

What New Learning is This?:  
Examining William Turner and his *Comparison Betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe*

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**Abstract**

William Turner remains an understudied figure of Reformation scholarship. He was a dedicated doctor, scientist, and Lutheran reformer. This thesis examines Turner and his place in the history of ideas. It looks closely at his three editions of *A Comparison Betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe* (1537, 1538, 1548) and explores how these texts fit into the history of ideas and reflect the larger religious debate occurring in England in the 16th century. It also explores Turner's connection to the German reformer Urbanus Rhegius, illuminating a connection between the continental and English reformers.

*For Mom-Mom.  
Thank you for the gift of language.*

## Acknowledgments

I knew when I began this endeavor that it would be a larger project than any I had previously committed to. I did not know, however, just how much work it would entail or how much enjoyment I would get from the work. A part of that enjoyment came from working alongside so many excellent minds – minds to which I owe a considerable debt.

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## Preface

A short distance from the Tower of London, a small church sits quietly surrounded by towering modern structures. Before their construction, a person exiting the church would have almost certainly viewed the Tower and the Thames. Buried at this church, St. Olave's by name, is one William Turner, a naturalist, physician, doctor, and priest, best known for "laying the foundations both of botany and of ornithology."<sup>1</sup> Born around 1510 and dying in 1568, Turner lived his life in one of the most tumultuous periods of English history pursuing his love of nature, identifying and describing plants and birds in several influential texts that shaped natural history in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His three part *Herball* (1551, 1562, 1568) was both extremely popular and widely influential among the burgeoning scientific community.<sup>2</sup> Turner also devoted a large portion of his life serving the causes of the early English Protestant reformers. A devoted Lutheran, Turner fled England twice in his lifetime to avoid imprisonment, possibly even execution. He published several polemical religious works, including *The Huntynge of the Romyshe Wolfe* (1543) and *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* (1555), which earned him both support and animosity from within the Church. *Romyshe Wolfe* grew from his exposure to a continental author and fellow Lutheran, Urbanus Rhegius. Malcolm Jones has shown Turner's *The Huntynge of the Romyshe Wolfe* found inspiration in the frontispiece of

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1. Whitney R.D. Jones, "Turner, William," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford UP) 2004, par. 14.
  2. Jones, W. par. 8. Jones writes of Turner's scientific writings: "His striking and evocative imagery ranges from the nest building of the robin in his Northumberland youth to the spectacle of storks nesting on chimney tops in Germany ... his observations extend from his native Northumbria to the Portland peninsula, the Thames above London, Lower Germany, and East Friesland" (par. 9).

Rhegius' *Wie man die falschen propheten erkenne ia greiffen mag* (1539).<sup>3</sup> Turner knew of Rhegius earlier, however, as Turner was also a dedicated translator and among his translations is *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyge and the Newe* (1537), a faithful translation of Rhegius' *Novae Doctrinae ad Veterem Collatio* (1526).

*A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyge and the Newe* does not occupy a large place in literary history, nor does it break new intellectual grounds. Neither does it represent a foundational document in Reformation history as do Luther's *95 Theses* and the *Augsburg Confession- al*. What *Comparison* does represent is the shifting of ideas and re-formation of the church occurring in England at that time. The text gathers those ideas and organizes them into an imaginary dialog of faiths. Additionally, it witnesses to a point of view that wanted to avoid dividing the Church. In the best spirit of reformation, *Comparison* suggests a look at twenty-one Christian doctrines and rituals in an effort to justify the reformers' position that they were both valid and true members of holy church. It is with *Comparison* and William Turner that this thesis concerns itself.

Chapter One establishes Turner's background as a reformation writer and brings to light much of his religious career, which included the Deanship of Well's Cathedral. A summary of his life and his major works places him in historical context, and a critical look at one of his final works explores his personal theology. Most scholarship focuses on Turner's career as an herbalist and a doctor. Although his scientific and medical backgrounds figure in this project in certain

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3. Malcolm Jones, "The Lambe Speaketh.... An Addendum." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 63 (2000): 290.



ways, I am more concerned with examining his ecclesiastical career and influence and I am particularly interested in the way Rhegius' *Novae Doctrinae* evolves after Turner translates it into English.

I devote a portion of Chapter Two to *Comparison*'s continental author, Urbanus Rhegius, and his relation to Turner. Also in this chapter, I closely examine the 1537 and 1538 editions of *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe* and its place as a transitional work of literature demonstrating the split in religious thought occurring in Turner's lifetime. I argue the text results from the epistemological differences resulting from the Continental Reformation which were then carried to England and assimilated by the reforming thinkers already in place, remnants of Wycliffe's Lollards and other religious thinkers. *Comparison* appears just after the flashpoint of the English Reformation and represents, in a relatively small space, the larger debate occurring between the faithful.

In Chapter Three, I turn to the 1548 reissue of *Comparison*, retitled *The Olde Learnyng and the New, Compared Together Wherby it May Easely be Knowen Which of Them is Better and More Agreyng Wyth the Euerlasting Word of God Newly Corrected and Augmented By Wyllyam Turner*. Turner's reissue, like the 1538 edition, reflects the evolving nature of the larger religious debate. *The Olde Learnyng and the New* foregoes the relatively objective tone of the earlier edition and directly attacks specific people within the Catholic Church Turner believes culpable of spreading false doctrine. This chapter looks critically at the rhetorical structure of Turner's text, examining his presentation to his audience, and demonstrates Turner's style of

writing being influenced by the relative frustration he felt with the then Protestant religious situation in England with King Edward on the throne.

Included in two appendices are the 1537 introduction to *A Comparison between the Olde Learnyge and the New* and the 1548 introduction to *The Olde Learnyge and the Newe*. Appendix One is a critical edition based on a collation of both the 1537 and 1538 editions of Turner's text. The appendices give an example of the coming critical edition of the entire text which I will pursue in the coming years. The collation process in this case is a limited one. I used two extant witnesses for the collation process, the 1537 and 1538 edition of the text housed at the British Library. I have annotated significant events, passages, and variants. My copy-text for Appendix I is the 1537 edition held at the British Library, shelf-mark c.25.a.5. Should the 1537 and 1538 editions vary on spellings, I preserve the earlier spelling. Exceptions to this are footnoted. Appendix II is an annotated transcription of the 1548 text held at the British Library. For the final critical edition, I will compare these witnesses to other extant copies in order to generate the critical text. Abbreviations have been silently expanded and the original spellings have been retained to preserve the flavor of the text except in the cases of the long 's', 'vv', 'u' for 'v', and 'i' for 'j', which I have modernized for readability. Punctuation and the inclusion of paragraphs have been silently regularized and modernized for readability and I converted roman numerals to their arabic equivalents for clarity.

## A Note on the Text

*A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe* appeared in three separate editions. The printer James Nicoleson printed the first edition in 1537, “translated out of latin in Englysh by Wyliam Turner.”<sup>4</sup> I made efforts to locate all surviving witnesses and compiled the following list. Note the list does not include microfilm or digital facsimiles. The Pollard and Redgrave edition of the *English Short Title Catalog* list five surviving witnesses of this edition. Two of these are listed as residing in the British Library; however, I was able to locate only one, shelf-mark c.25.a.5.<sup>5</sup> The other, listed as c.192.a.129, was not locatable. The library had no book listed under that shelf-mark, and all my efforts to find the second text were unsuccessful. On my return to the States, I conversed via email with Malcom Majoram at the British Library. He located the second witness, a recent purchase by the British Library which had not been entered into the catalog. He has done so and assures me it is now available. The remaining 1537 editions are held at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. A second edition of the text appeared the following year and survives in four copies at the British Library, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge University Gonville and Caius College, and the Folger Shakespeare Library. The final edition, published in 1548 by Robert Stoughton under the title *The Olde Learnyng and the*

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4. Urbanus Rhegius, *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe*, trans. William Turner (Southwarke: James Nicolson, 1537), frontispiece.
  5. This copy has one feature of special note. The letters ‘W.T.’ appear in blue pen written on the book’s edge opposite the spine. I could not verify who ‘W.T.’ was as the British Library kept no records as to the book’s origins. The book dates from William Turner’s lifetime. Perhaps the initials are his own.

*New, Compared Together Wherby it May Easely be Knowen Which of Them is Better and More Agreyng Wyth the Euerlasting Word of God Newly Corrected and Augmented By Wyllyam Turner*, boasts the most surviving copies, eleven in total. In the United States, copies of the text are held by the Huntington Library in California, the Yale University Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the libraries of the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The additional five witnesses remain in England at the British Library, the Bodleian, Peterborough Cathedral, St. Mary's Seminary, and Cambridge Library.

Chapter One:  
The Anatomy of Dr. William Turner

“Whan our saueoure in the fyrst of Marke had caste out of a man an uncleane spyрте, the Jewes were astonyed, sayenge: what new learnynge is this?” – so opens William Turner’s *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe*.<sup>1</sup> The question asked by the Jews would not have seemed a strange one to Turner’s readers. Everywhere they looked, new learning seemed to be thrust upon them.<sup>2</sup> Turner after all, translated Urbanus Rhegius’ Latin *Novae doctrinae ad veterem collatio* into English in 1537, only two years after Henry VIII’s pivotal Act of Supremacy and formal break with the Roman Church. It was the age in which, “a new ecclesiastical figure had arisen, the king as ‘Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of England’ with powers so great as even to include the definition of dogma.”<sup>3</sup> It was the age in which religious malcontents could very well lose their heads. Turner seemed willing to take such a risk and spent several years of his life outside of England in exile as a result. Benjamin Daydon Jackson argues Turner even spent some time in prison for his reformist theology, perhaps for his “refusal to sub-

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1. Rhegius, *Comparison* (1537) *recto sig.* A.ii. Bibliographic references to the 1537/38 edition attribute the work to Rhegius. To avoid confusion, references to the English text in this thesis as “Turner’s” means to signify him as the translator.
  2. It is important to note the problematic semantics of the phrase ‘new learning.’ Allen Chester makes a note of the problems associated with this term in his “The New Learning. A Semantic Note” in *Studies in Renaissance Literature* (1955). The term’s modern usage connotes the rediscovery of Greco-Roman texts and their integration into the educational and public spheres during the Renaissance. Chester argues the Renaissance usage referred exclusively to church doctrine. ‘New learning’ was the term applied by both Protestant and Roman Church supporters to discredit their opposition. For this thesis, ‘new learning’ is used to denote Catholic acceptance of the writings of Church fathers and canon law during the Reformation.
  3. J.R.H. Moorman, *A Church History of the Church in England*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973) 179.

scribe to the Statute of the Six Articles.”<sup>4</sup> Turner did manage to survive the period, however, and lived his life passionately pursuing both his love for the natural world and his passion for reforming the Church.

