Predestinarian Theology in the Mid-Tudor Play *Jacob and Esau*

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During the decade between Edward VI's accession in 1547 and the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign in 1558, English Protestants quarreled over an issue that had become a major source of conflict in Reformation Europe. It was the Church's perennial question of free-will and election: does man freely choose to be saved, or is he elected by divine grace alone? The leading Protestant authority on predestination at the time, John Calvin, had dealt with this question in the 1539 edition of *The Institutes* and in his *De aeterna Dei Praedestinatione*, both of which were popular among Reformers and divinity students in the latter part of Edward VI's reign.¹ Predestination had become such a contentious issue by 1554 that a bitter controversy over the subject broke out among unrecanting Protestants in the King's Bench Prison. According to the surviving documents related to this dispute, John Bradford and several other leading English Reformers encountered a party of Anabaptists and "free-willers" who dissented from the Augustinian view of predestination, the orthodox position of most Protestants up to this time.²

That English playwrights as well as preachers were engaged in the debate over predestination is exemplified in *The History of Jacob and Esau*, a contemporary play that dramatizes the story of Isaac's twin sons to illustrate election and reprobation and no less to give these notions a sound biblical basis. Long recognized as one of the finer specimens of mid-sixteenth-century English drama,³ *Jacob and Esau* is a school play in the tradition of the "Christian Terence," applying the more salient features of Latin comedy – e.g., a five-act structure and stock characters such as the saucy, quick-witted servant (Mido) – to the Old Testament narrative. As we shall see below, it has equally strong links with the indigenous tradition of homiletic drama. Much less is clear, however, concerning its authorship and precise date of composition. The only external evidence for dating is an entry in the

Stationers' Register for 1557/58. Most scholars of the work believe that it was composed sometime within the decade spanning the reigns of Edward and Mary and that its author was likely a schoolmaster, possibly Nicholas Udall or William Hunnis.⁴

While the playwright's extraordinary approval of the plot to seize Esau's birthright may have conveyed a radical political message to his audience,⁵ *Jacob and Esau* is primarily concerned with predestination and with presenting this highly abstract notion in concrete dramatic terms. Critics, having recognized this, have disagreed, however, over the particular doctrinal position the play takes on the subject. George Scheurweghs's contention that "the playwright vindicates the theory of predestination according to Calvin's principles," stated in 1933,⁶ had been accepted by most commentators of the play until Helen Thomas, in 1969, showed that Scheurweghs's evidence is questionable and that *Jacob and Esau* may well be Catholic or Erasmian in theological outlook.⁷ Neither of these scholars, however, nor any other to my knowledge, has examined the treatment of predestination in the play in the light of the theological views of contemporary English Reformers, perhaps best represented in the writings of John Bradford, the leading light of the Marian debate on the subject in 1554. In discussing the theme of predestination in *Jacob and Esau*, this paper seeks to show that the play is neither rigidly Calvinistic nor Erasmian in viewpoint, but is representative of popular Protestant opinion on predestination in mid-sixteenth-century England. It also proposes that the play's author was directly indebted to *The Great Bible* of 1539, the most popular version of the Scriptures in Tudor England prior to 1560.

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The playwrights's approach to dealing with predestination is really no different from the way earlier and contemporary homiletic playwrights in England dealt with religious themes. As in such homiletic interludes as *Mankind*, *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, and *The Conflict of Conscience*, *Jacob and Esau* develops its theme within a three-part sermon-like structure: exposition of the text (the prologue), illustration of the text (the play), and moralized summary and application (the epilogue).⁸ The Prologue, like the opening of a sermon, announces the theme and expounds the biblical texts on predestination in Malachi and Paul's epistle to the Romans:

But before Jacob and Esau yet borne were,
 Or had eyther done good, or yll perpetrate;
 As the prophete Malachie and Paule witnesse beare,
 Jacob was chosen, and Esau reprobate:
 Jacob I loue (sayde God) and Esau I hate.
 For it is not (sayth Paule) in mans renuing or will,
 But in Gods mercy who choseth whome he will.

