



strong and recognizably modern division of humanity into races that included allegations of African inferiority, it was framed by a science that denied the human ability to perceive essences, both in animals and in humans. Humans could thus be characterized by external characteristics allegedly gathered by empirical observation, but in fact tentatively selected. This racist science was adopted quite quickly in European universities. Europeans could invent a strong race doctrine only when they succeeded in isolating that doctrine from questions about heredity and the human soul.

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England's Second Reformation: The Battle for the Church of England, 1625–1662.
Anthony Milton.
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In this magisterial work, Anthony Milton demonstrates that the English Reformation was not, despite the probable intentions of Elizabeth I, “placed . . . as upon a square stone to remayne constant.” Rather than the substratum of the Church of England, the religious settlement of 1559 was an “incoherent and haphazard jumble,” enshrining deep ambiguity over the precise location of authority over doctrine, church government, liturgical conformity, and canon law. Instead of viewing the period of the English Civil War and Interregnum as an unfortunate and embarrassingly violent hiatus in the history of Anglicanism, Milton demonstrates that the decades of turmoil in the mid-seventeenth century were rather the “climax” of the English Reformation, when the fortunes of the Church of England were radically reconceptualized in a bewildering variety of plans, projects, and proposals. Amidst the bloodshed trauma of the civil wars, and the extraordinary political experiments of republic and Interregnum, England experienced a “second Reformation,” “moreover, a Reformation that was more thoroughly debated, over a much longer period, and by larger numbers of people, than any of England’s earlier Tudor Reformations” (217). While Tudor Protestants imported their theology and most of their ecclesiology from Reformed divines in Zurich, Strasbourg, and Geneva, the tumults of the mid-seventeenth century engaged a huge cast of homegrown English laity and clergy who sought to design and control the unfinished Reformation of the English Church.

After a brilliant scene-setting chapter on the “unresolved Reformation” of Elizabeth, Milton explores the phases of the second Reformation in chronological order, giving equal attention to the Laudian church, the experiments of 1640–42, the Westminster Reformation, the Royalist church of the Interregnum and the “failed reformations” of 1659 and 1661, and culminating with the Caroline Reformation of 1661–62 whose conservative character was, Milton argues, far from inevitable.

Through his unparalleled command of an exhaustive amount of printed and unpublished texts, Milton demonstrates that throughout every short period, ecclesiological and theological vantage points were furiously debated and always contested, even by writers of ostensibly sympathetic ideological perspectives. Within the violently changing political and ecclesiastical landscape, Laudians, Royalists, and Presbyterians were internally divided about the future of Reform. Meanwhile there could be sympathy between seemingly incompatible groups: Presbyterians and Independents were united in their anti-Laudianism, providentialism, and desire to seek common identity with the Reformed churches of Europe. In particular, authors who expressed vastly divergent views of the path of further Reformation, would equally claim to be the true heirs of the Elizabethan Reformers and the settlement of 1559. In other words, as Milton definitively and exhaustively demonstrates, no type of religiopolitical identity can be simply delineated: if we assume that (would-be) Reformers enshrined polarized positions we lose sight of the elements of “ambiguity, tension, flexibility and paradox” (512) that characterized these high-stakes debates.

Milton is one of the most revered scholars of the seventeenth century, and this book demonstrates his deep erudition and his unparalleled command of an enormous body of ecclesiological, theological, and political treatises and polemics over a period of more than a century. By emphasizing the complexity and nuance of so much religious debate, Milton highlights the conceptual simplifications embedded in existing historiography, although he prefers to assert his arguments demonstratively through intricate textual analysis rather than to launch swaggering attacks on other scholars. He is so careful to leave no hostages to fortune that some vital arguments seem rather understated and occasionally underdeveloped. Sectarian groups aside, the generalized commitment to national churches that characterized debate even in the Cromwellian period seems to merit more explanation than space allows. Milton argues that the conservative nature of the Caroline Restoration of religion in 1662 was “not inevitable,” but there is little analysis of the causes of the reactionary nature of the Cavalier Parliament, the prominence of hardline neo-Laudian bishops in that assembly, or even the reason why “many people who were not looking for a moderate settlement in the first place” (480). There is much for future scholars to develop and debate.

This is not a work for the uninitiated: the reader requires some prior knowledge of the broader religious and political narrative of the period. It is a shame that this work—which will be the essential work for historians of church and religion in this period—has no bibliography of secondary literature. But any quibbles are minor indeed. This book is a monumental achievement and will shape the field for decades to come.

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