*i. Turner’s Life*

William Turner was born around 1510 to a tanner in Morpeth, Northumberland.<sup>5</sup> Exactly when he moved south is not known, but Turner was studying at Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1526. At Pembroke, “he proceeded BA in 1529-30, was elected fellow of Pembroke in 1531 and made junior treasurer in 1532; he commenced MA in 1533, before becoming Pembroke’s senior treasurer in 1538.”<sup>6</sup> Turner’s time at Cambridge, with its share of Protestant supporters, would deeply influence his religious beliefs for the rest of his life. Just a few years before Turner’s study, according to J.R.H. Moorman, the University hosted Robert Barnes, Thomas Bilney, and John Firth, all discussing the works of Luther. Moorman also speculates these Protestant discussion groups included, “a group of future bishops and archbishops ... Thomas Cranmer, Matthew Parker, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley.”<sup>7</sup> Whitney Jones’ biography of Turner

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4. Benjamin Daydon Jackson, introduction to *Libellus De Re Herbaria Novus*, by William Turner (London: 1877). ii. Jackson mentions some scholars believe Turner recanted his position in order to save his life. Jackson finds this to be inconsistent with Turner’s character, as do I. The historical and textual evidence concerning Turner offers no evidence to suggest Turner ever backed down from his beliefs.
  5. Jones, W., Headnote. The biographical information found in this chapter focuses heavily on Turner’s ecclesiastical career while largely ignoring his contributions to the sciences. Jones’ biography of Turner offers a much more complete picture of Turner the scientist.
  6. Jones, W., par. 1.
  7. Moorman, 163.

specifically mentions the latter two, calling Ridley a “friend” and Latimer “deeply influ-  
enc[ial].”<sup>8</sup> Bishop Thomas Tanner places the young Turner directly under the tutelage of Latimer  
in his history of the period.<sup>9</sup>

Turner probably identified himself with the Protestant reformers more than with ortho-  
doxy by the mid-1530s, though he does take deacon’s orders in 1536. The following year, Turn-  
er translated and published Rhegius’ *Novae Doctrinae ad Veterum Collatio* (1526) under the title  
*A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe*. Included in his translation are two  
additions to the original text, an epigraph and an appendix, the latter entitled, “To the Christen  
reader.” Translating the work of a known reforming thinker hardly befitted a new deacon of the  
Church. I can only speculate, but Turner’s orders may have been purely for dramatic effect;  
labeling anyone’s personality tends to be problematic. Whitney Jones, however, says of Turner:

Alongside Turner’s considerable academic achievements went an idiosyncratic  
personality. At Wells, he trained his little dog to leap up and snatch off the corner-  
cap of a bishop at table. A handsome and witty man, he did not suffer fools  
gladly....<sup>10</sup>

If Turner’s Protestant loyalties were ever in question, he left no room for doubt in 1540 when he  
broke his vow of chastity and married Jane Alder, then fled England in 1541 after he was sum-

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8. Jones, W., par. 1.

9. Thomas Tanner, *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica*, (London: William Bowyer, 1748) 726.

10. Jones, W., par. 14.

moned to appear before an ecclesiastical court.<sup>11</sup> It seems unlikely this summons involved his decision to marry as England was officially Protestant by 1540. Turner's choice to flee most likely arose as a result of his views conflicting with King Henry's.

In what would be the first of two exiles, Turner found his way to Italy to complete his M.D., most likely at the University of Bologna, before traveling north where his journeys finally deposited him in Germany, specifically Zürich, a hotbed of reformation thinking.<sup>12</sup> Jones considers Turner's time in Zürich of double significance to Turner's intellectual development. "On reaching Zürich," writes Jones,

Turner met Conrad Gesner, the greatest of mid-sixteenth-century naturalists, with whom he established a lifelong rapport. His sojourn in Zürich may well be doctrinally significant, for this had been the city of Zwingli, the continental reformer whose views, together with those of Bucer, Turner found most congenial. Two decades later it was to Zwingli's successor, Heinrich Bullinger, that Turner and his kindred spirits in the vestiarian controversy were to appeal.<sup>13</sup>

Also at this time, Turner writes *The Huntyng & Fyndyng out of the Romishe Foxe*, a deeply critical look at Stephen Gardiner.<sup>14</sup> In addition to *The Huntyng & Fyndyng out of the Romishe Foxe*,

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11. Jones, W., par. 1.

12. Jones, W., par. 3.

13. Jones, W., par. 3.

14. Bishop Stephen Gardiner (c.1497-1555) served as Lord Chancellor during the reign of Queen Mary I. Gardiner acted as emissary to the Pope on behalf of King Henry VIII in his unsuccessful attempts to have his first marriage annulled.



he composes “another anti-Gardiner religious polemic in 1545” and finds himself “in a condemnatory royal proclamation in 1546.”<sup>15</sup> These texts and various other “small religious books ... were eagerly read by his countrymen, so much so that in the last year of the reign of Henry VIII his works were prohibited, as disseminating doctrines repugnant to His Majesty’s views.”<sup>16</sup> What specific doctrines Henry objected to in Turner’s writings are not recorded, however the official decree banned “such Englishe bookes as containe pernicious and detestable erroures and heresies ... or any other books containing mater contrary to the Kinges maiesties booke, called, *A necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christian man, &c*”<sup>17</sup> The reason for Turner’s exile and alienation might have resulted from Turner’s religious theology. It may be possible that Henry objected to Turner’s insistence on the elimination of Romanist elements from English religious services. In his later work, most notably *A New Book of Spiritual Physik*, Turner is highly critical of the king’s divorce and the king himself. While no concrete evidence has come to light of Turner voicing the same opinions early in his career, if Turner made similar accusations before his exile that would explain the ban on his writings. Whatever the precise reason for the ban, Turner does not return to England until after Henry’s death.

Turner’s homecoming, however, did not find him a changed man. His exile did nothing to stem his religious fervor. His return also saw him make several attempts to become more politically involved as well. A reference in *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* (1555) insinuates he

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15. Jones, W., par. 3; Jackson, iv-v.

16. Jackson, ii.

17. Qtd. in Jackson xviii.

might have sat in the House of Commons, though Jackson seems inclined to believe it refers to “the Lower House of Convocation.”<sup>18</sup> Jones and Jackson cite failed attempts in 1550 “to become provost of Oriel College, Oxford, and president of Magdelen, as part of a struggle to get protestant evangelicals into positions of influence.”<sup>19</sup> He was more successful, however, in returning to the church life he left behind after his marriage. In February 1550, Turner became the prebend of Botevant after an appeal to William Cecil.<sup>20</sup> The young Edward VI named Turner dean of Well’s cathedral in 1551.<sup>21</sup> As the new dean, he traveled around the country preaching and studying botany; he published part one of his *Herball* that same year. His relative success abruptly ended with Queen Mary’s accession in 1553 and Turner finds himself exiled once again. His second exile returned him to the European continent, mainly to Cologne, Worms, and Weissenburg, where he “writes another anti-Gardiner diatribe,” *The Huntyng of the Romyshe Wolfe*, and a much more interesting text, *A Newe Booke of Spiritual Physik*.<sup>22</sup> Jones calls the latter, “the fullest exposition of Turner’s chagrin at England’s failure to establish the social values and ideals of a Christian

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18. Jackson, iii.

19. Jones, W., par. 4; Jackson, iii-iv.

20. Jackson, iii.

21. Jackson, iii. Turner’s transition to the deanery never went smoothly. His original appointment removed John Goodman from the same position. Goodman later regained Wells upon Queen Mary’s accession only to lose it again to Turner at the order of Elizabeth I.

22. Jones, W., par. 5.

commonwealth.”<sup>23</sup> Turner’s exile lasted for the duration of Mary’s five year reign and he again found his works banned.

Elizabeth I’s court allowed Turner’s return to England and he picked up his life, with some difficulty, where he left off. Elizabeth saw to it the deanery of Wells was returned to him, but its previous occupant did vacate the seat willingly.<sup>24</sup> Turner spent his final years mainly preaching and writing. Jones notes that Turner preached at St. Paul’s Cross and finished the last two parts of his *Herball*.<sup>25</sup> His bent for controversy continued as well; many of his fellow clerics did not welcome him back with open arms. He actively opposed clerics who felt themselves superior to the laity. Archbishop Matthew Parker mentions in one correspondence, “that Turner of Wells hath enjoined a common adulterer to do his penance in a square priest’s cap.”<sup>26</sup> Turner vocally opposed ‘papist vestments’ in the English church which brought him into conflict with many people, including his own bishop, a dispute which became known as the vestiarian controversy. According to Jackson’s research, “In March, 1564, Turner was suspended for nonconformity ... [when he] resolutely declined to adopt the prescribed [clerical] garments” – a suspension that apparently caused Turner to return to London.<sup>27</sup> He also criticized the practice of withhold-

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23. Jones, W., par. 5.

24. Elizabeth knew Turner when she was still Princess Elizabeth. The two “conversed in Latin” when Turner lived in Kew and served as the Earl of Somerset’s physician (Jackson iii). Elizabeth certainly made Turner comfortable when he returned; the deanery’s income in 1563 totaled £151 6s. 8d (Jackson vi).

25. Jones, W., par. 8.

26. Jackson, vi.

27. Jackson, vii.

ing the sacramental wine from the laity during Communion. In the 1548 introduction to *The Olde and the Newe Compared Together*, Turner specifically addresses this issue.<sup>28</sup> Towards the end of his life, even his substantial contributions to scientific scholarship came under fire from his critics. Jones adds near the end of Turner's biography, "sniping protests from those within the diocese who saw him not as scholar but carpet-bagger persisted until Turner's death."<sup>29</sup> That death came on 7 July 1568. Turner's interment came two days later at St. Olave's on Hart Street, London.

William Turner's contributions to science go unquestioned. His *Herball* alone secured his position there. Whitney Jones names him "a naturalist of the first rank," but I disagree with Jones' conclusion that Turner's "permanent mark" in religion "was not so great."<sup>30</sup> Turner did not achieve the recognition of Latimer, Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli in so far as he did not become the leader of any major Protestant movement. Yet he did actively engage his efforts in documenting and *living* in the period. He sought to understand and affect the changes occurring around him. Many of his religious works engaged issues of the day central to life in England at the time. He was a man caught up in a very strange day, and his writings show his struggle to make sense of, critique, and influence these changes happening around him. His tenacious and meticulous writings illustrate a great deal of passion for the truth he believed in, and he was not hesitant to

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28. William Turner, *The Olde Learnynge and the New, Compared Together Wherby it May Easely be Knowen Which of Them is Better and More Agreyng Wyth the Euerlasting Word of God Newly Corrected and Augmented By Wylliam Turner*. (London: Robert Stoughton, 1548) *recto sig. Aiii*.

29. Jones, W., par. 6.

30. Jones, W., par. 14.

publish scathing criticisms of people he believed to be living outside of the will and teachings of God, regardless of social rank. Even King Henry and Queen Mary were not outside his polemics.

*ii. Turner's Theology*

Obviously no historical guesswork concerning a figure's personality can do that figure justice; however, something of Turner's theological personality might be reconstructed from his last polemic, *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* (1555). The selection of this text stems from its position near the end of Turner's literary career and at the point in his life in which his doctrinal beliefs manifest most strongly and bluntly. Turner's *Physik* represents one of his final efforts to influence change in the English religious climate. He pulls no stops, nor makes any apologies for the harsh criticisms it presents. The text illustrates a profound sense of hope in the possible future England might enjoy if only the governors of the land will dedicate themselves to the work necessary to rid England of the sickness he believes infects it. "I wil proue by good autorite," he states in his introduction, "and reason that [the English gentry] are sick, although thei do not, nor can not, perceiue and see their owne sicknes."<sup>31</sup> He employs Aristotelian logic to help make his case and approaches the various illnesses as a physician offers advice to a suffering patient; he offers hope for the cure and vividly describes the consequences for failing to follow his advice.