But now for our comming we shal exhibite here
 Of Jacob and Esau howe the story was,
 Wherby Gods adoption may plainly appeare:
 And also, that what euer Gods ordinance was,
 Nothing might defeate, but that it must come to passe.⁹

The dramatic action that follows is a kind of *exemplum* serving to illustrate the validity of predestination through the contrasting characters of the elect Jacob and his reprobate brother Esau. In the twin brothers portrayed in the play, we encounter two different and irreconcilable types of mankind: the one God's elect who is destined to inherit worldly prosperity as well as salvation in the next life; the other an unregenerate without conscience who is deterministically bent on a course leading to eternal damnation. Jacob, as one would expect, is a faithful, obedient son, his mother's favourite, and beloved by all in the community for his piety and quiet disposition. Above all, he is portrayed as a humble servant of God, subordinating his own will to what he believes to be God's providential will, as he reveals to Rebecca early on in the play: "what soeuer he hath pointed me vnto,/I am his owne vessell his will with me to do" (11.222-23). Jacob may strike the modern reader as a somewhat self-righteous and crafty opportunist, but clearly this is not the author's intention. His motives to acquire Esau's birthright and blessing are not in the interests of self-advancement but based on his conviction that he is acting in accordance with God's will.¹⁰

Esau, on the other hand, is as wicked as Jacob is unswervingly righteous. Deprived of the necessary grace to seek goodness, he is portrayed as a profligate youth who shows no signs of redemption. Esau is selfish and inconsiderate by nature, and so preoccupied with his favourite pursuit, hunting, that he can devote no time or attention to his parents or his responsibilities as the heir apparent. In our first glimpse of him, he awakens the neighbours by his incessant hornblowing at an unearthly hour of the night, and then proceeds to drag his servant, Ragan, off to the forest without sufficient food or sleep. An unregenerate fool, he does not value or grasp

the spiritual significance of the birthright, which he sells impetuously for a morsel of food and momentary gratification. When he discovers his undoing, he explodes like a tyrant, swearing to take vengeance on all who were involved in the plot:

But as for these misers within my fathers tent,
Which to the supplanting of me put their consent,
Not one, but I shal coyle them till they stinke for pain,
And then for their stinking, coyle them of freshe again.
(11. 1247–50)

At the conclusion of *Jacob and Esau*, “the Poet entreth” to explain to the people assembled how they may be assured of their own election:

Our parte therefore is first to beleue Gods worde,
Not doubtyng but that he wil his elected saue:
Then to put full trust in the goodnesse of the Lorde,
That we be of the number which shall mercy haue:
Thirdly so to liue as we may his promise craue.
Thus if we do, we shall Abrahams chyl dren be:
And come with Jacob to endlesse felicitie.
(11. 1815–21)

The poet’s remarks here serve the same function as the concluding commentary of a contemporary sermon where the lesson is applied to the congregation.

It is not surprising that the play’s unusually bold and explicit treatment of predestination suggested to Scheurweghs that the author of *Jacob and Esau* derived his ideas directly from Calvin, who in modern eyes is so closely associated with the topic. Scheurweghs refers to the 1539 edition of *The Institutes* where, in discussing predestination, Calvin uses the story of Jacob and Esau, and St. Paul’s exposition of the story in his epistle to the Romans, to support his claim that election and reprobation have their origins in God’s inscrutable will, and not in human merit. Scheurweghs’ case for the *The Institutes* as a direct source of the play primarily rests on some similarities between the following lines in the play’s Prologue and Epilogue and passages from the 1539 Latin edition of Calvin’s work:¹¹

History. Prologue 8-15

But before Jacob and Esau
yet born were,
Or had either done good, or
ill perpetrate:

As the prophet Malachi and
Paul witness bear
Jacob was chosen, and Esau
reprobate:
Jacob I love (saith God)
and Esau I hate.

