and that they myght put the world in hope" that they would return to the embrace of the Catholic Church.\(^{34}\) On Hosius' reading of recent Lutheran history, therefore, Melanchthon's decision to use traditional Catholic ceremonies was an intentional signal to the Catholic world that the Lutherans sought a graduated return to orthodoxy and reunion with the Church. Melanchthon and the "Adiaphoristes" had faced intense opposition from Gnesio-Lutherans like Matthias Flacius, who claimed that the restoration of Catholic ceremonies marked a return to popery. According to Hosius, the Gnesio-Lutherans had grasped the point perfectly. Flacius was correct to see the "wearing of a surplesse" as "the first part of the myserable wedge" that would restore Catholicism in Germany; Flacius rightly "smelled that wyndowes were made to conueye in the Papacye, which sholde followe after them."\(^{35}\) Hosius' only disagreement with Flacius was about whether this was really such a miserable thing, asking "is it so greate a faulte to buylde windowes for the Pope his supremacie, and not to make wyndowes for Sathanisme, that is Dyuellyshe doctrnye to entre in?"\(^{36}\)

Hosius applied this lesson from the Lutherans later in the text when he advised the King of Poland regarding ministers who had petitioned to abolish certain indifferent ceremonies in the

\(^{33}\) Hosius, *A most excellent treatise*, 59v.
\(^{34}\) Hosius, *A most excellent treatise*, 60r.
\(^{35}\) Hosius, *A most excellent treatise*, 64v, 61r-v.
\(^{36}\) Hosius, *A most excellent treatise*, 61v.
Polish church. While the king received many requests "that there sholde be an alteration in thinges (as some men thought) indifferent, you could be persuaded by no meane to do it, least you myght seme to gyue a token of youre going backward from y\$ Christian religion left unto you of youre forefathers, and of youre bending forwarde to Sathanisme".\textsuperscript{37} These indifferent things might "seme to some man to be of lesser importaunce," and things that no one "sholde stycke to graunte the takyng away of them," but even granting that "there were no faute in cutting of those thinges" because they were indifferent, it was still a very bad idea to eliminate them.\textsuperscript{38} These ministers sought the abolition of indifferent ceremonies because they wanted to break up the unity of the Roman Catholic Church: they "desire diuision in men, and not in suche thinges, as they know well inoughe, pertayne nothing to soule heath."\textsuperscript{39} While licit, eliminating indifferent ceremonies would separate the Polish kingdom from the rest of Christendom, and "in cutting of a mans his owne selfe from all the rest of Christendome, is suche a greate trespasse, y al other synnes compared to it, seme but a mote weyghing in balaunce with a myll poste."\textsuperscript{40}

Hosius wrote in 1557 to the King of Poland, but for Shacklock the translator and his English readers in 1565, the implications for events in England would have been clear. Indeed, later in the treatise, Shacklock made the comparison explicit in a marginal comment explaining that while the Lutherans were fighting over the "surplesse," "our Protestantes" in England were fighting over "wering of a Prestes cap."\textsuperscript{41} Hosius provided Shacklock with a framework whereby the use of Catholic ceremonies was glossed as goodwill towards Rome, a desire for unity with the Pope, and even an openness to healing Protestant schism. This line of argument would be even more directly

\begin{itemize}
  \item Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 63r-v.
  \item Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 63v.
  \item Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 63v.
  \item Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 63v.
  \item Hosius, \textit{A most excellent treatise}, 71r. It is a curious feature that much of the Catholic commentary on the vestiarian controversy focused on the cap, while Protestant commentary tended to focus on the surplice.
\end{itemize}
applied to the retention of Catholic ceremonies in the Elizabethan Church by Bishop Jewel's archenemy, Thomas Harding. Harding's *Confutation* (1565) of Jewel's *Apologie of the Church of England* (1562) began by praising Elizabeth's "good inclination towards the auncient and catholike religion, which the authours of that Apologie with an odious terme do call papistrie". According to Harding, Elizabeth was displaying a pattern of behavior that revealed her favorable feelings towards Catholicism. Elizabeth maintained a crucifix in her chapel, silenced the "lewd mouth" of a preacher who had denounced it, heard "the sobrest preachers" and a Good Friday sermon on the real presence, permitted her subjects to read defenses of the Catholic faith, refused to heed "hote preachers" who called for "sharp persecution," and most recently showed her "earnest zeale and trauail to bring (if it might be) those disordered ministers unto some order of decent apparell, which yet they want the reason tapply them selues unto." He was not alone, so he claimed, in drawing this conclusion from Elizabeth's behavior, as "very many others your louing and faithfull subiectes ar with the same prouoked to conceiue comfort and hope of a better estate for matters of religion to be sene in the church of England."

In the mid-1560s, therefore, Catholic exiles were glossing the queen's push for vestiarian conformity as a sign of royal favor towards Catholicism and as a hopeful portent of things to come. At the same time, they used the controversy to paint the opponents of the Queen's policy as seditious troublemakers. It was a commonplace of sixteenth-century polemics to accuse one's opponents of disobedience and rebellion, and in the 1560s English Catholics regularly cited the writings of John Knox and other Protestant resistance theorists as evidence of Protestantism's

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43 Harding, *A confutation*, *2v*-*3r*. For other examples of how Elizabeth's retention of a crucifix could be glossed as a crypto-Catholic gesture, see Martiall, *A treatyse of the Crosse*, a2v; Thomas Dorman, *A disproufe of M. Nowelles reproufe* (Antwerp: John Laet, 1565; STC 7061), *3r.
44 Harding, *A confutation*, *3r.*
inherently seditious nature. For example, the Catholic exile Thomas Dorman wrote that if Elizabeth were to change religion, Protestants would attack the queen with "some such seditiouse booke as ageinst Quene Marie ye made, or by some other practise (of which youre parte lacketh no store) to remoue her from all manner of gouernement both spirituall and temporall." On this line of argument, the fact that some Protestants were refusing to wear the legally prescribed vestments opened up a polemical goldmine for Catholic authors, enabling them to accuse all Protestants of disobedience and position themselves as the truly obedient subjects of the Queen. This theme was sounded again and again in the Catholic polemics published in 1565. Lewis Evans reported that Thomas Sampson, Laurence Humphrey, and Thomas Cole were refusing to wear the cap prescribed by the queen. Disobedience on this quotidian matter revealed the Protestants' deep hatred of good order and obedience, proving "therefore (good people) yt is the false preachers of England, which beareth her no good wyl, yt is they, that for the wearing of a cappe, will comptrole her maiesties most gracious mynde, & commaundement, yt is their dreamyng disobedience which dothe defye her lawes, and yt is their churlyshe hateful hartes, that murmure, and grudge against her maiesties proceedinges." Thomas Dorman used vestiarian non-conformity to highlight Protestant hypocrisy: while Protestants defended the royal supremacy against papal authority, "euen in a matter of no greater importance then is the wearing of a square cappe, they refuse the ordre of the supreme gouernour in all thinges and causes (as in wordes they call her) ecclesiastical and temporall." For Dorman, the fact that Protestants "grudgeth against the princes ordinaunce in matters indifferent and of small importance, no greater then of a square cap" was equivalent with Knox's *First Blast*, the

45 Thomas Dorman, *A proufe of certeyne articles in religion, denied by M. Iuell* (Antwerp: John Latius, 1564; STC 7062), 119v-120r.
46 Lewis Evans (trans.), *Certaine tables sett furth by the right reuerent father in God, William Busiopp of Rurimunde* (Antwerp: 1565, STC 15653), e5r-v. Evans would later convert to Protestantism and repudiate this claim in his anti-Catholic polemics of the later 1560s.
revolution in Scotland, and the wars of religion in France as evidence for the rebellious qualities of "that unhappy vermine the protestants".  