As the title suggests, the text presents itself as a manual for the curing of disease "made by William Turner doctor of Physik."<sup>32</sup> Turner begins his piece with a clear recognition of the

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31. William Turner, *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* (Rome: Marcus Antonius Constantius, 1555). *recto sig. B2*.

32. Turner, *Physik*, frontispiece.

controversial nature of his text by begging for the protection and patronage of ten separate English nobles to whom the book is dedicated.<sup>33</sup> His prose attains a degree of playfulness uncommon in Reformist texts. He enjoins these powerful men, “be patrones and defenders of this my lytle boke onely so farre as it agreeth with natural reason, and wyth the wrytten worde of God.”<sup>34</sup> In what can only be read as tongue-in-cheek, Turner continues, “Yf that any wise and learned man can reprove and justly overcome any thyng that I have wrytten in thys booke, wyth reason and Scripture, I wyll amende it that is amyse.”<sup>35</sup> Despite such confidence, Turner certainly stood to need powerful protection. His text harshly attacks the memories of Henry VII and VIII, not to mention the queen mother and the reigning Queen Mary. The reader should not be surprised to learn Turner writes *A New Booke of Spiritual Physik* in exile, nor should they be surprised to know his works were twice banned under two separate rulers. He quite openly writes at one point:

Ye maye se my lordes and maisters, that thys man [the author, Turner] calleth and judgeth Quene Katherin, to be none of kynge Henries lawfull wyfe, whych sayeng conteyneth in it, that Kynge Henry the eyght, was an inestuus horemaister, that

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33. Turner dedicates and addresses *Physik* to the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and the Earls of Arundel, Derby, Shrewsbury, Huntington, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Pembroke, and Warwick.

34. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. A3.

35. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. A3.

Quene Katherine was an hore, and that Mary theyr daughter nowe Quene, is a  
bastarde.<sup>36</sup>

Such an open statement printed in 1555 suggests Turner felt safe from any royal attempts to silence him for speaking so critically of the deceased monarch. Thomas More, after all, was executed (albeit as a last resort) for refusing to recognize the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn as legitimate. Turner does no less here. By denying the lawfulness of Henry's marriage, Turner also calls into question Mary's right to rule; an unforgivable slight. What is more, *Physik* was written and published in English, not Latin. Turner believed that by doing so, his works would be available to the largest number of English readers. In exile, he believed himself out of reach of Mary's authority. Apparently he was right.

Such boldness also appears in the doctrinal beliefs that he expounds in the not so subtle metaphor of physical ailments. Turner in fact, chooses four specific ailments to diagnose and treat: "the hole Palsey, the Dropsey, the Romyshe pockes, and the Lepre" – all diseases of interest.<sup>37</sup> Each disease displays a specific, physical outward sign by which one can detect the inward spiritual disease. No doubt Turner wanted anyone reading his work to apply his treatments not only to their own lives, but to look for the signs in others as well, perhaps as a means of identifying both friendly Protestant allies and Catholic adversaries. A physical sign removes the guesswork involved in discovering another's religious beliefs. The symptoms themselves mirror those

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36. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* [F6].

37. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* [A7].

identifying the physical illness to a physician. For example, the Romish pox displays two outward signs, the second of which is a shaved head. Look to the head of your priest, Turner enjoins,

For there is not one gentleman of the clergie, that hath the Romyshe pokkes, in the hole realme of Englande, that hath his hole heade covered wyth heere, but one patche is bare.<sup>38</sup>

A follically challenged priest would certainly be easily recognizable. These physical signs also allowed for a self-diagnosis (with the aid of Turner's book) for his readers.

*Physik's* readers were a carefully selected demographic as well. Turner's plea to the British nobility was more than a simple desire for patronage. He writes *Physik* specifically to a noble and gentlemanly audience, even taking care to define what a gentleman is in his opening chapter: "an excelient persone ether in qualities of body or mynde, or one that is comed of noble paretes and forefathers, ordened and promoted of God alone."<sup>39</sup> By his own admission, his choice of audience reflects the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes chapter ten – "As the governer of the cytie is: so are also they that dwell in it."<sup>40</sup> By addressing the nobility, not the clergy, whom he feels are largely unreachable or too far gone, nor the laity, who are largely illiterate or concerned more with survival, Turner seeks to influence change within the upper middle class. This class would

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38. Turner *Physik*, verso sig L2.

39. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. B4.

40. Turner *Physik*, recto sig. A3.



stand the best chance of spearheading change. They could influence the clergy through their patronage and gifts to the church, by coercion if necessary. So too, the nobility were bound by *noblesse oblige* to lead by example and pass the laws that governed the land.

Turner sets up his ‘body’ of England like that of a physical patient. The laity represent the mass of the body, the torso and limbs, while the nobility represent the body’s neck and the Queen its head. Turner specifically names the ten gentlemen to whom he writes for patronage, “the heade of all the noblitie in England under the Quene.”<sup>41</sup> The failure to mention the clergy as part of this body is undoubtedly a slight to the now-Catholic religious leaders. Yet, he continues to hold the Queen, even a Catholic one, at the pinnacle of the body politic. This could well be a simple recognition of the political facts of English life. It might also indicate that, despite his dislike of the reigning monarch, Turner was not yet entirely able to abandon the notion that the Queen was placed in her position by divine right and, by God’s ordination, held that honor even if she failed to follow God’s laws. If this is indeed behind Turner’s reluctance, it testifies to the Tudor expression of the divine right of kings that subjects should passively accept a monarch’s failings because God placed them in power.

Extrapolating Turner’s doctrinal beliefs from *Physik* is not difficult; he certainly speaks clearly enough. Nevertheless, explicitly stating these beliefs is a worthwhile endeavor and a necessary one in order to fully understand and appreciate his adamant, even extremist Lutheranism. In the first place, Turner clearly advocates the value and necessity of holding a vernacular Mass

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41. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* A4.

and offer translations of Latin texts, including the Bible, for common understanding. Turner often cites Latin passages, but always immediately follows those passages with their English equivalent – a practice Turner explicitly relates to the transmission of “Truth.” Turner believes a non-vernacular text seeks only to deceive. If an English writer presents a Latin work it is because, “he knoweth in hys conscience that it is a false booke, and a heretical boke,” a conviction that was most likely the original inspiration of Turner’s translations early in his career.<sup>42</sup> Continental works like Rhegius’, whom Turner obviously admired, needed to be available in English in order to be valid. *Physik* includes numerous Latin quotes, mostly Biblical quotations, which Turner faithfully translates. He even adds his own barbed disclaimer to one extended Latin quote:

But yf I shoulde leue thys latine not turned into English I wolde be aferde that some unlearned persones shulde abuse thys my wrytyng, as Popyshe sacrificeyng prestes and the comon popyshe sorte of the unlearned people, abuse the physicke of Christ written in latin.<sup>43</sup>

Such a strong insistence on a vernacular approach to religious matters also agrees with his insistence on self-education and exploration of religious knowledge. His first disease, in fact, is a spiritual palsy that manifests as a lack of knowledge culminating in an inability to speak anything new for oneself, relying instead on the sayings of others – a terminal disease if not treat-

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42. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. G4.

43. Turner *Physik*, recto sig. [17].

ed.<sup>44</sup> Turner's cure prescribes study and education leading to a renewing of the mind and attainment of wisdom. The final chapter of *Physik* insists that true gentlemen who find themselves the guardian of idle youths should "put them to the scole and holde them at it untyl they be ether preachers, lawyers, or phisicians."<sup>45</sup> It would have undoubtedly pleased him to learn his widow established a Cambridge scholarship in his honor.<sup>46</sup>

Turner's own study and interpretation of the Bible certainly led him to challenge many Catholic doctrines. He clearly supports the Protestant belief in *sola fide*, salvation only through faith. In his appendix to *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe*, Turner writes, "I declare the maner of justificacyon, remission of synnes, and salvacyon, whiche in scripture are all one thyng ... which is of the fayth on Jesus."<sup>47</sup> He rejected the outward vestments, rituals, and extravagances of priestly office. I have already mentioned his cap stealing dog and his involvement in the vestiarian controversy. He labels the Roman eucharist ceremony a danger to men of faith. In *Physik*, Turner recommends those suffering the Romish pox should, "for the space of your lyfetye forbear from the Romyshe wyne and from the leven of the pharisees, whyche is conterfet holynes."<sup>48</sup> He also rejects the ability of the Catholic clergy to successfully lead their followers to Heaven: "But all they that worship God in vayne shalbe damned, and

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44. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. [G7].

45. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. [M5].

46. Jackson, x.

47. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), recto 'cross' sig. i.

48. Turner *Physik*, recto sig. [L7].

al Romyshe preachers worship God in vayne, therefore all Romyshe preachers shalbe damned ... [as] shall all they be damyned that beleve Romyshe preachynge.”<sup>49</sup> Such religious fervor, even extremism, reflects the Zwinglian theology he encountered during his exiles and evidences the effect of the continental reformers on Turner’s religiosity.

Such fervent extremism might well be written off and Turner forgotten. But Turner’s extremism was tempered by a deep-seated hope in the reform of the Church and the reestablishment of God’s city on a hill. Turner certainly believed there was hope for a new beginning and a new age of English spirituality. *Physik*’s treatment of the spiritual diseases all include “remedies” prescribed to cure the ailments. Turner claims all the diseases to be potentially fatal, but never incurable. Just as education cured the holy apoplexy, the second disease, dropsy, which manifests with outward trappings of nobility and a consuming materialist understanding of success and self-fulfillment, comes with a prescribed cure. The dropsy, writes Turner, often affects “stert uppes,” and not true noblemen.<sup>50</sup> Having made the disease manifest most often in upstarts and ingrates, Turner’s later claim that Henry “fell into a great dropsye” certainly comes with a sharp implication behind it.<sup>51</sup> The dropsy does not heal easily, and it “kylleth many a man and woman and it bryngeth not onely death, of both body and soule, but in the lyfe tyme mocketh men, and

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49. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. [L6].

50. Turner *Physik*, verso sig. [H3].

51. Turner *Physik*, recto sig. [D8].

bryneth men into false opinios.”<sup>52</sup> So hearty and aggressive a disease must needs a similar cure, and Turner’s cure comes as a hard pill to swallow. He writes:

Go to the churche and befyre a learned man to make a byter sermon agaynst covetousnes, of the whyche sermon, take one good draught, fastyng in the mornyng, and [another] an houre before supper, wyth an ounce of repentance, at eche tyme for the space of fourteen dayes, and then take 6 drames of the purgation, whych maye well be called, *biera zachei*, and it wyll scoure them that haveth dropsye ....<sup>53</sup>

He adds afterwards a mindful man will also find this cure in his local apothecary, if the apothecarian happens to be Luke: “Gyve the one halfe of al thy goodes the poore ...” ; he also adds, “Yf thys purgation be to stronge and to [*sic*] bitter ... then take lesse of it, and make equale restitution ....”<sup>54</sup> He ends his section on the dropsey with a guarantee that his cure will work “and also as longe as ye lyve, [you] shall never fal into it agayne.”<sup>55</sup>

Besides the tonsured head already mentioned in relation to the third spiritual disease already mentioned, the other symptom of the Romish pox comes in the form of the lack of a spiritual “nose.” Turner remarks that without such a nose, “they can speake nothyng of Goddes

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52. Turner *Physik, recto sig.* [B5].