For it is not (saith Paul)
in man's renewing or will,
But in God's mercy, who
chooseth whom he will.

*History. Epilogue. Act
V. Sc. X.102-106*

So on God's behalf no man
ner default there is;
But where he chooseth, he
showeth his great mercy:
And where he refuseth, he
doth none injury.
But thus far surmounteth
man's intellection,
To attain or conceive, and
(much more) to discuss.

Institution, 248

Quum nondum nati essent, nec
quidpiam boni aut mali
fecissent, ut secundum
electionem propositum Dei
maneret, non ex operibus,
sed ex vocante, dictum est:
maior serviet minori;
sicut scriptum est: (Mal.
I.2-3; Rom. IX.13) Iacob
dilexi, Esau autem odium
habui. Quidnam ad haec
obscuranda praetextent, qui
operibus, vel praeteritis vel
futuris, locum aliquem in
electione assignant?
Hoc enim est prorsus eludere
quod contendit apostolus, non
ex aliqua operum ratione, sed
ex mera Dei vocatione pendere
fratrum discrimen, quia inter
nondum natos constitutum fuerit.

Institutio, 247

Quos salutis participatione
dignatur, eos gratuita eius
misericordia; nullo propriae
dignitatis respectu, dicimus
cooptari. Quos in
damnationem tradit, iis iusto
guidem et irreprehensibili
quidem et irreprehensibili
sed incomprehensibili ipsius
iudicio, vitae aditum
praecludi.

The correspondences certainly are impressive, particularly between the Prologue and *Institutio*, 248, where both authors refer to Malachi and St. Paul and where the same general sequence of thought may be observed. However, Scheurweghs has apparently overlooked even more striking and more numerous correspondences between the play's lines and passages from the New Testament. This has been pointed out by Helen Thomas who juxtaposed the above lines from *Jacob and Esau* with similar verses in Romans 8, 9, and 11. Considering that the sixteenth century was an age when every educated Protestant was thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, one has little difficulty accepting Thomas' contention that for his text on predestination in the Prologue, and for some lines in the Epilogue, the playwright drew directly from the Bible. Clearly, the Prologue's resemblance to the passage in *The Institutes* is due to the fact that both the playwright and Calvin were drawing on the same source.

Yet in citing the King James Version, printed at least fifty years after the writing of the play, Thomas offers no contemporary version of the Bible that was the specific source for the lines in *Jacob and Esau*. In the juxtaposed passages below, I quote from *The Great Bible*, edited by Miles Coverdale and printed in 1539. With seven editions in print by 1541, it was commissioned by Henry VIII to appear in every parish in the realm and remained the most popular version of the Scriptures in England prior to the Genevan Bible of 1560.¹² I have highlighted some of the more significant correspondences in phrasing which do not appear in a comparison of *Jacob and Esau* with other contemporary Bibles or with the KJV:

Jacob and Esau

But before *Jacob and Esau*
 yet borne were,
 Or had either done good, or
 ill perpetrate:
 As the prophet Malachi
 and Paul witness bear,
 Jacob was chosen, and Esau
 reprobate.
 Jacob I love (saith God)
 and Esau I hate.
 (Prologue, 11. 8-12)

The Great Bible

For yet the children were
 borne,¹³ when they had neither
 done good neither bad (that
 the purpose of God by
 eleccyon, myght stand) it
 was sayde vvnto her, not by
 [the]¹⁴ reason or workes, but
 by the caller: the elder
 shall serue the younger.
 As it is wrytte[n], Jacob
 haue I loued, but Esau
 haue I hated. (Romans 9:11-13)

Jacob and Esau

For it is not (sayth Paul)
in *mans renewing or will*,
But in God's mercy, who
chooseth whom he will.
(Prologue 11. 8-15)