William Allen exploited vestiarian non-conformity in 1565 to depict the Protestant clergy as disorderly beasts, gleefully asking "what a doo had the magistrates to make these wylde men go in priestelyke apparell, to kepe there Rotchettes, to obserue sum steppe of antiquityc in theire maners?"  

Richard Shacklock went furthest along these lines in 1565, claiming in a poem that the Protestants were prepared to depose the queen over the vestments: "For a cap they be redy their Prince to expell."  

Catholic polemicists not only exploited vestiarian non-conformity to demonstrate Protestant disobedience, but to accuse Protestants of courting popularity, one of the most damning political accusations of the age. Thomas Harding wrote in 1565 that the non-conformists had shown no regard for "her Maiesties commaundement, nor their Metropolitans decree".  

While the next parliament was expected to pass a bill "that all and singuler spirituall persons shall weare square cappes and syde gownes, as hath ben accustomed," Harding predicted that "many of you shall refuse to obey this order".  

Why did Protestants refuse to obey church, crown, and parliament? To win "the peoples praise of your constancie, that is to saye, of your stoutnes, of your stourdines, of your...

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50 Preface to Hosius, *A most excellent treatise*, a2v. This line of reasoning could also be found in the wake of the controversy. Thomas Stapleton wrote in 1567 that while Protestants claimed to support the doctrine of the Royal Supremacy, "so farre it serueth some of them, and the moste zealouse of them, that noe their Prince, though Supreme governour and judge in al causes Ecclesiastical, may not by Gods worde, appointhe them as much as a Surplesse or Cope to be wore in the Churche, or Priestlike and decent apparell to be wore of the[m] otherwise." By using their own interpretation of "God's Word" to limit the prince's authority, Protestants ultimately rejected all authority and revealed their revolutionary designs. Thomas Stapleton, *A counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste against M. Fekenham* (Louvain: Ioannem Foulerum, 1567; STC 23231), 70r.  
upright and stiffenecked disobedience. They did it because they would "leuer seme to the people, whom they use for their clawbackes, and to whose judgement they stand or fall, stout champions of their owne gospell, [rather] then meeke folowers of Christes gospell. Such mighty Samsons, such constant Laurences, your ioyly gospell breedeth". Linking the controversies about vestments under Edward with the Elizabethan sequel, Harding pointed to the great "adoo" made by John Hooper under Edward and the great "styrre" made by his Elizabethan followers as evidence that their stance on ceremonies and vestments was merely a perverse effort to win the support of the people. In addition to revealing Protestants' disobedience and populism, the vestiarian controversy also provided Harding with a convenient piece of evidence for the accusation that Protestants were divisive sectarians and therefore ipso facto the purveyors of falsehood. Harding claimed that amongst the Protestant clergy one could observe four different sorts of headwear and at least as many sorts of gowns. Beyond the simple fact that they were unable to agree on a proper uniform, Harding emphasized the hostility between Protestants over the issue: conformists saw non-conformists as "fooles and farre ouersene" for choosing to "sticke so much at so small a matter," while the non-conformists saw the conformists as "colde and faint mainteiners of the gospell".

53 Harding, A confutation, 146v.
54 Harding, A confutation, 147r. Here Harding was referring to Thomas Sampson and Laurence Humfrey, the leaders of vestiarian opposition at Oxford. In the wake of Parker's refusal to grant toleration to Humfrey and Sampson, Humfrey wrote to the episcopal commissioners lamenting that he had been handled in a way that "harted o' Aduersaries"; had the issue remained private, and the non-conformists permitted to quietly resign rather than be deprived, then the papists would not "haue accused (in their seditious books) the Protestants for contention." SP 12/36, f. 146r. May [?] 1565. The privilege for Harding's book bore the date of 12 April 1565, so it is possible that Harding's book was already circulating in England and that Humfrey was specifically referring to Harding in this letter.
55 Harding, A confutation, 146v.
56 Harding, A confutation, 146r.
57 Harding, A confutation, 146v. Harding wrote that conformists saw the vestments as "indifferent" and things that "may be yelded unto," while non-conformists say "they be the Popes ragges, and may not be wore" (146v-147r).
In sum, Catholics were active and aggressive contributors to the increasingly public debate over the Church of England's stance on vestments, *adiaphora*, and the exercise of religious authority. Catholics were able to gloss the queen's demand for vestiarian conformity as a crypto-Catholicizing gesture and they exploited vestiarian non-conformity to paint Protestants as disobedient, seditious troublemakers. To appreciate the impact these claims could have, it is important to remember the climate of religious ambiguity that pervaded early Elizabethan England.58 The window into the queen's soul is notoriously opaque and the motives behind Elizabeth's religious policies were and are difficult to gauge. As many scholars have pointed out, Elizabeth seems to have preferred to leave aspects of her religious settlement intentionally vague in an attempt to minimize domestic opposition and to keep her foreign policy and marital options as open as possible. The conservative elements in the Elizabethan Church may also have represented something more than tactical maneuvering by the queen: expressing skepticism at the claim that Elizabeth was "as Protestant as [bishops] Jewel, Grindal or Cox," Patrick Collinson has argued that "her religious conservatism was so consistently manifested, applied with such apparent conviction, that it is hard to believe that it went against the grain of her own beliefs and tastes."59 Revealingly, much of the evidence that Collinson goes on to cite in support his interpretation was also cited by the Catholic exiles as signs of the Queen's favor towards their religion.

The point is not, of course, that Elizabeth really was a crypto-Catholic or that Protestants really were rabid revolutionaries. The point is that the story that the Catholics exiles were telling -- of a Catholicizing queen hemmed in by heretical councilors who were prepared to unleash revolution over the wearing of a hat -- was plausible in the mid-1560s and could not simply be

58 For a good account of the "unsettled" state of religion in the early 1560s, see Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age*, ch. 3.
shrugged off by English Protestants. In June 1565, the Privy Council expressed concern that "the Aduersaries of Religion" were "takyng occasion to fortifie their ffaction" from the Queen's command for vestiarian conformity. The Council recommended that the queen clarify her intentions and even that the push for conformity be moderated if the papists continued their polemical campaign.60 Neither of these recommendations were followed, and a month later, Bishop Robert Horne (Winchester) noted that the papists were "endeavouring, by some of their writings dispersed among the people, to bring themselves into power and us into odium, having obtained a handle of this kind, (small enough indeed,) through the controversy lately arisen among us about square caps and surplices."61 In the vestments controversy of 1565-66, English Catholics were making a case for what the English Church should be like and for their place in it. These Catholic polemics, as much as the queen's demand for conformity, form an essential part of the controversy and an important context in which to understand the Protestant polemics of the vestments controversy.

II.

Critics of the vestments were deeply concerned by the ways in the English were interpreting the Queen's insistence on conformity. As one anti-vestiarian pamphleteer put it, the Queen had good intentions regarding the vestments, but "the end which the commander propoyndyth, dothe not folowe, but accordinge to the diuersitie of them y' use them, and them that iudge of them".62 Starting from this assumption that the vestments should be judged by the effects they would have

60 SP 12/36 ff. 148-152. Also see Haugaard, Elizabeth and the English Reformation, 218-9.
61 Horne to Gualter, 17 July 1565, The Zurich Letters, vol 1, 142. Horne went on to explain that the papists "cried out, that there is not among us that unanimity in religion which we profess to have; but that we are guided by various opinions, and unable to remain in any fixed purpose."
62 To the Reader. To my faithful brethren (Emden: E. van der Erve, 1566; STC 10391), a4r-v. As another anti-vestiarian pamphleteer put it, "wee deni not but that they are reteynid of a good intent, but wee see that an euill end doth followe of the restoring of them." An answere for the tyme, to the examination put in print, with out the authours name, pretending to mayntayne the apparrell prescribed against the declaration of the mynisters of London (N.P: 1566, STC 10388), c1r.
on the English population, the way in which the "papists" were talking about the vestments was therefore integral to the anti-vestiarian case. By offering a psychological analysis of how various segments of the English population would respond to clergy who wore the vestments, the opponents of the vestments argued that their use would "pull downe, staye or hinder the building up of the Lordes temple, which is his Church or congregation."  