53. Turner *Physik, recto sig.* [I5].

54. Turner *Physik, verso sig.* [I6].

55. Turner *Physik, recto sig.* [K7].

worde ... but snevel alwayes of wyl werkes, of pylgrimages, of yimages, of purgatory, of Masses<sup>56</sup>, and of Diriges ....”<sup>57</sup> Catching the pox, like catching the plague, is not difficult. It is readily available from Rome, “the hore of Bablio” who called the noblitie of Europe and England to her in order to “lye” with them and were so infected.<sup>58</sup> Turner’s play on ‘lye’ as both the spreading of falsehoods and a sexual act should not be overlooked. Whitney Jones remarks of Turner’s writings, “[his] exposition of protestant teachings alternates with sometimes scurrilous sexual imagery and coarsely textured abuse.”<sup>59</sup> As with all sexually transmitted diseases, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. Turner advocates a sort of spiritual abstinence, writing, “yf any man woulde be free fro the Romyshe pokkes, let hym nether eate nor drynke wyth these pokky marchauntes, ne ether suffer them to breath upo hym in theyr confession bootes.”<sup>60</sup> For those already afflicted with the disease, “take 6 drames of the bytter medicines of the turned forferers, and 4 unces of the ... water of lyfe. [M]ingle them together and warm them upon the coles of the decrees ... Clementines ... and of all the other suche popyshe bookes, well burnt into coles.”<sup>61</sup> Despite his often scathing criticisms, Turner does genuinely seem to care for the people to whom he writes and their spiritual well-being, undoubtedly the result of his own convictions and his

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56. Corrected from ‘Messses.’

57. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* [L].

58. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* [L3].

59. Jones, W., par. 11.

60. Turner *Physik*, *recto sig.* [L5].

61. Turner *Physik*, *verso sig.* [M].

dedication to medicine. Turner's faith in the Ecclesiastes Chapter Ten admonition suggests his hope for change, as does his insistence that an errant Christian could cure the diseases, no matter their severity, through repentance and dedication to the Truth of God's word. The cures may be bitter, but the best medicines generally are.

Taking *Physik* as an example, certain traits of Turner's personality might be construed. Turner was most certainly a Lutheran; his translation of Rhegius, adamant distrust of Latin texts, and his emphasis on the authority of the scripture all point towards the principles of reform advocated by Luther's *95 Theses*. Much of his life Turner spent writing and translating reformist texts and preaching the gospel. He actively involved himself in the Church. His Lutheranism was also tempered with some of Zwingli's influence. Spending portions of his exile in Zürich, he meets and befriends Heinrich Bullinger, the man who takes Zwingli's position after the latter's death.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly enough, Turner's appendix to *Comparison* also hints at Calvinist doctrine, specifically the doctrine of election. Turner posits, "God hath sent me hys worde and grace thorow his sprete to cause me [to] beleve it and therefore cōclud that he hath chosen me, and hath mercy unto me thorow Christ hys only son which is the [i]mage of the invisible God, fyrst begottē before all creatures."<sup>63</sup>

The modern disciplines of botany and ornithology add the label of scientist as well, despite what Turner's contemporaries said. The evidence also suggests extremism in Turner's the-

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62. Jones, W., par. 3.

63. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* 'cross' v.

ology in relation to others of his day. His tenacity and passion surely would have placed him at odds with the very people he hoped to reach. He certainly spent many years fleeing the most powerful of these adversaries. He rebelled against the Protestant, Anglican church on his return from exile; all traces of Catholicism were anathema and stood to harbor the corruption he felt deserved purgation. Yet Turner was not a fanatic – passionate surely, but not fanatic. There is no evidence that he ever became involved in the more violent “cleansings” of the Church, either while on the Continent or in England. For that, he should be applauded. Others acted with less restraint. Instead, he called for self-education and betterment as the means for spiritual change. I would like to think his control came from the hope that comes through in *Physik* and other works, a hope for a better future begun in his day.



Chapter Two:  
Translation and Transmission:  
*Novae Doctrinae* becomes *Comparison*

The young William Turner, fresh from Pembroke College, entered the literary arena with at least one major work of translation – the translation of a continental Protestant writer. This choice of subject matter suggests the young Turner already felt a strong calling towards reformist thought, due in part to his tutelage under Latimer. Turner, in the midst of such religious upheaval in England, elected to translate Urbanus Rhegius' *Novae Doctrinae ad Verterem Collatio* in 1537. Some sources also mention a second work of translation by Turner, Joachim von Watt's *Vom alten and neuen Gott*. Dr. Daydon Jackson lists this work as Turner's, as does the *Short Title Catalog*, but William Underwood believes this attribution to be erroneous:

The attribution to Turner appears to be wrong. The von Watt translation has a title similar to that of another book, which Turner did translate. This is *A comparison betwene the olde learnynge and the newe* (1537), by Urbanus Regius [*sic*]. ... The name of the Regius volume, and the short title of the von Watt, appear on adjacent lines in a list of banned books compiled by John Foxe. Foxe's editor inserts the name William Turner in brackets next to the Regius volume.<sup>1</sup>

Both the STC and Dr. Benjamin Jackson appear to have made the same mistake. Rhegius' text represents both Continental Reformist thought and addresses the religious divide in Europe.

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1. William Underwood, "Thomas Cromwell and William Marshall's Protestant Books," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004): 517-39.

Even the title hints at the perceived divide between orthodox and reformist thinking. Turner's selection of Rhegius' text seems unsurprising considering the religious and political climate in England in the sixteenth century. The executions of St. Thomas More in 1534 and Tyndale just afterwards was fresh on the minds of the whole of the English and especially on the minds of intellectuals. King Henry's annulment from Katherine and break from Rome had shaken the country's religious security and reforming voices grew louder and bolder with each passing day in the now Protestant political atmosphere. The faithful found themselves caught between two conflicting voices, both declaring themselves to be the straight way to Heaven. Turner's translation attempted to provide an answer to this conflict, and he looked to the continent, where the Reformation was already well under way, for that answer.

*i. Rhegius' text*

Turner saw in Urbanus Rhegius (1489-1541), *Novae Doctrinae's* continental author, a kindred spirit and fellow reformer devoted to the reestablishment of God's kingdom on Earth.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely Turner and Rhegius ever met; Turner did not flee to the Continent until the year of Rhegius' death. Although Turner and Rhegius never met personally, the two men were remarkably similar. Rhegius, like Turner, found himself writing and preaching in a fractious religious world; he writes *Novae doctrinae* just nine years after Luther's *95 Theses* and only four years before the seminal *Augsburg Confessional*, making his work a transitional piece of literature in a

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2. An authoritative biography of Rhegius has yet to be published. A useful biographical sketch appears in Douglas Brian Hampton's "Urbanus Rhegius and the Spread of the German Reformation" (PhD diss. Ohio State University, 1973).

very inflammatory period of Church history. Rhegius was not blind to the changes occurring around him, nor was he insensitive to the growing desire for vernacular texts. Only thirteen years after the publication of *Novae doctrinae*, Rhegius decided to publish in his native German. Like Turner, Rhegius sought to declare the obfuscated ‘truth’ of the Scriptures. Dr. Douglas Hampton writes, that Turner “declared his intention to serve as a pathfinder through the Scriptures, which had been obscured by glosses or neglected altogether.”<sup>3</sup> Though neither is remembered as a pivotal figure in religious change, a kinship between Rhegius and Turner in terms of their ultimate success in religious endeavors links the two. Hampton writes the following of Rhegius in his dissertation’s conclusion, and the same might well be said of Turner:

It is not Rhegius as a prime mover in theological disputation or ecclesiastical reform who is significant but rather Rhegius as a thoughtful man striving to comprehend the ideas of men more gifted than he, coping with the practical problems of institutional change, and performing his duties as a conscientious preacher and pastor. Viewed from this perspective, his career becomes a microcosm of the Reformation in the 1520’s.<sup>4</sup>

With such similar backgrounds and convictions, it is little wonder the younger Turner drew on Rhegius for the foundation of his own literary career. Rhegius engaged contemporary issues, ar-

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3. Hampton, 224.

4. Hampton, 226.

gued these issues with evidence from both sides, and allowed each reader to come to their own conclusions, and Turner followed his basic model.

How Turner came upon Rhegius' *Novae doctrinae* is not known, although Hugh Latimer may have suggested that he read it. Whatever the circumstances, Turner felt it important enough to translate, thereby making it available to a much wider English reading audience, renaming it, *A Comparison Betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe*. At the British Library, I spent some time comparing the Latin original to the English translation and have since acquired a copy of the former in facsimile. Turner's translation into English is largely faithful. For the 1537 publication and the 1538 reprint of *Comparison*, Turner adds a short epigraph between the book's contents and preface and a seven page appendix to its conclusion "that thou mayest the better understande (good reader) the artycles of fre wyll, fayth, Good workes, and ... Merytes."<sup>5</sup> Rhegius' core text remains largely unchanged. Like the Latin original, Turner's translation is divided into twenty-one chapters concerning a variety of doctrinal specifics: the sacraments, confession, free will, the Lord's supper, and the worshipping of saints for example. Each chapter is then sub-divided into 'the newe learnynge' (Roman orthodoxy) and 'the olde learnynge' (reformist doctrine based on *sole scriptura*). The purported purpose of the text is laid out quite clearly by Rhegius in the introduction:

Wherefore I, doynge the offyce of a christen brother, have made a comparyson  
betwene the newe learnynge and the olde, whereby, deare brother, thou maye

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5. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* 'cross.'

easily knowe whether we [the reformers] are called worthely or unworthely the preachers of new learnyng.<sup>6</sup>

The faithfulness of the translation is evidence of Turner's devotion to "Truth" and the presentation of that truth as accurately as possible. He would have avoided any accusations of preaching (or disseminating) falsehoods, and this extends to the fidelity of his translated text.

Rhegius develops a quasi-dialogic form, a rhetorical structure that separates his text from other, more polemical works. He arranges the text so as to present the ideas of both orthodox defenders and reformist thinkers in a relatively fair manner, sidestepping placing blame on individuals, relying instead on the reader's reason to ultimately arrive at the "truth." A casual reading of *Novae doctrinae* might easily reach the conclusion that the text is not in fact objective. *Novae doctrinae* exhibits a clear Protestant bias against Romanism. Some sections even come across as straw-man arguments, easily dismissed by Rhegius in his counter-argument. The most telling example of the straw-man appears in "Of Fastynge." The new learning states in full, "We must fast certayne dayes under the commandment, as the Apostles. Even the 4 ymbrynge [Harvest] dayes, and the lent."<sup>7</sup> The old learning continues for nearly four pages. Nevertheless, Rhegius does present both sides, and allows the reader to choose for him or herself which represents true doctrine, albeit with a clear bias.

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6. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* A.iii.

7. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *verso sig.* D7.