Jacob and Esau

Oh the deepnesse of the
ryches of Gods wisdom, e,
How vnsearchable are his
wayes to mans reason.
(Prologue 11. 1813-14)

The Great Bible

So lieth it not then in
mans wyll or runnyng.¹⁵ but
in [the] mercye of God. (9:16)
So hath he mercye on whom
he will, and whom he wyll,
he maketh hard herted.
(Romans 9:17)

The Great Bible

O the depnes of [the] *riches*¹⁶
both of [the] wysdome and
knowledge of God: how
vnsearchable are his
judgeme[n]ts, a[n]d his wayes
past fyndinge out.

Yet, having established *The Great Bible* as the likely source for the above noted lines in *Jacob and Esau*, we ought not to dismiss outright the influence of Calvin's writings on the play. H.C. Porter observes that Calvin's *Institutes* were widely read by English undergraduates in the early fifteen-fifties. He adds that the Reformer's *De aeterna Dei Praedestinatione* was "swallowed whole" by a group of English theologians who were dissatisfied with the more moderate views of Archbishop Cranmer.¹⁷ Moreover, *Jacob and Esau* certainly would not have been the only English play of its day to bear the mark of Calvin's thought. *The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene*, which is Edwardian or early Elizabethan in date, converts whole passages on faith, repentance, and the law from *The Institutes* into dialogue form; and in *New Custom*, an interlude of the early fifteen-sixties, two leading characters, New Custom and Light of the Gospel, are Calvinist ministers newly arrived from Geneva.¹⁸

Certainly the author of *Jacob and Esau* shares Calvin's strong conviction that predestination should not be merely acknowledged and defended as a divine mystery (as the Lutherans were content to do), but that the realities of election and reprobation ought to be preached and propagated to all believers. Also strongly reminiscent of Calvin are the frequent references throughout the play to the mysteries and inscrutable nature of God's

ordinances.¹⁹ "What thou workest to the glory of thy name," the players sing in the play's first hymn to God, "passeth man's reason what way and how" (11. 847-75). These sentiments are also reflected in Isaac's last speech to Esau (11. 1471-76) and in the song that closes the action of the play (11. 1776-83). Even if the author of *Jacob and Esau* did not borrow directly from *The Institutes*, it is quite conceivable, given the popularity of Calvin's book in mid-sixteenth century England, that he was inspired to write the play by the eloquent treatment of the Old Testament story in the section of the 1539 edition of *The Institutes* devoted to predestination. This hypothesis, however, is purely speculative. The evidence supporting the case for Calvin's direct influence on the play's theology remains inconclusive, and, as we shall see shortly, the playwright departs from Calvin's own rigid teaching of "double predestination" – that the fates of the reprobate as well as the elect are determined by divine foreordination.

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Since *Jacob and Esau* was arguably written during the reign of Mary I, and since some scholars believe it to be the work of Nicholas Udall, who served in the Catholic Queen's court, is it not possible that the play reflects a Catholic view of predestination? Thomas has proposed that it does. She argues, mainly on the basis of certain lines in the Epilogue, that the author's opinions on predestination go directly against the teachings of both Calvin and Luther, and that they are more representative of contemporary Roman Catholic doctrine. "It is very likely," she concludes, that the play "is a dramatic statement of the position of Erasmus on predestination."²⁰ The lines she refers to are as follows:

Yet not all fleshe did he predestinate,
But onely the adopted children of promise:
For he foreknewe that many would degenerate,
And wylfully give cause to put from that blisse.
(11. 1801-4)

Thomas comments, "Thus God's foreknowledge of man's future actions is given as the cause of His choice of the elect and the reprobated."²¹ From the Poet's remark that foreknowledge of sin is the basis of excluding many from bliss (the meaning of the latter two lines), Thomas has deduced that election, as well as reprobation, is a consequence of God's foreknowledge of man's actions. This is, indeed, the position of Erasmus on predestination,

and one that Thomas Aquinas made orthodox in Roman Catholic theology, but it is not the view expressed in *Jacob and Esau*. Thomas, I believe, has misread the text. The Poet is saying here that, while God has predestined the elect to salvation, he did not actually predetermine, but only foreknew, the fate of the many others who were not elected; their degeneracy or sin is the cause of their exclusion from eternal bliss.

