

discuss how to suppress heresy. Instead, he attacked his audience for their vena-
lity and worldliness. According to Colet, what are the problems of the Church?
(Compare with Starkey's diagnosis, document 1.7 above.) Who is to blame
for them? Can they be solved? Do Colet and other critics below really refute the
positive view of parochial religious life portrayed by Martyn (document 3.1)?
Alternately, did the "secular evils" he describes really affect everyday paro-
chial life? Might both pictures of the pre-Reformation Church be accurate?

How much greediness and appetite of honor and dignity is nowadays in men of
the Church? How run they, yea, almost out of breath, from one benefice to
another; from the less to the more, from the lower to the higher? ... The second
secular evil is carnal concupiscence. Hath not this vice so grown and waxen in
the Church as a flood of their lust, so that there is nothing looked for more
diligently in this most busy time of the most part of priests than that that doth
delight and please the senses? They give themselves to feasts and banqueting;
they spend themselves in vain babbling; they give themselves to sports and plays;
they apply themselves to hunting and hawking; they drown themselves in the
delights of this world. ... Covetousness is the third secular evil, the which Saint
John the apostle calleth concupiscence of the eyes. ... This abominable pestilence
hath so entered in the mind almost of all priests, and so hath blinded the eyes of
the mind, that we are blind to all things but only unto those which seem to bring
unto us some gains. For what other thing seek we nowadays in the Church than
fat benefices and high promotions? Yea, and in the same promotions, of what
other thing do we pass upon than of our tithes and rents? ... Of thee, all the
suing for tithes, for offering, for mortuaries, for dilapidations, by the right and
title of the Church. ... The fourth secular evil that spotteth and maketh ill
favored the face of the Church, is the continual secular occupation, wherein
priests and bishops nowadays doth busy themselves, the servants rather of men
than of God; the warriors rather of this world than of Christ.

3.3 *Confession of John Pykas of Colchester (March 7, 1527)*⁴

The Church did not take critics lightly; instead, it often banished them from
the Church as heretics. Henry VII and Henry VIII either burnt or otherwise
persecuted Lollards and other late medieval heretics with enthusiasm. While
most Lollards pre-date the Lutheran Reformation, John Pykas, who con-
fessed before a bishop's court in London, appears to have been a latter-day
Lollard. Why was the bishop's court so concerned about him? Were his

⁴ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials: relating chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of it, and the Emergencies of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary I* (Oxford, 1822), 1.i: 121-3.

ideas "Protestant"? (Admittedly, the term would not become common in England until the 1550s.) How would Pykas react to Martyn's views on proper religious expression (document 3.1)? How might everyday life have changed if Pykas's ideas had been put into practice?

That about a five years last past, at a certain time, his mother, then dwelling in Bury, sent for him; and moved him that he should not believe in the sacraments of the Church, for that was not the right way. And then she delivered to this respondent one book of Paul's Epistles in English; and bid him live after the manner and way of the said Epistles and Gospels, and not after the way that the Church doth teach. Also, about a two years last past, he bought in Colchester, of [from] a Lombard [a North Italian, probably a banker] of London, a New Testament in English, and paid for it four shillings. Which New Testament he kept, and read it thoroughly many times. And afterward, when he heard that the said New Testaments were forbidden, that no man should keep them, he delivered it and the book of Paul's Epistles to his mother again. And so in continuance of time, by the instruction of his mother, and by reading of the said books, he fell into these errors and heresies against the sacrament of the altar; that he thought that in the sacrament of the altar, after the words of consecration, not the *very body* of Christ, but only *bread* and *wine*.

Which heresy he hath diverse time spoken and taught; not only in the house of Thomas Matthew, in the presence of the said Matthew's wife, William Pykas, and Marion Westden, daughter to Matthew's wife; but also in the houses and presences of John Thompson, fletcher [maker of bows and arrows]; Dorothy Lane, Robert Best, Mistress Swain, John Girling; John Bradley, blacksmith, and his wife; Thomas Parker, weaver; Margaret Bowgas, the wife of Thomas Bowgas; Mistress Cambridge, widow, of the town of Colchester: and also in the house and presence of John Hubbert, of East Donyland; Robert Bate, of the same; Richard Collins, alias Jonson, weaver of Boxstead; John Wiley, of Horkesley, weaver. Which all and singular persons, often and many times have had communication of the said articles with him ... and did affirm them to be of truth. ...

Also he saith, that he hath taught, rehearsed, and affirmed, before all the said persons, and in their houses at sundry times, against the sacrament of Baptism, saying that there should be no such things: for there is no baptism, but of the Holy Ghost. ... Also he saith, that he hath in the places and presence aforesaid, spoken against the sacrament of confession, saying, that it was sufficient for a man that had offended to show his sins privily to God, without confession made to a priest. Yet notwithstanding this respondent hath yearly been confessed ..., but for no other cause, but that people should not wonder upon him.

Also he saith, that he hath heard diverse preachers preach, and especially Mr. Bynney [Thomas Bilney, censured in 1527 and executed as a relapsed heretic in 1531, see Plate 3] preach at Ipswich, that it was but folly for a man to go on pilgrimages to saints; for they be but stocks and stones; for they cannot speak to a man, nor do him any good. And also that men should pray only to God, and



Plate 3 Thomas Bilney ejected from the pulpit. (Source: J. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*, 1563, woodcut, © British Library.)

Depicted is Bilney's ejection in 1527; he was executed as a relapsed heretic in 1531 (see document 3.3). What does the pulpit represent in Protestant ideology? Compare Bilney's ejectors with his audience in this woodcut. Foxe's book is famous for portraying the Marian martyrs, although this clearly happened under Henry VIII, just before the Henrician Reformation. How are these the "latter and perilous days" for Foxe (relate to the Book of Revelation)?

to no saints. For saints can hear no man's prayer, for they are but servants. Which after this respondent heard preached, he did publish and declare it to diverse persons, and set it forward as much as in him was. Moreover he saith, that Mr. Bynney's sermon was most ghostly [spiritual], and made best for his purpose and opinions, as any that ever he heard in his life. ...

Also he confesses, that he hath spoken, rehearsed, and affirmed, in the presence and places aforesaid, and diverse other more; against pardons, saying and affirming, that pardons [indulgences] granted by the pope, or other men of the Church, are of no effect. For they have no authority to grant them. ...

Farther, he saith, that he hath now in his custody [several religious] books ..., which he had of a friar of Colchester: also a book ... which he had of old Father Hacker, alias Ebbe. Also he had the copy of a book ..., of his brother William Pykas. ... [Witnessed] by me John Pekas, of Colchester.