How did anti-vestiarians characterize the papist response to the vestments? Most basically, they emphasized that papists were deeply pleased by the fact that the queen was forcing Protestant clergy to wear caps and surplices. Using the simplest oppositional logic, this fact alone was enough to condemn the policy for a puritan like Anthony Gilby, who explained that "we ar assured that we seke Gods glory, and our aduersaries [those enforcing conformity] may see, yf they can se any thinge, that this thinge that they seke is not for gods glory, seing the papistes the enemyes of God, doe so desyre yt and glory in yt."  

A happy papist was a bad thing in and of itself for puritans like Gilby, but there were other reasons why happy papists were troubling. According to Thomas Sampson, who would be deprived for non-conformity in 1565, godly behavior should be discomfiting to papists: even in the use of things indifferent Christians must not "seeme thereby to consente to theyr [the papists'] blasphemios heresies."  

It was a Protestant axiom that papists considered vestments to be essential for Christian worship and that they attributed a superstitious, idolatrous holiness to the garments. According to the anti-vestiarians, this opinion was so firmly rooted that the use of vestments by Protestants could only confirm the papists' "in ther superstitius

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63 A briefe discourse against the outwarme apparell and Ministring garments of the papishe church (N.P.: 1566, STC 6079), a4r. In addition to being concerned about the impact of the vestments on those who observed their use, the anti-vestiarians were also concerned with their impact on the wearers themselves; see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

64 Anthony Gilby, To my louynge brethren (1566; STC 10390), b1r.

65 Sampson to Leicester, ca. 1565, Egerton MS 2836, fol. 32r.
opinion, of these things," and encourage them to "sticke still in their popishe puddle."\footnote{An answere for the tyme, c3v; A briefe discourse, c4r.} The "popish preistes" who constituted the bulk of the Elizabethan clergy allegedly continued to wear the vestments "for the same end, they did in poperie," enabling them to keep "a litle spicke of their Masse" and confirming lay papists in their belief that "the seruis of god hathe grete nede of them."\footnote{An answere for the tyme, c1r-v. Also see To the Reader, a4r-v.}

More insidiously, puritans claimed that the retention of this small part of Catholic ceremonial by Protestant clergy would lead the ignorant people to think that all popery was good. Adopting the voice of the people, one anti-vestiarian pamphleteer told the bishops that "if yow walked in the countrie, yow should heare the comon voice saye. Poperie is not so euil as they make it for then they wold never command thse things so streightlie to be observed. Yow shold heare: neyghbore played wee not a wise part, whan wee kept our Masse clothes & bookes, for by the masse neyghbour we shall hau all again, one daye."\footnote{An answere for the tyme, h6v. Emphasis added.} As this last statement made clear, the anti-vestiarians complained that the use of vestments gave papists hope for the future restoration of popery in England. The puritan Dean of Durham, William Whittingham, wrote that the papists "laughe, and triumphe to se us thus delt wythe, not ashamyd here upon to brag, that they truste that the rest of theyr thynges wyll folow."\footnote{William Whittingham, To my faithful brethren (Emden: E. van der Erve, 1566; STC 10389), a3r.}

In responding to these claims, Protestant conformists like Archbishop Parker denied that the vestments were being misunderstood, used inappropriately, or offering hope to English Catholics. In \textit{A briefe examination of the tyme} (1566), the official response to the non-conformist pamphlet \textit{A briefe discoure against the outward apparell and Ministring garmente of the popishe church} (1566), Parker doubted “whether the blynde papiste, the weake papiste, and simple Ghospeller (as you tearme them) haue these opinions nowe aduouched,” suggesting that “it is rather phantasied of some, then beleued of
According to Parker, everyone knew why the queen had commanded the use of vestments. In the first published response to Parker, An answer for the tyme (1566), the author simply pointed to the writings of Harding and other Catholics "abrod" as evidence to the contrary. "What better profe, can you haue then experiens. Remembre what Harding writith in this matter, in his preface before the answear to the Apologie, enquire what the Papistes say abrod, yf these things be good, all poperie, is not euill, wee trust that other things will follow shortly &c." This proved conclusively that "obstinat Papistes are confirmed, in erro[r]s, by retianinge this apparell." Harding's claims about Elizabeth and the vestments were cited repeatedly by anti-vestiarian writers to clinch their case. One pamphlet proclaimed "What the Papists iudge of us, maye easely be seene by this, yt Harding for the retayning of those Popishe cerymonies, conteynith hope that popery shalbe restoryd." If a learned papist like Harding could draw this conclusion, "what the ignorant people iudge of the reamnants of papistri retaynyd, wyse men may well consyder." Anthony Gilby also invoked Harding, writing that the retention of vestments could not be a good policy if it caused "the enemies, Harding & his fellowes to triumpe, and to waite for an ouerthrowe of both partes". Whatever their motives were, the Catholic exiles' public embrace of the queen's vestiarian policy

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70 A briefe examination for the tyme, of a certayne declaration, lately put in print in the name and defence of certayne Ministers in London, refusing to weare the apparell prescribed by the laves and orders of the Realme (London: Richarde Iugge, 1566; STC 10387), ******1r. The text was published anonymously, but is universally attributed by historians to Parker. A similar argument can be found in a brief manuscript tract, entitled “A short reply to a smale treatise of late entituled: A briefe awnswer to a pamphlete, latelie sett furthe in printe, by a Proctor of the popish apparayll,” Lambeth Palace Library MS 2007, fol. 146r.

71 An answer for the tyme, c6r.

72 To the Reader. To my faithfull brethren, b2r-v.

73 Gilby, A Pleasaunt Dialogue Betweene a Souldior of Barwicke, and an English Chaplaine (Middelburg?: R. Schilders?, 1581; STC 11888), c4r; also see k4r. This text was written in May 1566, and parts of it circulated in that year, but the work as a whole was not published until the 1570s.
could hardly have been better calculated to fan the flames of controversy within English
Protestantism.\textsuperscript{74}

The anti-vestiarians were not only concerned about how papists perceived the vestments,
but also with how "Christians" perceived their use, especially recent converts who were still "weak"
and "simple gospellers." On one level, the anti-vestiarians had the same fears about "weak"
Christians as they did about papists. The London ministers wrote that the "Nouice in Christ" was
not doctrinally strong and remained heavily dependent on the example of the Protestant clergy. If
those clergymen put on Catholic vestments, the "simple Christians" who did not yet understand the
doctrinal niceties of \textit{adiaphora} and Christian liberty would be "by us beaten back to superstition, from
which they were before making hast to flye."\textsuperscript{75} On another level, the puritans claimed that wearing
the vestments would be to abuse Christian liberty in "things indifferent" because it would offend or
harm fellow Protestants. In short, the anti-vestiarians claimed that strong Christians, like
themselves, understood that Christian liberty permitted them to use "things indifferent" like
vestments. "Weak" Christians, however, were not fully convinced of their Christian liberty in things
like vestments, and legalistically saw them as inherently wicked. To wear the vestments in the
presence of these weaker brethren would be to violate the apostle Paul's instructions to use charity
towards the weak in "things indifferent." Serious consequences would follow. Some weaker
brothers and sisters would be driven away from the Church and might form sects. When the
suspended London ministers defended their non-conformity in print, they claimed that the "simple
gospellers doe suppose, that forasmoch as the Papistes doe holde that without these things there can
be no right ministration: they ought not to communicate with those that use them," while another