This moderate Calvinist position (that reprobation was not the object of a divine foreordination but simply the state of those not chosen by God) was adopted by Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr,²² two of Calvin's closest colleagues and supporters in England, and by many of their English contemporaries, notably John Bradford. As stated earlier, Bradford was embroiled in the famous Marian debate over predestination in the King's Bench Prison in 1554. Fortunately, his contribution to the dispute has survived, and since his written opinions upon the subject appear to have been approved by Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the three leading divines of the Edwardian Church,²³ it may be said that they generally reflect the views of most committed English Protestants during the 1550's.

Bradford writes that it does not hurt to "affirm, teach, and preach" the doctrine that "Christ elected some, and not all," since it is set forth unto man in the Bible.²⁴ According to Bradford, predestination "utterly overthroweth the wisdom, power, ableness, and choice of man, that all glory may be given only unto God" (Bradford, I, p. 315). The Edwardian Reformer follows Calvin in declaring that "election is not to be looked upon but in Christ" (Bradford, I, p. 22).²⁵ "Christ's death is sufficient for all," he asserts, "but effectual to none but to the elect only." He comes close to advocating limited atonement in believing that Christ "prayed not" for all men, and that "for whom he 'prayed no,' for them he died not" (Bradford, I, p. 320). While reprobation, as well as election, serve to glorify God, Bradford, like Calvin, places the responsibility for damnation squarely on the reprobate's shoulders (Bradford, I, p. 220). Where he significantly deviates from Calvin, however, is in his assertion that God's rejection of the reprobate is based not upon a positive eternal decree (as Calvin evidently believed), but on his foreknowledge of sin: "the damned therefore have not nor shall not have any excuse, for God, foreseeing their condemnation through their own sin, did not draw them as he doth his elect unto Christ" (Bradford, I, p. 219).

Thus, when the Poet declares in the Epilogue that God predestined "onely the adopted children of promise," and that "he foreknewe that many [ie. the reprobate] would degenerate, / And wyfully giue cause to be put from that

blisse," he was expressing this more moderate Calvinist position on predestination.

The Poet goes on to say that due to the Fall, all men are subject to damnation on account of their sins, so "Where he chooseth, he sheweth his great mercy:/ And where he refuseth, he doth none iniury" (ll. 1806-7). In anticipation of those who may ask why Christ did not offer his mercy to all of mankind, the Poet declares that the mysteries of predestination "farre surmounteth mans intellection,/ To attaine or conceiue, and much more to discusse," and adds that such matters must be referred to "Gods election,/ And to his secret iudgement" (ll. 1808-10). Here, the author complies with Calvin, who often warned against indulging in speculative thought on predestination, for to seek knowledge of it outside of the Scriptures is a confusing and dangerous business, and "no less madnesse than if a man haue a will to goe by vnpassable waye, or to see in darknesse" (*Inst.* III.xxi.2).

Jacob and Esau, then, like several other mid-sixteenth-century interludes that depict offsetting elect and reprobate characters (see eg. *Nice Wanton* and *Enough is as Good as Feast*),²⁶ appears to be moderately Calvinist in its view of predestination. In this respect, it reflects the opinions of Bradford, Ridley, and other English Reformers of the time who staunchly defended divine determinism against human free-will without going so far as to acknowledge that reprobation as well as election is directly willed by God. And while the anonymous author may have been familiar with, possibly influenced by, Calvin's *Institutes*, the direct source for several lines in the Prologue and the Epilogue seems to have been an early English version of the Scriptures, probably *The Great Bible*, popular among English Protestants between its first printing in 1539 and the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign.