Rhegius wanted the reader to imagine two church leaders facing each other in a forum, each presenting his dogmatic position. Rhegius' speakers are neither named, nor explicitly described, but for the sake of clarity, I have named the characters the Priest, representative of the Catholic position, and the Pastor, speaking for the reformers. In this way, the opposing arguments as possessing the traits of different speakers will become much more obvious. The dialogic structure of these speakers is quite clear. Ultimately this descends from the form of Platonic dialog mediated through the rhetoric of Renaissance humanism.<sup>8</sup> The use of such a structure carries with it a traditional authority and a feeling of authenticity. The debate proceeds without ire or accusation; both characters argue what they believe and present evidence for the reader to consider. No overt judgement is made, nor does Rhegius allow deeply theological jargon. This in turn facilitates forward motion in the way the arguments unfold.

The Catholic Priest and the Reformist Pastor begin their dialog by discussing the Sacraments and their relation to salvation. The Priest claims that a combination of the Sacraments and good works are the chief instruments of salvation:

It is ynough and suffycient to receave the sacramentes effectually and with frute to have no stoppe nor let of deadly synne: And ther is not requyred in a man a good motion within hym whiche receaveth them, whereby of a congruence or of worthynes he maye deserve grace: for the sacramentes brynge grace with them of

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8. Petrarch's *Dialogues* were circulating and Erasmus' *Colloquies* was Rhegius' contemporary.

the worke that is wrought by them, or by the worke work itself: that is to saye because the worke is shewed and mynistred as a sygne or a sacrament.<sup>9</sup>

As evidence, the Priest cites Peter Lombard's *Book of Four Sentences*, "the forth boke in the fyrst distinction."<sup>10</sup> The Pastor replies,

The gospel witnesseth that we be saved not by an holy sygne, but thorow fayth. Gen[esis] 15: Abraham gave credence and beleved God that was rekened to hym for ryghteousness. Rom[ans] 4 [and] Rom[ans] 10: Yf an man beleve from the harte he shalbe made ryghteous. He sayeth not that with the body an holy sygne is taken unto ryghteousnesse. Also [H]abacuc 2 and Roma[ns] the fyrst. The juste shal lyve by his fayth. He sayeth not: He shal lyve by the sacramentes. If foloweth therefore after the olde learnynge, that fayth is necessary to be had in hym that receaveth the sacramentes with frute.<sup>11</sup>

The Priest and the Pastor's engagement with each other's arguments illustrates Rhegius' rhetorical technique as the old learning (Pastor) defaults to the authority of the Scripture while the new learning (Priest) prefers quoting the Church Fathers and canon law – a perfect model of the dialog of the faiths.

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9. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *verso sig.* A.v.

10. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *verso sig.* A.v. The passage alluded to in Lombard's book deals with the definition of the sacraments, their purpose, and their role in the mystery of salvation.

11. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* A.v.

The rhetorical impetus in this dialogic construction represents, as Dr. Hampton suggests, a “microcosm” of the larger argument occurring in the religious community. The leaders of the established Church did rely on the writings of the Church fathers, canon law, and tradition; the reformers relied on Scripture – Luther’s emphasis on *sola scriptura* is only the most famous example. In *Novae doctrinae*, the Priest and the Pastor mirror this tendency in their respective arguments. Take, for example, the discussion of one of the most hotly contested points of Catholic doctrine, the transubstantiation of the blood and body of Jesus in the mystery of the Eucharist during High Mass. According to the Priest, “the flesh is meate, and bloud is drynke, Christe aby-deth for that whole under both the kyndes. A layman must take hys ryghtes every yeare once at the leaste accordynge to the chapter *Omnis utriusque [sexus]*.”<sup>12</sup> The Priest clearly articulates his position on transubstantiation; Jesus appears in both the wine and the bread. He offers no ‘evidence’ of this truth, intimating self-evidence (or evidence by tradition). The mention of canon law only supports the necessity of the layman’s partaking in the rite. The Pastor, on the other hand, begins, “The Apostell [Paul] in the fyrst epistell to the Corinthians the 11 chapter, prepyaryng the supper of the Lorde, dyd wryte that he toke of the Lorde, that he taught and gave to the Corinthians.”<sup>13</sup> Again, the emphasis falls on Scripture.

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12. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* [C.viii.]. According to John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, the *Omnis utriusque sexus* was canon law implemented at the 1215 Lateran Council stating, “Be it decreed, that every faithful Christian, both man and woman, coming to the years of discretion, shall confess himself alone of all his sins to the priest of his own proper parish, once in the year at least; and that he shall endeavour, by his own self, to fulfill the penance, whensoever he receaveth the sacrament of the Eucharist, at least at the time of Easter” (Townsend 751).

13. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *verso sig.* D.i.



Interestingly enough, the Pastor also includes in his discussion of the Lord's Supper mention of Jean Gerson, a fourteenth-century French reformer. Here Rhegius cites from Gerson's writings, "that nother the byshop of Rome nor the generall council, not yet the church oughte to chaunge the learnynge that was geven us by the evangelistes and by Paul."<sup>14</sup> The inclusion of an extra-Scriptural and contemporary source is unusual. By including Gerson, Rhegius may have intended to show that even "Catholic" writers were not without some merit or that sometimes they made very good points. Such compromise also suggests Rhegius, like Luther, wished reform, not division and the search for common ground recurs throughout *Novae doctrinae*. Unfortunately, reformers and the Church rarely interacted in so reasonable (and peaceable) a manner when discussing theology as do the Pastor and the Priest of *Novae doctrinae*. Even before Rhegius wrote *Novae doctrinae* heretical thinkers burned at the stake.<sup>15</sup> The text should be taken a step further and interpreted as what Rhegius (and to a lesser extent, Turner) might consider an idealistic dialog of reform. In other words, if orthodox thinkers and reformers only spoke civilly to each other, avoiding cries of 'Heretic' and 'Papist,' Reason would prevail and the Church would heal itself by returning to the teaching of the early Church supported by Scriptural authority.

*ii. Turner's First (and Second) Edition*

Turner felt it necessary to add a third, qualifying voice to the dialog of his 1537 translation – his own. In the 1537 and 1538 edition of *Comparison*, Turner's voice is mild, speaking

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14. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto*.

15. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* mentions the execution of Henry Voes and John Esch "both condemned to the flames" in 1522 (Forbush 167).

only in a unassuming epigraph and appendix to the translated text. The latter, “To the christen reader,” expands upon those church issues Turner felt Rhegius left unclear or, perhaps, felt the reader would need further clarification on – specifically, “the aryteles of fre wyll, fayth, Good workes, and of Merytes.”<sup>16</sup> In doing so, he takes the opportunity to spin these points of doctrine to a decidedly Protestant point of view by placing them in relation to justification, remission of sins, and salvation. Turner deconstructs, in a relatively short space, the notion that salvation might be achievable as a result of good works, prayers, or any earthly, quantifiable means. Taking his cue from Rhegius, Turner cites carefully chosen Scriptural passages fortifying his position, Paul’s letter to the Romans being his source of choice. He places justification solely in the hands of God, locating man outside the mechanism of his own salvation. Faith only in God’s mercy and the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary brings the hope of salvation. Furthermore, Turner dismisses the notion of the Mass and prayers for the dead, likening belief in them to a diminishment of God’s power and authority:

Yf Gods mercy shulde be bounde to sende soules to youre purgatory, and at youre massynge agayne to release them, than were Christ no Jesus, and God no father but a servaunt of yours.<sup>17</sup>

Enjoining the faithful reader to join with him in prayer and “leave ... youre new erronious doctryne,” Turner turns to the worship of saints and relics, dismissing both as “pictures and ymages

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16. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* ‘cross.’

17. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* ‘cross’ iii.

... [that] blaspheme God.”<sup>18</sup> Turner’s voice carries a distinctly Lutheran tone, a clear separation from Catholic dogma that Rhegius largely avoids. Turner’s translation of the text allowed the continental reformer’s voice a means to enter the English religious debate, and Turner then tempers the text to reflect the voices already circulating in England. And in this way, *A Comparison betweene the olde learynyge and the Newe* becomes an English text culturally and linguistically, just as Rhegius’ work was a continental text.

By translating the text, Turner links *Comparison* to the Lollard tradition of disseminating texts in English, a practice dating back to John Wycliffe and William Thorpe two centuries earlier. The Lollards, pre-Reformation proto-Protestants and followers of Wycliffe, had attempted reform in the English Church in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries when Richard II’s court offered religious tolerance and political protection from more extremist Catholics. The Lollard’s ultimate failure can be linked in part to the efforts of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury whose name might be familiar to readers of Chaucer.<sup>19</sup> The Lollard movement only goes underground and resurfaces as what modern scholars would recognize as Protestantism when the political climate became more favorable. Turner’s reformist ideology places him in direct connection with that tradition. That Turner knew of Wycliffe’s works goes without saying. As to Thorpe, Turner mentions him by name in a letter dated 20 November 1563 to the martyrologist John Foxe. “One thing that displeases me,” writes Turner, “[is] that you have not printed the

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18. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), verso sig. ‘cross’ iv.

19. Terry Jones argues for Arundel’s involvement in Chaucer’s death. Cf. Terry Jones, et al., *Who Murdered Chaucer? A Medieval Mystery* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2005).

book of Thorpe in its original dialect.<sup>20</sup> Get Thorpe's autograph if you can, and print it as he wrote it."<sup>21</sup> Wycliffe, Thorpe, and the Lollards advocated vernacular religious texts. Turner, as a direct descendant of that tradition, offers Rhegius' text to the masses. They accept.

Turner was not an obtuse mind nor was he an elitist thinker. He wanted the message of the Gospel (and the Church's corruption of it) made known to the people. *Comparison*, as an English text, was intended for consumption by the masses and apparently people did read it. All editions of the text were printed in an affordable *octavo* format to ensure accessibility. The reprinting of the 1537 edition the following year also suggests at its popularity. In the letter to Foxe quoted above, Turner writes:

I will tell you what on my long journey<sup>22</sup> in various provinces I heard about your book of martyrs. All praise it highly, both argument and treatment: but not a few poor men complained of the price. I and others think that you will be well advised to cut out all the stories about the papists and leave only the histories of the true martyrs, cutting out also all those Latin texts of which you give an English trans-

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20. *The Testimony of William Thorpe* (1407). Thorpe's first-hand account of his examination before Archbishop Arundel. Though the text was thought spurious, Maureen Jurkowski offers compelling evidence suggesting otherwise. Cf. Maureen Jurkowski, "The Arrest of William Thorpe in Shrewsbury and the Anti-Lollard Statute of 1406," *Historical Research* 75, no. 189 (2002): 273-95. The complete text of Thorpe's *Testimony* appears in Anne Hudson's *Two Wycliffite Texts* Early English Texts Society (Oxford University Press, 1993) 24-94.

21. Qtd. in J.F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970) 137.

22. 'Long journey' refers to the travels Turner embarked on after his reinstatement to the Deanship of Wells on Elizabeth's accession. Turner spent several years traveling around England preaching and gathering information he used to complete his *Herball*.

lation. ... If you do, you will, I doubt not, however much the printer may rage, publish the book for the greater profit of the true church. For by cutting out useless and superfluous things the price of the book will not exceed ten shillings.<sup>23</sup>

Recall too that Turner's works, including *Comparison*, were banned under Henry's rule, indicating that Turner succeeded in getting the attention of the King as well as the masses.