\textsuperscript{74} There is perhaps an interesting comparison to be drawn here with Bishop Stephen Gardiner's
calculated decision to express approval of the 1549 \textit{Book of Common Prayer}. See Diarmaid
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{A brief discourse}, a4v. Also see the brief non-conformist response to Parker, printed by Daniel
pamphlet reported that "simple gospellers" had been asking "whether with safe conscience, they maye come to the seruis with ther presens, to allow this gere, yea some openlie confess they will not come."76 Perhaps more dangerously, if godly ministers agreed to wear the vestments, they might lead some of the weaker brethren to act against their consciences by attending services that they believed to be idolatrous (due to the use of vestments). This would be a heinous sin and the anti-vestiarians constantly repeated the various biblical warnings against wounding weak consciences. The London ministers wrote that wearing vestments would bring down "that heauie cursse, which our Sauiour hath pronounced against all suche as laye stumbling blocks in theyr brothers wayses."77 Christ's words in Matthew 18 were quoted incessantly by the anti-vestiarians: "Take heede that ye offende not one of these little ones that beleue in me. Wo unto that man by whom offences come. It were better for that man, that a milstone were tyed about his necke, and he cast into the deepe of the sea, than that he shoulde offende one of the least that beleue in me."78

When the anti-vestiarians claimed that Scripture governed the use of things indifferent, rather than the prince, it was these biblical injunctions regarding the proper use of Christian liberty around the "weak" and the "obstinate" to which they pointed. In other words, the arguments advanced by the anti-vestiarians about scripture's authority over things indifferent were fundamentally social and ethical in nature: as anti-vestiarians understood it, the scriptural rule for the use of adiaphora required one to take into account the impact of using "things indifferent" on others and then to frame one's behavior accordingly. Given their assessment of how various segments of the English population would respond to the vestments, the anti-vestiarians concluded that the use of vestments would edify neither group and could only harm the progress of "the gospel" in England. In a nutshell, this was the puritan position in the vestiarian controversy.

76 A brief discourse, c1r; An answere for the tyme, h6v.
77 A brief discourse, a5r.
78 A brief discourse, a6v.
While name "puritan" was new in 1565-66, however, this sort of theological ethic and the repeated invocation of these particular biblical passages would not have struck early Elizabethan Protestants as unusual in the least. Indeed, this reasoning and rhetoric had dominated Protestant literature during the reign of Mary Tudor in the form of arguments against Nicodemism, the practice of dissembling one's faith through external conformity to religious rites that one internally rejected. The considerable literary energies of the Protestant exiles during Mary's reign had been directed against the practice of Nicodemism, with seemingly every letter and pamphlet from that period urging fellow Protestant not to hide their faith by attending Mass. Despite the abolition of the Mass and the restoration of a Protestant national church under Elizabeth, however, the anxieties and concerns that motivated anti-Nicodemism did not disappear. Anti-Nicodemism was not fundamentally about the evils of attending Mass, but about the necessity of living in such a way that one maintained clear distinctions between the practice of true and false religion. These concerns were very much alive among militant Protestants in the early 1560s, with the majority of the English population (lay and clerical alike) indifferent or hostile to their understanding of true religion. As one preacher claimed at Paul's Cross in January 1566, there were three or four thousand churches in England (out of approximately 10,000 parishes) that continued to worship "accordinge to ye purification of the Iewes," where clergy and laity used the surviving remnants of the Catholic past to continue in their popery.79 Even in parishes where conformity to the religious settlement was the norm, the fact that the regime demanded nothing more than external conformity "opened up a gap between the inward and the outward, the real inner convictions of a person and his or her outward behavior," that produced concern among both Elizabethan Protestants and Catholics about

79 Bodleian Tanner MS 50, 37r. Also see Patrick McGrath and Joy Rowe, "The Marian Priests Under Elizabeth I" Recusant History 17 (1984), 103-120. See, for example, Christopher Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), ch. 14.
dissembling and insincerity. While popery may no longer have been upheld by law, therefore, a certain sort of Elizabethan Protestant felt its presence as intensely as ever: as one anti-vestiarian pamphlet put it, "Your [sic] cannot deni unlesse yow wilbe impudent, that wee dwell among manie hundred of papistes, though by publike authoritie poperie be not maynteynid...Belial is Belial whether he be openlie or priuatlie professed, & so Ceremonies are prophane and unhollie, though they haue neuer so faire & holie a visard." 

It must also be recognized that anti-Nicodemism continued to maintain a hold on the Protestant imagination in a much more direct fashion through the publication and republication of anti-Nicodemite pamphlets throughout the 1560s. In 1562, an English translation of the Gnesio-Lutheran Johann Wigand's *De Neutralibus et Mediis, Grosly Inglyshed, Jacke of both Sydes* was published in London, containing an extensive denunciation of Nicodemism and dissembling. John Bradford's *The hurte of hering masse*, written before he was executed in 1555, was published for the first time in 1561 and John Hooper's *Whether Christian faith maye be kepte secret in the heart, without confession thereof openly to the worlde*, first published at the start of Mary's reign in 1553, was republished in John Bull and Miles Coverdale's 1564 anthology of the Marian martyrs' writings. Bradford and Hooper's texts had immense authority for early Elizabethan Protestants, being hallowed by their authors' }

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81 *An answere for the tyme, d8v-e1r.*
82 Johan Wigand, *De Neutralibus et Mediis, Grosly Inglyshed, Jacke of both Sydes* (London: Richard Harrison, 1562; STC 25612).
83 John Bradford, *The hurte of hering masse* (London: Wyllyam Copland, 1561; STC 3494); a manuscript of this text is found among John Foxes papers: British Library Harley MS 422, ff. 104-132. John Hooper, *Whether Christian faith maye be kepte secret in the heart, without confession thereof openly to the worlde as occasion shal serve* (Roane [London?: John Day?], 1553; STC 5160.3); Hooper, "A letter sente to the Christian congregation, wherein he proueth that true faith cannot be kepte secrete in the heart without confession therof openly to the world when occasion serueth" in Miles Coverdale (ed.), *Certain most godly, fruittifull, and comfortables letters of such true Saintes and holy Martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this Realme, gane their byues for the defence of Christes holy gospel* (London: John Day, 1564; STC 5886), 157-163.
recent martyrdoms, and indeed, the entire hagiographical project of the early Elizabethan period -- most extensively in Foxe's *Acts & Monuments* (1563) -- kept the martyrs' hatred of idolatry and vivid rejection of Nicodemism front and center in Protestant consciousness. Anti-Nicodemism not only remained alive in written form, moreover, as those who had penned anti-Nicodemite polemics under Mary continued to write under Elizabeth. Thomas Sampson, for example, rejected the use of vestments with many of the same arguments he had made in a 1554 pamphlet to his London congregation, urging them not to attend Mass.