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Notes

- 1 See H. C. Porter, *Puritanism in Tudor England* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 56. See also Note 17 below.
- 2 See John Strype, *Memorials of the Most Reverend Father in God Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1840), I, 502-5; *Authentic Documents Relative to the Predestinarian Controversy under Mary*, ed., Richard Laurence (Oxford: W. Baxter, 1819); and *The Writings of Bradford*, ed. E. A. Townsend, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1848), I, 307ff.
- 3 See F. P. Wilson and G. K. Hunter, *The English Drama 1485-1585* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), pp. 95-96.
- 4 The case for William Hunnis as author has been put forward by C. C. Stopes, *William Hunnis and the Revels of the Chapel Royal* (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1910), and more recently and persuasively by N. S. Pasachoff, in "Playwrights, Preachers and Politicians: A Study of

- Four Tudor Old Testament Dramas" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1970), pp. 16-55. William Hunnis served as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal under Edward VI and was later appointed Chapel Master in 1568, the year *Jacob and Esau* was reprinted. It has been suggested that Nicholas Udall wrote the play, on the basis of several metrical similarities between *Jacob and Esau* and Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*. However, both Pasachoff and Glynne Wickham consider the case for Udall's authorship highly suspect. Pasachoff: "If both plays were written for school boys, the similarities between them may owe more to their generic nature than to the identity of the playwrights" (p. 42). Moreover, as Wickham points out, one finds it hard to believe that Udall, whose lack of religious commitment is evidenced by his continuing favour at Queen Mary's court after Edward VI's death, would have written such a staunchly Protestant play as *Jacob and Esau*. See *Early English Stages* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959-80), III, 304.
- 5 Instead of showing that Rebecca and Jacob, in deceptively plotting Esau's downfall, were self-seeking and presumptuously intervening in the divine plan (the standard view of Anglican biblical commentaries), the author attempts to demonstrate that the seizure of the birthright was in fact sanctioned by God as the means of unseating corrupt authority and fulfilling God's promise to Jacob. This observation has led to the belief that the play implicitly sanctions rebellion against corrupt authority when divinely inspired. See David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 112. See also Pasachoff, pp. 16-55, and Wickham, III, 232.
 - 6 "The Date of 'The History of Jacob and Esau,'" *English Studies* 15 (1933), 218-19.
 - 7 Helen Thomas, "Jacob and Esau - 'rigidly Calvinistic?'" *Studies in English Literature*, 9 (1969), 199-213.
 - 8 For more on this homiletic structure in medieval and Reformation English drama, see Wickham, III, 133-34; my own doctoral study, "Calvinism and the English Stage: 1547-1576", (Ph.D. Thesis, Drama Department, University of Bristol, 1983), pp. 73-74; and G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1933), pp. 471-547.
 - 9 *Jacob and Esau*, ed. John Crow and F. P. Wilson, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), The Prologue, 11. 8-19. All subsequent references to this play will be taken from this edition.
 - 10 This is indicated in a speech delivered just before he follows his mother's instructions to beguile Isaac for the blessing:

But as for this matter which she doth now intende,
 Without thy aide O Lorde, how should it come to ende.
 Neuerthelesse forasmuche as my said mother,
 Worketh upon thy worde O Lorde, and none other,
 It shall become me to shewe mine obedience,
 And to thy promise O Lorde, to guie due credence.
 (11. 1225-30)
 - 11 See Scheurweghs, pp. 218-19.
 - 12 *The Byble* (London: Grafton and Whitchurch, 1539); all references to *The Great Bible* will be to this edition. *The Great Bible* is a revision of the Matthew Bible (1537), which was John Roger's updated edition of Tyndale's translation, and relies also on Coverdale's own earlier Bible of 1535. See A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken, 1964), pp. 129-35. The playwright may have known these earlier and considerably less popular Bibles, yet their parallels with the *Jacob and Esau* text are not nearly as numerous or as striking as those that *The Great Bible* has with the play. See, for example, comparable passages from Tyndale's *New Testament* cited in the notes below.
 - 13 The playwright has simply reversed the verb order from "were born" to "born were" apparently to accommodate the rhyme with 'bear' in line 10. Compare *The Great Bible's* phrasing with the wording in Tyndale's *New Testament* (1526; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1938), which the playwright also possibly knew: "Yeer the chyldren were borne,