Up to this point, I have largely neglected mention of the 1538 edition of *Comparison*. It needs minimal addressing here because, apart from some accidental differences occurring from resetting the type, the editions are identical. *Comparison*'s rapid appearance in 1538 suggests *Comparison*'s popularity, and the lack of subsequent editions after 1538 resulted not from a lack of interest, but as a byproduct of both Henry's ban of Turner's books and subsequent exile. *Comparison* remained in the public sphere. The text, with its dialogic nature reflected the English debates occurring amongst theologians as it had on the continent. Turner's appendix gave it a distinctly Protestant edge. Ten years separate the 1538 edition of *Comparison* from its next incarnation, and when Turner does find the time and an acceptable political climate in which to republish the work, he does so with gusto. While his voice in the 1537/38 editions was mild, in the 1548 reprint, he speaks loudly and clearly.

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23. Qtd. in Mozley, 137-138.

### Chapter Three

#### Augmentations and Ire:

Turner writes *The Olde Learnynge and the New*

Turner's *Comparison* attempted to present differing religious perspectives in a dialog and, despite the fact this dialog carried a clear bias, the dialogic structure of the text remained. Turner's republication of *Comparison* in 1548 eliminated the dialogic nature of the original text. What motivations he had for this change are unclear, but his changes were deliberate. The 1548 text, based on intent and tone, is completely different, going beyond the stylistic and reflecting the growing Protestant position of power within England in 1548. With the Protestant King Edward on the throne, reformers had more freedom to speak and write against Romanism than ever before. Turner made full use of the opportunity, using it to rail against the continuing influences of Romanism in the English Church, a battle he continued until his death. Despite Edward's reign and Henry's break with Rome, the Church of England continued to be dominated by Roman influence and traditional worship, two truths reformers continued to struggle against. Turner and his fellow reformers were not content to settle for a break with papal rule. They sought a complete overhaul of the faith. Even in Protestant England, the Church continued to resist reformation. In Turner's own preface to the 1548 text, he enjoins:

I desyre al yow that are wilfully mynded to be blynde to read this boke with an indyfferent eye and when ye have red it, then judge whether our lernynge or their

lernynge which boast themselves so moch of olde antiquitie, is the older and more agreynge with Gods holye worde?<sup>1</sup>

The implication underlying the statement supports the continued divide occurring between the remnants of Romanism and the Reformers.

*i. Turner's Augments*

*Comparison's* reissue in 1548 came with substantial changes and what seems an effort to remove Rhegius from the text entirely. Accounting for differences in font and layout, I would conservatively estimate Turner adds four pages to the overall length. Most significantly, all mentions of Rhegius disappear from the text. Turner's own preface replaces the continental author's original; he "augments" Rhegius, and he retranslates several sections.<sup>2</sup> Turner further distinguishes his text by re-titling it *The Olde Learnyng and the New, Compared Together Wherby it May Easely be Knowen Which of Them is Better and More Agreyng Wyth the Euerlasting Word of God Newly Corrected and Augmented By Wyllyam Turner*. The sum total of these changes result in a major change in tone. As the new title suggests, the text departs from a relatively neutral dialog of ideas. It no longer hints at nebulous Church failings, but assigns singular individuals blame. A good example comes in the early chapter "Of the Sacraments." In Turner's 1537/38

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1. Turner, *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, verso sig. Aiiii.

2. The retranslations are all stylistic, reflecting Turner's maturation as a Latin scholar, rewording and clarifying passages he found difficult in his original efforts.

translation, this section ends by naming the sources of the new learning as the “master of sentece” (*sic*) and “the doctores.”<sup>3</sup> Turner adds to these in 1548:

Of the same opinion are Trigerus, Eckius, Faber, Pighius and Billichius, with the whole rable of dunces disciples and sworne Papystes.<sup>4</sup>

I identified four of the five names mentioned here: Johann Eck, Johann Faber, Albert Pighius, and Eberhard Billick. Each man was a Catholic supporter who actively wrote against Protestantism. Johann Eck warrants special mention as one of the greatest Catholic controversialists. Luther and Eck exchanged multiple literary attacks against each other in the years after 1519.<sup>5</sup> Presumably, Trigerus was another Catholic apologist/controversialist of the day. Turner’s use of specific, contemporary names would further make his case for the newness of Catholic learning.

Turner’s changes more directly attack Catholic charges of newness in relation to Protestantism. In his introduction to *The Olde Learnynge and the New* Turner acknowledges this criticism:

Even as the unlerned people of this realme blinded of long tyme by the false doctryne and ordinances of the Byshop of Rome, do cal the Gospel of Christ (long

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3. Turner *The Olde Learnynge and the New*, verso sig. A.v. “Master of sentece” refers to the medieval theologian Peter Lombard and his *Four Books of Sentences*. There are various references to Lombard’s text throughout both Rhegius’ and Turner’s works. Lombard’s text was a common theological textbook until the sixteenth century and Lombard is often named ‘The Master of the *Sentences*’ in other works.

4. Turner, *The Olde Learnynge and the New*, recto sig. A.iii.

5. Philip Schaff, ed. *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1952). 64-66.



buried and holden downe with mannes doctryne, when it now begineth to be preached agayne) new lernynge and straunge doctrine: and that because they have not byn aquaynted with yt, but onlie have byn brought up in the lerning of the phariseys of our tyme.<sup>6</sup>

Turner deflects this criticism by arguing the Protestant doctrine is old, not new; he advocates a return to the old authority of the Scripture, as did Luther and other reforming writers:

The Authors of this [Catholic] learnyng that are the yongest, wrote 115 yeres ago. Then judge, I pray the good reder, whether our learnyng whiche was taught onely by the Prophetes and Apostels, so many yeres ago, ought rather to bee called Olde learnyng, or theirs ....<sup>7</sup>

Turner pushes further, listing the Biblical authors – Moses, Jeremiah, David, Peter, Paul, and John – and closing with “the cheife Author of our learnyng was God hymselfe.”<sup>8</sup> The final attribution to God severs any connection between the old and new learning leading to compromise. Turner explicitly relates Catholic doctrine with man’s attempt to replace God’s teaching; Catholic doctrine becomes heretical. The section concludes with a similar list for the Catholic writers, ending with a piercing injunction – “Now judge whiche syde hath better Authors, the pa-

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6. Turner, *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, recto sig. A.ii.

7. Turner, *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, verso sig. A.v.

8. Turner, *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, verso sig. A.v.

pysts or we.”<sup>9</sup> While Rhegius made a similar rhetorical move, Turner’s augmentations leave little room for doubt (or discussion) as to which doctrine reflects Truth.

Turner’s stylistic changes alter the dialogic nature of the original text – hinted at by the removal of “comparison” from the title and the substitution of “compared.” While the former connotes a fair handling of both positions, the latter lacks such implication. Turner’s use of “compared” suggests judgement or weighing, not unlike the condemnatory “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN” in the Old Testament book of Daniel.<sup>10</sup> Turner’s departure from Rhegius is furthered by the newly added Preface: “The Preface of the Translator unto the Christen Reader.”<sup>11</sup> This should be compared to Rhegius’ original preface title: “Urbanus Regius to a certayne frende of his, wyssheth CHIRST oure ryghteousnesse.”<sup>12</sup> Turner quite clearly labels his audience while Rhegius prefers a more ambiguous one. Rhegius opts for a more intimate address to a friend while Turner’s appears more distant. Why Turner chose to remove all of Rhegius’ introduction, even eliminating all mention of Rhegius, is unclear. Rhegius died ten years before *The Olde Learnyng and the New* appears. Perhaps Turner no longer felt it necessary to mention

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9. Turner, *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, recto sig. A.v.

10. Daniel 5:24-27 (New Revised Standard Version). “Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'--God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. 'TEKEL'--you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.”

11. Turner *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, recto sig. A.ii.

12. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), recto sig. A.ii.

his source. More likely, Turner's augmentations caused a significant enough change to the original text's intent to constitute considering it a different text.

Whatever Turner's motivation, the changes to the rhetorical structure of the text are substantial. The Priest's voice completely disappears along with the imagined dialog present in *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe*; the participants become two Protestant reformers expounding on the failings of the Roman Church before declaring their own "true" teachings. It is no longer the case of comparing two positions, but of replacing one with the other. Compare the two following excerpts from the "Faith and Works" section under the new learning. In *Comparison*, the section ends:

Therefore ther are two kyndes of ryghteousness necessary to salvation, that is to wyte of fayth and works. The one without the other (excepte a man have no tyme or leasur) doth not save a man.<sup>13</sup>

Turner retains the previous quote in *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, but adds:

The autors and teachers of this doctryne are: Duce, Durad, Holcot, Bucot, Linwod, Triger, Eckius, Pighius, Chocleus, Ucheus, Bruchius, Latomns, and Byshopes of Englande with their chaplens [and] namely Doctor[s] besy[d]e, with the whole rable of them that ar maynteiners of Antechrist of Rome and his vayne ceremonyes.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), *recto sig.* [B.vi.].

14. Turner *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, *recto sig.* [B.vi.].

Eck and Pighius appear in several sections throughout, the others only once or twice more. Whoever they are, Turner's animosity towards them is clear. They are most likely Catholic apologists. Note, too, Turner's indictment of the Bishops of England in this 'rable.' *The Olde Learnynge and the New* appears during the reign of Edward VI's Protestant court. Even the Protestant clergy retained too much Romanism for Turner to trust. His involvement in the vestiarian controversy further evidences his conviction on the matter. Turner's accusations towards the Bishops of England appears most strongly in "Of the Supper of the Lord." He writes, "This doctrine [the new learning] teache ... Fisher Bishoppe of Rochester sumtime, divers Bishops of Englonde and Doctors of divinitie, with the hole rable of papistes of all other lands which hate Luther, and hold with the Pope and his ceremonyes."<sup>15</sup> Bishop John Fisher died on Tower Hill just over a decade before Turner writes these words – a victim, like Sir Thomas More, of King Henry's break with Rome.

A key argument in *Comparison* had maintained that Catholic doctrine was being increasingly fabricated by contemporary churchmen while in the meantime the older learning of the Scriptures fell by the wayside. Rhegius makes this point in his introduction, saying, "Certayne thynges which were devised with in these foure hundreth yeares, yee rather even of late have bene receaved by and by of them, as soone as they were made, namely this is theyr learnynge and so olde that they desyre for this, that the Gospell almoost shulde be caste awaye."<sup>16</sup> Turner

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15. Turner *The Olde Learnynge and the New*, verso sig. D.i.

16. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537) sig. recto sig. A.iii - verso sig. A.iii.

reaffirms this position, claiming in his 1548 preface, “now a dayes the pharicis and their folowers when thei cannot acuse the doctrine of the Gospel of falsnes, thei ley newnes unto it.”<sup>17</sup> These accusations are rhetorically compelling. The writers Turner names were still alive or recently deceased when Turner published *The Olde Learnyng and the New* in 1548. A reader would find it difficult not to take pause when faced with the reality that the people writing doctrine were not pillars of the Church like Moses and St. Paul, the traditional writers of the majority of Old and New Testament doctrine. The separation between those founding figures and contemporary faithfuls was enough to elevate the former to positions of authority. Such authority is much more difficult to accept when only a handful of years, or a generation, separate the reader from writers of doctrine.