When read side by side, the arguments found in anti-Nicodemite literature and anti-vestiarian literature are virtually indistinguishable. Anti-Nicodemites and anti-vestiarians were both deeply concerned with how religious behavior would be perceived by others: for both, the intentions were ultimately less important than the consequences. As John Hooper put it during Mary's reign, it was imperative that "if a faithful man should be at the masse, it is to be considered with what mind those that he doth there accompany himselfe withal, do come thyther, and what the ende is of the worke that the priest doth." Hence, both the anti-vestiarians and the anti-Nicodemites offered extensive analyses of how "papists" and "protestants" perceived religious acts. In Robert Pownall's 1555 translation of *The Temporysour*, an anti-Nicodemite dialogue by Wolfgang Musculus, the godly interlocutor "Eusebius" explained that when a Catholic saw a Protestant dissemble to attend Catholic services, the Catholic would believe that "yō dost likenwyse reuerence & worship those seruices, as I do," thinking moreover that the Protestant had realized how he ha had been "seduced & abused by yt new gospel whiche he lately professēd, & now knoweth certainly yō we haue yē treu gospel, & yō we

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84 I would suggest that is no accident that many of the figures involved in this hagiographical project, like John Foxe and Miles Coverdale, were themselves leading opponents of the vestments.
85 Thomas Sampson, *A letter to the trew professors of Christes Gospell, inhabitinge in the parishe off Allhalloween, in Bredstrete in London, made by Thomas Sampson, sometyme their pastore* (Strasburgh in Elsas [i.e. Wesel? : By Joos Lambrecht?]; STC 21683), esp. b5v. Compare with his letter to the Earl of Leicester, ca. 1565, Egerton MS 2836, ff. 31-34.
86 Hooper, "A letter," 162.
are the trew church." As Anti-Nicodemite authors stressed *ad nauseam*, the attendance of known Protestants at Mass would only strengthen Catholics in their heretical beliefs and give them hope that all Protestants would soon return to Rome. As Peter Martyr Vermigli put it concisely in his *Treatise of the Cobabilitacion of the faithfull with the unfaithfull*, translated into English and published in 1555, the papists would say to themselves "these gospellers do comme to our masses, which they wold not do yf our masses wer so euell as thei call them: wherfor we may perseuere and continue in our old purpose." On this point, John Bradford equated attendance at mass with bearing false witness against one's neighbor, since it would be "wyettenessynge the masse to be a true seruyece of god and a badge of hys churche, wher there owne conciences saye they lye and so condemneth them," and therefore make the dissembler guilty of murdering his neighbor's soul.

Of course, the Nicodemite who attended Mass was not only regarded as harming papists, but also "weaker brethren" who witnessed the act of dissembling. As Sampson put it in 1554, when a Protestant dissembled by attending the Mass, "a double stomble blocke is geuen whiche euin in things indifferent is to be auoyded," in that idolaters are confirmed in their superstitions and the "weake brother" is offended. While Anti-Nicodemite authors insisted that the Mass was "manifeste Idolatry forbidden of God as a thing not indifferent," they nevertheless applied Pauline rules for the use of "things indifferent" to the Mass. As Sampson explained, "though al thinges be clean to the clean to be eaten on all dayes with thankes geuing, yet better it is not to eate flesh, nor to drinke wyne: then too offende thereby thy weake brother." Offense was given to weaker

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87 Wolfgang Musuclus, *The Temporysour (that is to saye: the observer of tyme, or be that chaungeth with the tyme)* (Wesel, 1555; STC 18312), e4r.
88 Peter Martyr Vermigli, *A Treatise of the Cobabitacion of the faithfull with the unfaithfull* (n.d: n.p., 1555; STC 24673.5), e4r.
89 Bradford, *The hurte of hering masse*, c6r, c1v.
brethren, who did not grasp their liberty in things indifferent, when they were "boldened" to act
against the testimony of their conscience. Hooper wrote that "by a dissemblers halting & playing of
both handes, ['the weaker sort'] embraces both in body and in soule, the euil that he abhorreth in
hys hart". This was a great evil "to make a doubtful conscience or striuing against knowledge to do
any thing that is not godly," and Hooper invoked Christ's words from the gospel of Matthew that "it
were better a milstone were hanged about such an offenders necke, & cast into the sea...For those
weaklinges that we make to stomble, Christ died, as S. Paul sayth, God defend we should confyrme
any mans conscience in euil." This message and these texts were repeated throughout Anti-
Nicodemite admonitions: attending mass would offend weaker brethren, encourage them to violate
their consciences, and drive them back to popery. In John Bradford's evocative phrase, it would
"laye a Pyllow & Cusshen under there knees & elbowes to hold on styll & so to encrease goddes
further vengeance."

As we saw, these anti-Nicodemite arguments were used time and again against wearing
vestments. The continuity between the two campaigns was even made explicit in an Autumn 1565
sermon at Paul's Cross when the preacher invoked the Marian martyrs in reference to the current
debate over adiaphora. The preacher recounted how many Protestants had died under Mary for
conscience's sake, not only for the sake of their own souls, but to avoid harming their brethren who

95 Cf. the virtually identical admonitions in John Philpot, "A letter which he sent to the Christian
congregation, exhorting them to refrayne themselfs from the Idolatrous seruice of the papistes,
and to seue god wyth a pure and undefiled conscience after hys worde" in Coverdale (ed.), Certain
most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters, 220; Musculus, The Temporysour, d3v; Vermigli, A Treatise of the
Cohabitacyon, c4r; Bradford, The hurte of hering masse, c7r-c8r.
96 Bradford, The hurte of hering masse, d4v.
97 This sermon is contained in Tanner MS 50, which contains a chronological series of notes on
Paul's Cross sermons during 1565-66. Unlike all of the other sermons in the volume, this one has
no heading (rendering its author unidentifiable), but the date can be conjectured by the preceding
and following sermons: 24 September 1565 and 14 October 1565.
would be tempted to deny the truth. If Protestant preachers and bishops had renounced the truth under Mary, the preacher claimed, they would have “hindered many with in this Realme and caused them also 2 deny Christ.” 98 This bold and dangerous proclamation of the truth “ought not to be only in y principal points of religion, but also in indifferent things, if so be I shall therby hurt y conscience of my neighor.” 99 This argument elevated conscientious scruples over “things indifferent” -- and in autumn 1565 who could not think of the vestments? -- to the same level as the Marian martyrs’ willingness to defend the gospel with their lives.

I have not discussed the arguments made by the anti-vestiarians about authority, and they had much to say on the subject. Some opponents of the vestments suggested that it was godly ministers who should determine the proper use of indifferent ceremonies, not the queen, and others would come to equate the rule of bishops with popery. Flagrant non-conformists like William Turner, who had made his opinion of the vestments quite clear when he made an adulterer do public penance in clerical garb, would denounce the rule of bishops from the pulpit, asking "who gave them authoritie, more over me, then I over them: eyther to forbidd me preachinge, or to depryve me: unlest they have yt from their holy father the pope." 100 But as I have argued, when the anti-vestiarians pointed to scripture as the supreme authority for the use of "things indifferent," they were ultimately making an ethical argument about how scripture required Protestants to behave towards "weaker brothers" and "obstinate papists." In doing so, their response to the vestments was grounded in a theological and ethical discourse that had occupied a dominant place within English Protestantism for more than a decade.