when they had nether done good nether bad..." Like *The Great Bible*, *Jacob and Esau* prefers "yet" to Tyndale's "yeer," which appears to be a variation of "ere" (see OED). By contrast, the Authorized version of 1611 reads: "For the children *being not yet born*, neither having done good or evil..."

- 14 Here and in other quoted passages from *The Great Bible*, '[the]' is substituted for 'y,' which is a familiar form of 'th' and 'the' in Tudor manuscripts (see OED).
- 15 Tyndale's version is close in phrasing, but uses "cunnyng" rather than "renewing" (*Jacob and Esau*) or "running" (*The Great Bible*, KJV): "so lieth it not then in a mans will or cunnyng, but in the mercye of god" (9:16). The KJV reads: "So, then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (9:16).
- 16 Tyndale's version: "O the depnes of the aboundaunt wysdome and knowledge of God." KJV: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."
- 17 See Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 56. One of these may have been the martyr John Philpot. While in the King's Bench Prison for heresy during the early part of Queen Mary's reign, Philpot defended the church and doctrine of Geneva, praised Calvin's Institutes, and in a letter to his parishioners advised them to adhere to Calvin's doctrine of predestination. See John Philpot, *Examinations and Writings*, ed. R. Eden, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1842), pp. 223-34.
- 18 See my article, "Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* and John Calvin," *Notes and Queries*, 226 (1981), 508-1, and thesis, "Calvinism and the English Stage, 1547-1576," Chapter 6.
- 19 See *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, trans. Thomas Norton (1561; rpt. London: n.p., 1582), particularly III.xxiii.5 and III.xxi.2.
- 20 Thomas, p. 213. Thomas believes that the play was written by Nicholas Udall; see Note 4 above for the question of the play's authorship.
- 21 Thomas, p. 202.
- 22 Peter Martyr, who served as Doctor of Divinity at Oxford in 1550, argued that "predestination refers to saints only while the reprobate are not predestinate, since sin is the only cause of reprobation." Cited in R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p. 30. For Bucer's views, see *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (London: Westminster, 1969); and François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Glasgow: Collins, 1965), pp. 280-282.
- 23 John Strype, the late seventeenth-century historian who had access to many no longer extant documents related to the controversy, writes the following: "Bradford was apprehensive that they [the free-willers] might now do great harm in the church, and therefore out of prison wrote a letter to Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the three chief heads of the reformed (though oppressed) church in England, to take some cognizance of this matter, and to consult with them in remedying it. And with him joined Bishop Ferrar, Rowland Taylor, and John Philpot. . . . Upon this occasion, Ridley wrote a treatise of *God's Election and Predestination*. And Bradford wrote another upon the same subject; and sent it to those three fathers in Oxford for their approbation: and, theirs being obtained, the rest of the eminent divines, in and about London, were ready to sign it also" (*Memorials of... Thomas Cranmer*, *op. cit.*, pp. 502-3.).
- 24 The Writings of John Bradford, *op. cit.*, I, 311; all subsequent references to this work will appear in parentheses in the text.
- 25 See *Inst.* III, xxiv, 5.
- 25 In *Nice Wanton*, the godly Barnabus is juxtaposed to the delinquent youths, Ismael and Dalilah; in *Enough*, the hell-bound Worldly Man faces his saintly counterpart Heavenly Man. Other plays which illustrate predestination this way are *The Trial of Treasure* and *The Glass of Government*.