Concerning the old (reformist) learning, Turner augments Rhegius just three times and only one of those changes is substantial. The minor changes appear in “Of merites” and “Of mens tradicions.” The former clarifies the place of faith over works for salvation while the second replaces an ambiguous pronoun, “hym,” with “his brother,” in order to make more clear Paul’s warning to not become a stumbling block for a brother in Christ.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, these changes occur in words added by Turner after the original translation. The most substantial change to the old learning comes in “Of fayth and workes.” Apart from rejecting Catholic belief in the transubstantiation of the Eucharist, justification by faith was a central tenet of Protes-

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17. Turner *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, verso sig. A.iii.

18. Romans 14:20-23.

tantism. Turner chooses to expand Rhegius' ideas here because the continental author fails to subordinate works the way Turner felt necessary. Rhegius makes faith the catalyst of salvation, calling it "the most pure doctryne of the holy ghoste," and ends saying, "Yf the ryghteousnesse come of the lawe, then is Christ dead in vayne. But Christe dyed not in vayne, therefore ye boast in vayne of the righteousnesse of workes and of the law."<sup>19</sup> After Rhegius' text, Turner adds approximately two pages of his own commentary. Specifically, he builds on Rhegius' argument that Abraham's faith justified him over his works by stressing the fact that works, in and of themselves, are without value in relation to salvation. "Moreover the scripture sayeth," writes Turner,

that he is acursed which abydeth not in all thyngs which are wrytten in the boke of the lawe. But no man abydeth in all things which are written in the boke of the lawe. Therefore every man is accursed, for lacke of kepyng the lawe. ... neither we nor no other man [can] be saved and justified by the workes and fulfilyng of the law. Therefore ... we flye for succoure to hym which keped the whole law ....<sup>20</sup>

Such doctrine contradicted prevailing Catholic dogma and remained a point of contention even in Protestant England. Turner's devotion to that subject is unsurprising.

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19. Rhegius *Comparison* (1537), verso sig. [B.viii.].

20. Turner *The Olde Learnyng and the New*, verso sig. [B.viii.] - verso sig. C.i.

## ii. Turner's Frustration

Turner reveals something of himself in *The Olde Learnynge and the New* as well – apart from the departure from neutral dialog and commentary on “newness” – a clear sense of frustration. *The Olde Learnynge and the New* then can be understood as a release valve, Turner's method of venting frustration at the result of England's departure from Romanism, a departure Turner felt had not gone far enough. Historically, Turner wrote *The Olde Learnynge and the New* after his return from exile under King Henry. Turner's time on the continent placed him in touch with the more extreme reforming thinkers, Zwingli among them. *The Olde Learnynge and the New* reflects this exposure and, emboldened by the protection of a Protestant court, Turner lashes out at the Catholicism still apparent in the English Church. This was not the first or last of his books to wax polemical, but it is the one most uncontrolled. His early religious work lacks the focus of some of his later works. The polemical nature of *The Olde Learnynge and the New* degenerates into ranting in several places. His blunt diction, scathing criticisms, and name-calling all point towards Turner's frustration. While examining Catholic doctrine concerning Prayer, Turner declares the teachings, “the lerning of the Popish freers, Monkes, and Sacrifyeng preestes, with all other Popysh preachers, which had [rather] that the people shulde be the disciples of man, then of God.”<sup>21</sup> He says nothing of their specific teachings, leaving the reader to either explore them further or accept his interpretation of them at purely face value. Seven years later, again in exile, *A New Book of Spiritual Physik* vents frustration once more, but in a more

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21. Turner *The Olde Learnynge and the New*, recto sig. E.iii.

complex and purposeful manner. *Physik* continues the attack on Catholic doctrine, but Turner's argument evolves into a much more focused and mature form, leveling charges, but backing those charges up with textual evidence instead of vague generalizations. *Physik* also radiates a sense of hope that *The Olde Learnynge and the New* lacks, tempering the former's polemic ire substantially.

Just as *Comparison* reflected the larger religious debate, so too did *The Olde Learnynge and the New*. Turner uses *The Olde Learnynge and the New* to articulate and solidify the growing divide between Catholic and Protestant which occurred in the years following Edward VI's accession. The political climate encouraged such literature of religious controversy and Turner embraces the opportunity. The polemic nature of *The Olde Learnynge and the New* offers no middle ground, no means of compromise, only condemnation. Even with Protestantism accepted as the official religion of England, Catholic apologists and faithfuls continued to write and preach, albeit with considerable caution.



## Conclusion

William Turner's life might be considered a case study in English reformation thinking. He began his life in a country wholly Catholic, ruled by a Catholic monarch. By his early youth, the reforming thinking from the Continent found its way into his hands and, along with access to vernacular Scripture, Turner began to question the dogmatic "truths" of his youth and he translated *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnynge and the Newe* in an effort to frame the larger debate around him. Perhaps then he still hoped for compromise; his willingness to take deacon's orders certainly suggests he was not completely disgusted with the established religion. But compromise in England, as on the Continent, failed. Rome excommunicated King Henry; Turner, faced with a call to appear before an ecclesiastical court, choose to leave England. When he returned several years later, he abandoned the rhetoric of compromise in favor of more direct calls for change. *The Olde Learnynge and the New* appears in just this time; its tone and content reflect the religious zeal of the newly Protestant country seeking to establish itself beyond question. At Queen Mary's accession, Turner is forced from England again, his zeal having left him open to imprisonment and execution. After Elizabeth assumes the throne, England found itself reeling from such extreme shifts in religious ideology and the violence accompanying each. The nation was ready now for the compromise of Anglicanism which solidifies under Elizabeth. Turner's writings reflect the moderation of zealousness and replacement with reforming language. By the end of his life, Turner's *A New Book of Spiritual Physik* seeks to call attention to the surviving Catholic influences in the English Church by arguing with logic and Scripture in place of unfocused tirades.

Turner lacks the historical weight of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli; he lacks the preaching skill of Latimer. Approaching Turner's writing is to look at the Reformation through the eyes of someone in its midst who stood far enough from its epicenter to avoid being idealized as a great name. It allows us to see Turner the man and not Turner the name; it makes him human. *Physik*, one of the last books he writes before his death, pointedly appends "the prayer of the prophete Daniel contaeyned in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of hys boke, very nessecary for thys troublesome tyme:

We beseche the o-Lorde, thou great and fearful god ... We have synned, we have offended. We have bene disobedient, and gone back. Yea we have departed from all thy preceptes and judgements ... O Lorde hear. O forgyve Lorde ....<sup>1</sup>

Daniel's prayer offers the *impetus* of Reformation in a nutshell, and leaves Turner secure in the knowledge that as He had forgiven Daniel, God would forgive those who had been misled by the Roman Church. The appeal to God carries with it the faithful, heartfelt cry for justification mirrored in the tax collector of Luke's gospel. In that story, Jesus and his disciples witness two men praying in the Temple, a Pharisee and a tax collector. While the Pharisee proudly thanks God he is not a tax collector, the humble tax-collector beats his chest and begs God to have mercy on his sinfulness.<sup>2</sup> Turner hoped for a similar experience in England, a prostrate nation throwing off the pharisaical hollowness of Romanism and embracing the humility and mercy of Protestantism. Jesus tells his disciples the tax collector left satisfied; I believe Turner did so as well.

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1. Turner *A New Book of Spiritual Physik*, *recto sig.* [N6] - *verso sig.* [N7].

2. Luke 18: 9-14.

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Appendix I:

1537/38 Introduction to *A Comparison betweene the Olde Learnyng and the Newe*

A coparison betwene the Olde learnynge and the Newe,  
Translated out of latin in Englysh by Wyliam Turner.

Prynted in Sowthwarke by me James Nicolso[n]  
Anno, 1537.

The contentes of this boke.

Of the sacramentes.	Of fastynge.
Of penaunce.	Of the difference of dayes.
Of confession.	Of prayer.
Of satisffaceyon.	Of vowes.
Of frewyll.	Of counselles.
Of fayth and workes.	Of matrimony.
Of merites.	Of bisshoppes.
Of synne.	Of ceremonies.
Of the worshippinge of sayntes.	Of mans traditions.
Of the supper of the Lorde.	Of counceles <sup>1</sup> and lawes made by a multitude of bisshoppes gathered together.
Of the choyse of meates.	

To the reader.  
Some there be that do desye  
All that is newe, and ever do crye  
The olde is better, awaye wyth the new

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1. 'coiincels' (1537).

Because it is false, and the olde is true:  
Let them this boke reade and beholde  
For it preferreth the learnyng most olde.

Unto the reader.

Urbanus Regius to a certayne frende of his, wylheth CHRIST oure ryghteousnesse.

Whan our saveour in the fyrst of Marke had caste out of a man an uncleane sprete, the Jewes were astōnyed, sayenge: what new learnyng is this?<sup>2</sup> It was thought new to those wretches for lacke of knowlege of scripture: which of all thynges was oldest, that is to say the Gospell, the which was longe tofore promysed by the prophetes in the scripture, of the sōne of God Jesu Christ. The same thyng was sayd to Paul, whan he preached Christ at Athene.<sup>3</sup> They toke him and led hym to Marcis strete, sayenge: May we not knowe what new learnyng this is, that ye teach? For ye brynge in to our eares new thynges.<sup>4</sup> Was the teachyng of the Apostles (I praye you) strayght waye new, because it was thought new to the proude gentyles swellynge and bounde with theyr carnall and fleshly wysedome? Even suche lyke thynges in these later dayes, do they al[l] suffer, which teach purely the Gospel of the gracymous savour and glory of God.

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2. Mark 1:27.

3. Athens, Greece.

4. The 'new thynges' were the teachings of Jesus and the beginnings of the Christian faith. Paul taught from the Areopagus to a crowd of Greek's interested in the new learning Paul presents. The Bible records the event in Acts 17:16-34. One of the teachings concerned the resurrection of the body from the dead, an idea that many found impossible to accept.

Which do not abuse the worde of everlasteynge truth for avaūtage:<sup>5</sup> but as it were of syncernesse, but as it were of god, sospeak we by Christ in the syght of God. Thys is the new doctrine (saye our adversaries) lately devysed and furnished in the shoppes of workhouses of heretikes. Let us abyde styl in our old fayth. Let the holynesse of our fathers, the authorite of the coūcels, the consent of the longe tyme and so many ages, holde us in the wayes of our fathers. Let the heretickes go and shake theyr eares with theyr new learnynge, which spronge and rose up of late. Those thynges which we teach came not all from Christe and the Apostles by wrytynge, neverthelesse they came by a faythfull revelacyon and shewynge unto us.

To whom I wyll answere none otherwyse then Christ answered the Saduces: Ye erre (sayeth he) and ar ignoraunt in the scripture.<sup>6</sup> And wolde to God that I myghte purchase and obtayne so much equyte of a braynlesse kynde of mé[n] as one heythen man sheweth to another: that is, yf they wolde fyrst heare the cause or matter, and then afterwarde (yf it please them) condemne hym that is accused. Now they condemne innocentes without ony hearynge of theyr cause. And they crye unto us which defende<sup>7</sup> the worde of God with nothyng but galowes,

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5. Rhegius' accusation was hardly a new idea. The corrupt nature of the established Church has long been discussed and commented on in greater detail than I can here relate. I would mention though that Turner levels this charge against the Church in England using evidence of the Church's insistence on holding Mass in Latin and making vernacular translations of the Bible illegal.

6. Matthew 22:29. The quote comes from an incident in which the Pharisees attempt to trick Jesus into speaking against the Roman overlords of Israel. On the same day, the Sadducees come to ask whom a woman who remarries several times will call husband in Heaven. Jesus accuses the men of not knowing the Scriptures. According to Jesus, there are no marriages in Heaven.