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98 Bodleian Tanner MS 50, f. 20r.
99 Bodleian Tanner MS 50, f. 20r.
100 Turner’s comments reported by Bishop Berkeley in a March 1563 letter to William Cecil, Lansdowne MS 8, f. 6r.
When Archbishop Parker responded to the non-conformists in *A briefe examination* (1566), he argued that their ethical principles were out of date. Parker conceded that their arguments about avoiding offense would have carried some weight in a different time. Parker wrote that "In indifferent thynges, if lawe, for common tranquilitie haue prescribed no order what ought to be done, a Christian man ought to haue a great regard of his neyghbours conscience, accordyng to S. Paules doctrine." Likewise, if the use of vestments was commanded as a *necessary* part of religion -- as it had been under Queen Mary -- then they should not be used, in order to testify to Christian freedom. But according to Parker, neither of these circumstances currently existed under Queen Elizabeth, "for (thankes be to God) we dwell not among the Babilonians and Chaldies, we haue in our Church no publique worshyppyng of Idolles, no Heathenishe or idolatrical sacrifice, as were in some place of the citie of Corinth, whose societie & contagion we ought to auoyde." Elizabeth had commanded the use of vestments by law, not as necessary things, but quite clearly as "things indifferent" to be used without superstition for the sake of order, comeliness, and unity. In this situation, the biblical rules that the "precisans" pointed to about Christian liberty, things indifferent, and avoiding offense no longer applied: obedience was now the primary concern, and offense would be given by disobeying the monarch's command. As historians have come to characterize it, this was the conformist case in a nutshell. On this approach to *adiaphora*, "psychological complexities cease where law ‘takes order’" and the “Gordian knot” created by the puritans' objections was severed by the sharp logic of obedience. The vestments had no meaning apart from providing an

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101 *A briefe examination*, ***3v.*
102 *A briefe examination*, ***4r.*
103 J. S. Coolidge, *The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 43: “The English situation is like what Paul’s would have been if an edict had gone out from a benevolent emperor requiring, for the sake of good order, that Christians should always eat meats offered to idols.”
opportunity for obedience: as Secretary Cecil put it in 1565, external things like vestments “ar of none other value but to make a demonstration of obedience, and to rend’ a testimonie oof unity.” Indeed, Parker went so far as to argue that the English people did not even need to understand why the vestments were being commanded. They only needed to obey, since “oftentymes the Subject ought to obey in thynges not forbydden by God, and commandd by lawe, though be do not playny

perceyue ethyr for what good end they are required, or to what ende they wyll come: as dayly experience in common wealthes do shewe.” It was preposterous to insist that the queen's subjects "understande as much as the Prince and councell knoweth and intendeth" before they obeyed, as this would "set the subiect at his choyse."

Parker's approach effectively sidestepped the entire anti-vestiarian approach to the vestments, and unsurprisingly, they were shocked by the claim that St. Paul's teaching regarding adiaphora was now irrelevant in Elizabethan England. One rejoinder to Parker urged him to consider "how shamfully you do erre," in claiming that "lawes pretending common tranquillitie maye prescribe an order contrarie to the ordar of charitie commaundede of the holie goste, by his instrument S. Paull: binding all ages, places, and personnes. Where doth S. Paull, or anie part of holie writt teache such doctrine?" On this point, it should be recognized that Parker was not merely dissenting from the anti-vestiarians' stance on adiaphora. While his claims about adiaphora and obedience were not without precedent -- similar claims had been advanced by Thomas Starkey under Henry VIII and by Thomas Cranmer under Edward VI -- Parker's attempt to replace

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104 Cecil to Robert Beaumont, 10 December 1565, Petyt MS 538/38, fol. 55v.
105 *A briefe examination,****3r (emphasis added).
106 *A briefe examination,****3r.
107 *An answere for the tyne, d7v.
offense with obedience departed significantly from even the ways in which Elizabeth’s bishops had discussed *adiaphora* in the recent past.\(^{109}\) In 1559, several bishops and leading divines wrote to the queen, seeking to persuade her to abolish the use of altars in the Church of England.\(^{110}\) While the authors argued that altars were technically illegal in England – the Book of Common Prayer specified the use of “a table” – and that tables had more support in scripture and patristic sources, they nevertheless admitted that altars were *adiaphora* and “a thinge whiche in some other tyme might be tollerated.”\(^{111}\) As such, their main argument was not that altars were strictly prohibited, but that “at this tyme the continuance of Altare shulde bring merveiul inconveniences.”\(^{112}\) The bishops based their stance on the ways in which various segments of the English population perceived altars and on the potential they had for offense. Since many of the “godly minded” rejected altars as “ordenunces and devises of man not commaunded in goddes worde,” their retention would be “an occasion of offence and diuision amongst the godly mynded.”\(^{113}\) This might even lead some to separate from the established church, since the bishops expected that thousands who had embraced the gospel “will absteine from receiving the communion at an Altare, whiche in the ende maye growe to occasion of greate schisme and diuision amonge yo’ people”.\(^{114}\) Conversely, the bishops argued that the Catholic clergy who remained within the Church of England greatly desired the retention of altars, because altars aided them in simulating the mass and confirming “the simple in

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109 Drawing on different evidence, Brett Usher has also emphasized Parker’s divergence from his episcopal brethren in his campaign for conformity: Usher, “The Deanery of Bocking”.
111 LPL MS 2002, f. 107v.
112 LPL MS 2002, f. 107v.
113 LPL MS 2002, f. 109r.
114 LPL MS 2002, f. 108r.
their former errors.” Rather than arguing that the queen could simply nullify the potential for offense by commanding the use of altars for the sake of order and unity, the bishops saw offense and charity as ongoing concerns and argued against the use of altars in almost exactly the ways that puritans would argue against the use of vestments.

In short, when Parker replaced offense with obedience as the overriding concern with regard to the use of vestments, he was charting a controversial course. This perhaps explains why he not only tried to undercut the anti-vestiarians' premises, but also attempted to refute them on their own terms. Parker argued that the use of vestments would not harm the English population in the various ways that the anti-vestiarians claimed. Rather, they would actually be a powerful tool for converting papists into true Christians. The argument is worth quoting at length:

You would haue us thy nke that the receyuyng of these orders doth not edifie, because (as you imagine) the obstinate papiste shal be confirmed in his opinion. This thing is easyer and oftener saide of you, then proued as yet. For truely this may be a meanes rather to wynne the aduersaries from theyr errours, when they see us without superstition or any necessitie, turne those thinges to good uses, which they fowly abused, and heare us condemne in open preachyng, that which they set so much by. And uppon this cause it seemeth, the Apostles used long after Christes ascention the Ceremonies of Moises, and that in the Temple, to wynne to Chryst the obstinate Iewes. The histories Ecclesiasticall also have diuers experiences, howe much our auncient fathers increased Christes Churche by such godly policie. Hence it was, that they plucked not downe all the Iewyshe Sinagoges and Heathenyshe Temples, but turned them to the seruice of God: that they altered theyr feast dayse: that they chaunged their rites to Godlye purposes. And that this myght be done, it appeareth

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115 LPL MS 2002, f. 108r.
by S. Augustine to Publicola, saying: *Cum vero ista vel in honorem veri dei conuertuntur, hoc de illis fit, quod de ipsis hominibus, cum ex sacrilegis et impiis in veram religionem mutantur.*

When these things be converted unto the honour of the true God, it is of them as it is of the parties them selues, when they were before committynge sacrilege and impietie, nowe they be converted into true religious persons.\(^{116}\)

Rather than viewing vestments as a cipher, as merely a means of showing obedience, Parker was arguing here that their use had positive merits and that the Protestant appropriation of vestments could play a key role in the conversion of English Catholics. Like medieval Christian missionaries who felled sacred trees to construct churches, English Protestants would appropriate and repurpose objects of Catholic superstition for the true service of God. Parker was not the only bishop to express hope that the Protestant use of Catholic externals might lead to conversions. In a February 1564 letter to Parker, Bishop John Scory (Hereford) had expressed hope that the use of Catholic vestments by Protestant preachers might lead Catholics to credit their evangelical message. Scory wrote that he hoped that "all soche as in my diocese are counted and called papistes maye as redey thinke al on thing in doctrine and religion according to the truth of chists gospell w' us, as we are redey to agre in the owteward apparell of cappes, gownes, and typpets w' them."\(^{117}\)

Parker's claim that the vestments would edify and hopefully convert English Catholics has not interested historians, who have focused their analysis on his arguments about authority and obedience, but it hardly went unnoticed by his contemporaries.\(^{118}\) The notion that the use of vestments would assist in the conversion of papists was, as we have seen, the mirror opposite of

\(^{116}\) *A briefe examination*, ***1v.*

\(^{117}\) Scory to Parker, 17 February 1564: British Library, Harley MS 6990, 64v.

\(^{118}\) Parker's argument even went beyond what his successor at Canterbury, Archbishop Whitgift, would argue against Thomas Cartwright in the 1570s regarding the ability of ceremonies to edify "per accidens." See Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 19, 46, and esp. 65: "He [Whitgift] never claimed that the ceremonies in question edified or had any religious significance at all."
everything the anti-vestiarians and English Catholics had been arguing. *An Answere for the tyme* (1566) directly addressed Parker’s invocation of Augustine and the policy of Christianizing pagan rituals in order to win converts, claiming that Augustine “utterly misliked the pollacie, answering: *quaeritis, &c.*

> do yow aske me houe the pagans may be wonne? How they may be called to saluacion? Forsake thier solemnites, let goe their toies, and then yf they agree not to our tru[t]he, let them be ashamed of their fewnes. Yf wee could agree with Augustine and forsake the popishe toyes, and trinketes, with in shorte space no doubt the Papistes which now swaru would shrinke in the wetting and wax so few, that they wolde be ashamed of their little nomber.”

The whole notion that apparel could be used "to winne the adversaries" was utterly opposed by "godes word." Anti-Nicodemite arguments again provide an important context for this part of the anti-vestiarian case. Marian Anti-Nicodemites had insisted that the only way to convert “simple” and “ignorant” papists was to repudiate their worship: even the smallest compromise was sinful and uncharitable, because it did not adequately proclaim to papists the wickedness of their religion. This argument, made by all of the anti-Nicodemite authors cited in the preceding section, was applied extensively to the use of "things indifferent" in the 1562 translation of Johann Wigand's *De Neutralibus et Mediis, Grosly Inghshed, Jacke of both Sydes.*

Wigand, a Gnesio-Lutheran who (like Matthias Flacius) opposed the policies of Lutherans like Melanchthon regarding *adiaphora*, denounced any attempt to use *adiaphora* as a means to unite Protestants and Catholics. The text proclaimed that “the order is most filthily turned up syde down, when the agreement or conformytce of externall matters is fyrst sought at their handes, which haue most sluttishly soiled those things with horrible superstitions &

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119 *An Answere for the tyme*, c6v. Anthony Gilby repeated this response almost verbatim in *A Pleasaunt Dialogue*, c8r.
120 *An answer for the tyme*, c6r.
blasphemyes, and powerd them full as it were of deadly poison.” Agreement must first be forged on doctrine, and then agreement on the external forms of worship would follow.

As we have seen, Parker had a very different view of how externals might play a role in the evangelistic mission of the Church of England. We can gain insight into Parker's mindset by examining an encounter he had two years earlier with a group of high-ranking French Catholics. In May 1564, the queen had commanded Parker to entertain the French ambassador Msr. de Gonour and his delegation on their journey to the court. Parker reported back on the meeting in June, writing to Cecil that the Ambassador and his companions had been particularly interested to learn about "the order and using of our religion." In talking with them, Parker discovered that the French were severely misinformed about the Church of England, thinking that "we had neither statas preces, nor choice of days of abstinence, as Lent, &c., nor orders ecclesiastical, nor persons of our profession in any regard or estimation, or of any ability, amongst us." Parker "beat that plainly out of their heads" and the French were very pleased to learn "that in ministration of our Common Prayer and Sacraments we use such reverent mediocrity, and that we did not expel musick out of our quires, telling them that our musick drowned not the principal regard of our prayer." Friday evening's dinner provided Parker with the perfect opportunity for an evangelistic object lesson: the Archbishop arranged for a fish supper to be prepared and explained to the French that "it was rather in the respect of their usage at home than for that we used so the Friday or other such fasting days, which we observe partly in respect of temperance and part for policy, not for any scrupulosity in choice of days." All in all, the Frenchman "noted much and delighted in our mediocrity, charging

122 Wigand, De Neutralibus, 14r.
123 Parker to Cecil, 3 June 1564, in Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 214-217.
124 Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 215.
125 Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 215.
126 Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 216.
the Genevians and the Scottish of going too far in extremities.\textsuperscript{127} Indeed, the French "professed that we were in religion very nigh to them," not least in mutual hostility to the pope, and Parker responded by saying (perhaps recalling Bishop Scory's words to him the previous February?) that "I would wish them to come nigher to us, grounding ourselves (as we do) upon the apostolical doctrine and pure time of the primitive Church."\textsuperscript{128} In conclusion, Parker expressed hope to Cecil that "this ambassador may be a great stay in his country for the better supposing of us hereafter."\textsuperscript{129}

Parker's account of this meeting reveals him experimenting with a particular evangelistic strategy towards Roman Catholics and records his impressions of that strategy's efficacy.\textsuperscript{130} The French objected to the "extremities" that characterized the religion of Jean Calvin and John Knox, but they came to think favorably about the Church of England when they saw its moderation in ceremonial matters. Parker used a "thing indifferent" [ab]used by Catholics -- fasting on Fridays -- to show "respect" for his visitors' religious practice, but also as an opportunity to teach the French the true (Protestant) use of Christian liberty in "things indifferent" like fasting. Ultimately, Parker was convinced that the moderation of the Church of England's ceremonies -- and their outward similarity to the religion to which the Catholics were accustomed -- made the Catholics favorably disposed to the worship of the Protestant Church of England in a new way, and Parker hoped this might lead them to be open to Protestant belief as well.

When Parker defended the use of vestments in the Elizabethan Church, therefore, he brought with him the belief that the moderate use of ceremonies coupled with clear teaching on Christian liberty was an effective evangelistic tool. The great threat to the edification and conversion

\textsuperscript{127} Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 215.
\textsuperscript{128} Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 216.
\textsuperscript{129} Correspondence of Matthew Parker, 216.
\textsuperscript{130} On Parker's failed efforts to convert leading Roman Catholic clergymen in 1559, see Louise Campbell, "A Diagnosis of Religious Moderation: Matthew Parker and the 1559 Settlement" in Luc Racaut and Alec Ryrie (eds.), Moderate Voices in the European Reformation (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 32-50.
of England was not the vestments, but rather the extremists, the vocal non-conformists (many of whom were literally friends of Geneva's Calvin and Scotland's Knox) whose incendiary rhetoric and disobedience were bringing the Church of England into disrepute and undermine its ability to edify the queen's subjects. When Parker responded to the Catholic polemics addressing the vestiarian controversy, therefore, he focused on their accusations of Protestant disobedience and division.131 Parker not only addressed the non-conformists in *A breife examination*, but he also addressed the "English Louanistes" with their "fawning flatterie prefaces" and "bookes so fast and hastily sent ouer in great numbers".132 Referring to the non-conformists, Parker wrote that "the aduersaries of true religion [the papists] can winne no great reioyce at these mens oversights, as beyng but a very fewe, and counted in deede none of the sincere and learned protestauntes, howsoever for a tyme they seemed to be amongst us. For though they be gone out from us, yet they were belyke neuer of us."133 In saying this, Parker was wholeheartedly agreeing that Protestant non-conformists were seditious popularity-seekers, but simultaneously neutralizing and deflecting this attack by disowning the non-conformists and pushing them outside of the Protestant fold. This was a harsh repudiation of putative co-religionists and a brutally simple rejoinder to the claim that English Protestants were divided.134 Parker went on to write that the Catholic exiles should not "delyght them selues with any hye reioysinges, as though the Prince woulde for disprouyng of a fewe counterfaites, dislyke the whole state of the rest of the Cleargie." Just as the rest of the apostles were not "discredited, though