7. 'défede' (1537).

ropes, and fyre, not witesasyng us the leest corner of the catholyke church.<sup>8</sup> In so much that I wonder of what sprete they be of. For that gentle and pleasaunt sprete of Christ, the which fedeth the mysticall body, seketh for the health and not for the destruccyon of them that erre. Charite the frute of the holy goost (as the apostell sayeth) doth thynke none evell, but is glad and rejoyceth with the trueth, beleueth all thynges, trusteth all thynges. Surely they that set asyde the blynde judgement of the affeccyon, and loke earnestly upon the matter, judge otherwyse of us. For the olde aucient fathers dyd neuer knowe of heare tell, of the moost parte of those thynges, whiche oure condemners do teache: then ye maye be sure that theyr learnynge ought not to be rekened for olde learnynge and apostolicall.

Futhermore not every thyng that the olde fathers wrote savoureth of the syncernesse and purenesse of the sprete of the Apostles. Certayne<sup>9</sup> thynges which were devised with in these foure hundreth yeaes, yee rather even of late have bene receaved by and by of them, as soone as they were made, namely this is theyr learnynge and so olde that they desyre for this, that the Gospell almoost shulde be caste awaye, and counted<sup>10</sup> as a new teachynge and learnynge.<sup>11</sup> Ther-

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8. Torture and burning were common on the Continent as Rhegius writes *Novae Doctrina ad veterem collatio*. Capital punishment for unrepentant or relapsed heretics became English law in 1401 with the passing of the *De hearetico comburendo*. The document was pushed through Parliament by Archbishop Thomas Arundel, a staunch opponent to the Lollard heresy. It remained on the books until 1611.

9. 'Certayue' (1537).

10. 'cosited' (1537).

11. Rhegius' argument suggests that the doctrine of the Church fathers and tradition had become so accepted as infallible that the Scriptures being emphasized by the reformers were considered 'new' to the vast majority of the Church hierarchy.



fore I wolde that they shulde knowe and understande that we do teache and preache the olde and the trewe heavenly doctryne of the sprete: that is the gospell of god. The greate mystery of holynesse and godlynesse that god was declared in the fleshe, was justified in sprete, sene of the angelles, preached to the gentyles, that cō[n]fidence was gevé to him in the worlde, and was received in to glory. What saye youe be these newes: God dyd predestinate us that he myght chose and purchase<sup>12</sup> us to be his sones, by Christe Jesus in his owne selfe, acordyng to the pleasure of his wyl, that the glory of the grace of God myght be praysed, whereby he made us welbeloved, thorowe his welbeloved, by whome we have redemcion<sup>13</sup> thorowe his bloude, forgevenesse of synnes accordyng to the ryches of his grace? This was the father's counsell upon us, before the begynnyng of the worlde, that he shuld save us, and calle us with an holy vocation, not accordyng to our workes, but accordyng to his purpose and grace, whiche is geven unto us thorowe Jesus Christ before the everlasting times,<sup>14</sup> but it is opened and declared nowe, by the appearing of our saveour Christ which put deathe away and hathe thorowe the gospel brought forthe the lyfe into lyght and mortalite. The which thyng seyng that it was promysed so longe ago by the prophetes at the cōmaundement of the holy gooste and nowe published thorowe al[l] the coastes of the worlde, howe dare they for shame call it newe learnyng. Ceasse you wycked men and

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12. 'purches' (1537).

13. 'redepcio' (1537).

14. The reformers often voiced the doctrine of salvation by grace and not works; Luther named it *sola fide* and both Luther and Wycliffe emphasized this point. Rhegius' Lutheran background and life are better treated in Douglas Hampton's dissertation concerning the reformer, *Urbanus Rhegius and the Spread of the German Reformation*.

staunche your blasphemyes.<sup>15</sup> [G]eve glory and prayse with us unto god and embrace and love (as ye ought to do) the mysteries of the truthe with devoute myndes, leste ye be indurate and made harde harted of god, with the reprobate and castawayes, the which beleve not the truth, but alowe unryghtuousnesse. The axe is layed at the roote of the trees.

Wherefore I, doynge the offyce of a christen brother, have made a comparyson betwene the newe learnynge and the olde, whereby, deare brother, thou maye easely knowe whether we are called worthely or unworthely the preachers of new learnyng. For so did they call us of late, scornynge and of a contempte, and you desyred of me to know what I thought best to answer to these braynles and madde fellowes. The which thyng seyng that it can not be expressed in an epystell. I thought it beste to bestow afew houres in thys matter, in these dayes called fastyngam, in latyn *carnis privium*, whiche hath the name of the takyng awaye of fleshe. In the which dayes after the maner of the gentyles and heythen men, they use uncomly playes and games. Take in good worth the labour of your frende. Fare ye well, and praye<sup>16</sup> to God for me a synner.

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15. The sentence does not break here in the 1537 text, but continues to 'unryghtuousnesse.'

16. Handwritten 'pray' in margin in the 1537 text, printed in the 1538.

Appendix II:

1548 Introduction to *The Olde Learnyng and the New*

The Olde Learnyng and the new, compared together wherby it may be knowé which of them is better and more agreyng wyth the everlasting word of God

Newly corrected and augmented by Wylliam Turner.

The Contentes of This boke.

Of the sacramentes.	Of fastyng.
Of penaunce.	Of the difference of dayes.
Of confession.	Of prayer.
Of satisfaction.	Of vowes.
Of free wyll.	Of counceles.
Of fayth and workes.	Of matrimony.
Of merites.	Of byshopes.
Of synne.	Of cerimonies.
Of the worshypyng of sayntes.	Of mans tradicions.
Of the supper of the Lorde.	Of counceles and lawes made by a multitude of byshops gathered together.
Of the choyse of meates.	

To the reader

Some ther be that do deyse

All that is newe, and ever do crye

The olde is better, awaye with the new

Because it is false, and the olde is trew

Let them this booke reade and beholde

For it preferrerth the lernyng moste olde.

## The Preface of the Translator unto the Christen Reader.<sup>1</sup>

The Jewes which were blynded by the olde leaven<sup>2</sup> of the scribes and phariseys, sayd: Mar[k] the first: What new lernyng is this? Even as the unlearned people of this realme blinded of long tyme by the false doctryne and the ordinances of the Byshop of Rome, do cal[l] the Gospel of Christ (long buried and holden downe with mannes doctryne, when it now begineth to be preached agayne) new lernyng and straunge doctrine: and that because they have not byn aquaynted with yt: but onlie have byn brought up in the lerning of the phariseys of our tyme. Was Christes learnyng new learnyng I pray yow because the Jewes had never harde it before preched of the phariseis? If it were no new lernyng but many 100[s] [of] yeres afore preached and taught by the prophets: th[en] is not the Gospel which we preach now, new lerning, because ye have not herde it before: no more then the son is a new son to a man which hath ben in a house 20 yeres and never sawe the son in his lyfe before at the last seeth it and calleth it a new light. Howe was it possible to se the Gospel or to knowe it in al your lyfe tyme? Seing that no man myght read the Gospel hym selfe w[ith]out great jeoperdye, and they that shuld have red and preached it, neither could preache it nether wolde read in a tonge that ye coulde understand:

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1. The introduction to the 1548 edition of Turner's book excises all mention of Rhegius from the text. Why he does so is not stated. Turner also 'augments' the text throughout with additions to Rhegius' original text. The changes all explicitly accuse the Roman church of falseness, where the original text tends to be more subtle. The 1548 text witnesses a point in Turner's theological development where he has left behind less political language, but he has not yet reached the point of bluntness seen in *A Newe Booke of Spiritual Physik* seven years later.
  2. Leaven. This choice of word recalls the holy Eucharist. The Eucharist was often used as a test by the Roman Church to identify Protestants who denied the physical incarnation of Jesus in the sacring. Turner uses the image to connect the Roman church and its dogma to the closed minded Jewish religious leaders often depicted in the New Testament.

Wherby ye are come now to this ignorance, that ye judge the long hyd truthe of Chrites Gospel to be a new learnyng, as the heathen men of Athens called Pauls doctrine new lernynge, because they had never herde it before.<sup>3</sup>

The same thyng that Christe and [P]aule suffered in their dayes, do now the preachers of the true worde of God suffer.<sup>4</sup> For as the Jewes and the heythen men whé[n] they colde otherwyse brynge Christes learnyng and Paules into dyspysynge and contempt, they accused it of newnes, and sayd it was a new doctryne: so now a dayes the pharicis and their folowers when thei cãnot acuse the doctrine of the Gospel of falsnes, thei ley newnes unto it. And as the old pharisaycal Jewes and proud heythen wyse men of the worlde when they had no reason nor scripture to defende theyr opynyons whyche they helde aganynste Christe and Paule: they leaned only unto antiquytie and old tyme<sup>5</sup> and with that weapon (though they had it not in dede) did ever fight agaynste Christe and thapostels, so the pharisies and scolars of this tyme not being able to improve the word of God cal[1] it new learnig, and their maisters for lacke of scripture, they for socoure for the mayntenance of their doctrine to thantiquitie of the old doctors, allowynge al thynges that they se therin dispraysyng what soever they canot find in them, as Christes doctrine were not to be receyved but wher as the doctors have receyved it, and so moch of

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3. Turner's objection to the lack of an English Bible appears again in *A Newe Booke of Spiritual Physik* (1555). In that text, he relates books printed in English with "Truth," those in Latin with "falseness."

4. The sentence does not end here, but continues to "newnes unto it."

5. The religious leaders of Jerusalem often tried to trick Christ into doing something against the law of Moses set forth in the *Torah*. Jesus, at one point, questioned their own knowledge of the Scripture, accusing them of misunderstanding or misusing it to their own peril. As to Paul, the Greek gentiles to whom he first preached could not accept the doctrine of bodily resurrection as it went against the theological ideas of the day.

Christes learnyng shalbe put out of use as the doctors wyl not allowe. It is now adayes axed whether that lay men maye receyve as wel as precsts both the partes of the supper of the lorde? [T]hey answered that Christ doth allowe bothe the partes: but for as moch as the old doctors thynke it mete that the laymen shuld have but one parte alone the prestes two partes, they cānot get the sacrament of Christes holy blode.<sup>6</sup> An so with manye other maters wherof I shall make mention of hereafter.

Is not this a pretye playe that the antiquitie of doctors, shulde waye downe the truthe of Gods worde and chaunge the ordinaūce of Christ, is not this to prefer intiquitie before the veritie? and to set mā[n] above God? and to reken the yonger the older? and reken the creature above the Creator? I desyre al[l] yow that are wilfully mynded to be blynde to read this boke with an indyfferent eye and when ye have red it, then judge whether our lernyng or their lernyng which boast themselves so moch of olde antiquitie, is the older and more agreynge with Gods holye worde? the olde God whiche is without begynnyng and endynge, graunt us al to knowe his holy worde, and after that we have knowen it, godly to lyve after it.

Amen

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6. This practice served to further separate the laity from the clergy. The sacrament of communion, as evidenced by the etymology of the word, served to create a sense of community amongst its partakers. By limiting access to both parts of the rite, the priests were, in effect, setting themselves apart as a distinct (and superior) community – a practice Protestant leaders adamantly fought against.