131 For Parker's early concern about how Catholics were exploiting the controversy, see Parker to Grindal, 30 January 1565, in *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, 228.
132 *A breife examination*, *4r-v.*
133 *A breife examination*, *4r.*
134 In part, this was tit for tat: in *A brief discourse*, the London non-conformists had first made the bold claim that "the earnest soliciters of this matter...are not, neyther were at anye tyme Protestantes: but when tyme woulde serue them, they were bloudy persecuters, & synce tyme fayled them, they haue borne back as much as lay in them" (c5r).
Iudas fell out from them,” neither were the English clergy besmirched by these false brethren.\textsuperscript{135}

For Parker, non-conformity was a challenge to the queen's authority, but it was more than that. It was a threat to the entire evangelistic mission of the national church.

IV.

This chapter has attempted to revise our understanding of a much-studied episode in English history by advancing new claims about its participants, content, and origins. First, I have argued that Catholics were important, yet hitherto unrecognized, players in the vestments controversy. By emphasizing the role played by Catholics in what previously has been considered an intra-Protestant dispute, this chapter contributes to a growing body of scholarship that aims to restore English Catholics to their proper place in the "mainstream" history of early modern England.\textsuperscript{136} Not only were Catholics contributors to the vestiarian debate, but their involvement shaped Protestant polemics and intensified the hostilities between Protestants. Attending to the Catholic context helps us to understand the dynamics of the vestments controversy better and it also sheds light on the role played by flesh-and-blood Catholics (and not merely the amorphous specter of "popery") in shaping Protestant identities in early modern England. At the moment when the word "puritan" was being coined by Catholic polemicists, puritanism was not so much "one half of a stressful relationship," but rather one part of a multi-faceted debate with other Protestants and with Roman Catholics on an array of controversial issues.\textsuperscript{137}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{135} A briefe examination, *4r-v.
\textsuperscript{137} The phrase is Patrick Collinson's, in The Birthpangs of Protestant England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 143.
\end{footnotesize}
Second, while not seeking to minimize the importance of the debate over authority in the vestiarian controversy, I have attempted to shift the interpretative focus away from authority and towards the debate over Protestant evangelistic strategy. For Protestants, the vestiarian controversy was not only a debate about who (or what) should have authority in the Church of England, but also a debate about how they should best minister to (edify) the people of England. While it is well known that puritans feared the "offense" that would be given by vestments, it has been insufficiently acknowledged that the leader of early Elizabethan "Conformity" defended the vestments as a valuable weapon in the Church of England's evangelical arsenal. These were radically different understandings of how Protestants should relate to England's Catholic majority and represented an ideological divide as significant as the divide over authority.

Recognizing this dimension of the debate gives us a fuller understanding of what was at stake in the vestments controversy, but in conclusion, I also want to suggest that it can enable us to understand the development of puritanism in Tudor England in new and productive ways. For much of its history, Puritanism was defined in terms of non-conformity and opposition to the Church of England. Its sources and origins were naturally sought, therefore, in the history of Protestant non-conformity. The vestiarian controversy plays an important role in this narrative: the puritan opposition to vestments is seen as the culmination of a series of "proto-puritan" moments, in which figures like John Hooper or the "Knoxians" refused to conform to the Church of England on theological and biblical principle. Thanks to the pathbreaking work of Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake, however, it has become increasingly clear that non-conformity was only one possible manifestation of the underlying puritan pursuit of "edification."\textsuperscript{138} Puritans who were critical of the vestments did not necessarily become non-conformists -- indeed, the majority did not -- often

instead reaching accommodations with their ecclesiastical superiors that enabled them to remain within the Church of England, pursue their evangelistic and pastoral missions, and keep their scruples relatively intact. This phenomenon can be seen in a number of instances during the vestiarian controversy. When Richard Turner, Simon Clark, and Robert Pownolds pledged their conformity at the Chapterhouse in Canterbury in 1566, they did so on the following conditions: first, that they be given the chance to speak to their congregations “for their quyetnes concernynge our conformytie…that the offence maye be the lesse to us warde,” and second, that they be released from conformity when “travelynge abrode to preache, as in respect of the greate offence that therby may growe unto many,” and third, that they be released from wearing the square cap entirely.

Turner, Clark, and Pownolds conformed on the condition that their actions would not offend their congregations – hence their refusal to wear vestments in places where they had less control over how their actions were interpreted. We can see a similar dynamic at work in the pledged conformity of George Withers to Archbishop Parker. Withers had been a vocal opponent of the surplice at Cambridge, but was now willing to conform because “the townesmen of Burie, whose offence I chiefly feared haue ben earnestly in hande with me rather to weare a cappe then to forsake them promising moreover never yᵉ more to regarde it or esteame it for my wearinge of it.”

This assurance removed Wither’s concern that his conformity would be an “offence unto yᵉ godlie” or a “stommblinge blocke & an occasion of fallinge” to those who might doubt the gospel he had had

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139 While the majority of London non-conformists were not ultimately deprived, Brett Usher has pointed out that there is little evidence to support the standard assumption that they retained their positions through conformity; indeed, the jurisdictional jumble of the Elizabethan Church made the imposition of conformity from the center nearly impossible, with powerful lay and episcopal patrons able to protect clergy from the necessity of conformity. See Usher, "The Deanery of Bocking," 452-454; Brett Usher, "Edward Brocklesby: 'the first put out of his living for the surplice'" in Stephen Taylor (ed.), From Cranmer to Davidson (Aldershot, 1999), 62; also see Kenneth Fincham, “Clerical Conformity from Whitgift to Laud” in Lake and Questier (eds.), Conformity and Orthodoxy, 125-127.

140 Declaration of conformity by Turner, Clark, and Pownolds, 8 September 1566, LPL MS 3470, f. 17r.

141 Withers to Parker, 24 May 1565, Petyt MS 538/47, f. 320r.
preached were he to wear the surplice.\textsuperscript{142} This sort of compromise was at the heart of "moderate Puritanism," a compromise that "allowed the puritan minister to maintain both his membership of the national church and his identity as a member of the godly party within the church.\textsuperscript{143}

As non-conformity has become increasingly epiphenomenal to our understanding of puritanism, however, the explanatory power of puritanism's traditional origins story has become significantly diluted. If we wish to understand the origins of puritanism, we need to go beyond the history of non-conformity and provide an account of the development of the motives, attitudes, and patterns of thought that would underwrite puritan self-understanding and activism in Elizabethan England. By highlighting the continuities between early Elizabethan puritanism and the Marian Protestant ethic of Anti-Nicodemism, this chapter tells part of that story. While early Protestant non-conformity was an essential part of the history of puritanism -- and the puritans themselves certainly thought it was -- we should also see puritanism as a product of long-standing attitudes within English Protestantism about the ethical and evangelistic responsibilities of "the godly" towards their neighbors: the "weaker brethren," the "neuters," and the "papists."

\textsuperscript{142} Petyt MS 538/47, f. 320r.
\textsuperscript{143} Lake, \textit{Moderate Puritans}, 48.