General Introduction

ICONOCLASM IN REFORMATION ENGLAND

In 1547, the young King Edward VI issued a series of religious injunctions intending to reform the churches in England. Among the targets of these injunctions were icons and other religious imagery, about which he commanded his clergy and royal officials:

> Take away, utterly extinct, and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candle-sticks, trindals, and rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glasses, windows, or elsewhere with their churches and houses, preserving nevertheless or repairing both the walls and glass windows. And they shall exhort all their parishioners to do the like within their several houses.[1]

England, in the 1540s, was already a doctrinal battlefield littered with the wreckage of religious images. Henry VIII had instituted a series of religious changes, particularly the dissolution of over 800 monasteries and nunneries, condemning large swathes of traditional Catholic religious practice and iconography. His son Edward and Edward's counsellors followed the even more iconoclastic example of the reform movements in Switzerland and Germany.[2] Images—statuaries, murals, stained glass, rood screens, altars, paintings, carvings, roadside crosses, and many other sorts—were the most public displays of Catholicism in the sixteenth century. Unlike other points of theological dispute, religious imagery was a tangible and permanent aspect of the landscape, both inside and outside the churches.

1. VAI, II, 126.
2. Wandel, *Voracious Idols*; Eire, *War Against the Idols*.

For many people, it was one of the first aspects of the church to be reformed, and the degree to which it was reformed often was indicative of an individual's or community's theological leanings.

Behind this destruction was a longstanding debate over the nature, purpose, and appropriate uses of images, particularly in relation to worship and devotion. The Reformation was not the first period in church history where Christians asked questions about images and art. Nor were Protestant reformers the first to seize the hammers of iconoclasm. Destroying would-be idols had marked strong religious sentiment since the early church, and both Catholics and Protestants employed the examples and arguments of earlier movements in their debates.[3] Reformers found inspiration from precedents like the Byzantine iconoclasm of the eighth century and from biblical models like the Old Testament King Josiah.[4]

The Reformation lines between icon and idol, however, are much more difficult to identify than any single debate, event, or royal injunction would suggest. One of the oftentimes overlooked aspects of the debates during the Reformation was how much the issues surrounding idolatry changed over time, not only as lines of demarcation shifted but also as certain points of emphasis arose as others fell away. This volume tracks the image debate—from the perspectives of both Protestants and Catholics—across the period of religious change in England from 1525 to 1625. England offers the most useful context for seeing this kind of diversity and change, as arguments and discourse in England evolved in different directions over the century. Unlike the reformations in Germany, France, and elsewhere, the image debate in England continued to play a major role in the theological discourse well into the seventeenth century. Also, England, while maintaining an official Protestant confession, played host to a variety of religious confessions and perspectives (some of which originated in continental Europe), including: pre- and post-Tridentine Catholicism, church papism (Catholics who conformed to the Book of Common Prayer), puritanism, Lutheranism, evangelical Protestantism, Anglicanism, and conforming Calvinism. Taken together, these different viewpoints demonstrate the richness and complexity of ideas that were on offer, each helping to shape one of the most

3. Van Asselt et al., eds, *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*; Kitzinger, *The Cult of Images*; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*.

4. Aston, *King's Bedpost*, 26–36. In this regard, the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy stands out among the rest. Unfortunately, it has historically been woefully oversimplified and misunderstood. See Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*; Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*; Parry, *Depicting the Word*. Perhaps the most thorough study of Carolingian iconoclasm and art is Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm*.

longstanding religious questions of the Reformation: what makes an image idolatrous?

Iconoclasm has been sifted thoroughly by historians, theologians, and literary experts over the past four decades. It is not my purpose here to retread what is already a well-paved road, but a few comments about this scholarship is useful. The English context has been examined particularly by John Philips and Margaret Aston. Aston's work has proven to be the most formative, outlining the intellectual and theological underpinnings of Protestant iconoclasm in England. Also, she demonstrated the importance of iconoclasm in the Reformation, as something that was more than simply the removal of visual religion:

> It was . . . quite as momentous as the removal of the monasteries. In some ways it was more so. Iconoclasm affected the whole fabric of worship and the ways in which people believed. It bore upon the making of the whole Reformation settlement. It contributed to the continuously recurring violence of the Reformation years a form of disturbance that led straight into the troubles of the Interregnum. Also, more theoretically, the switch from an imaging to an imageless church seems relevant to some of the major shifts in seventeenth-century thought.[5]

For scholars of the English Reformation, iconoclasm has played a major role in the historiographical disputes over the nature, length, and efficacy of Protestant reform. Since Eamon Duffy's revisionist work *The Stripping of the Altars*, which argued against a traditional understanding of the English Reformation as a revival of sincere religion, Protestant iconoclasm has become a necessary talking point when discussing the Reformation in England.[6] Iconoclasm mattered not only for the religion that it was destroying but also for the religion it was helping to create.

While there was a tradition of iconoclasm in England stemming back to the Lollard heresy of the fifteenth century, the English reformers took their lead in iconoclasm from the Lutheran and Swiss reformers who were already instituting different policies of iconoclasm on the continent in the 1520s.[7] The work of Carlos Eire, Lee Palmer Wandel, Sergiusz Michalski, and others have shaped our understanding of continental iconoclasm, and

5. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 16.

6. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*. The debate over the English Reformation has become something of a quagmire of academic wrangling, summarized in Marshall, "(Re)defining the English Reformation," 564–86.

7. On Lollard iconoclasm see Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*.

these will be referenced throughout this book in order to connect the continental and English reformations.[8]

Several key points arise from these works about the general nature of Reformation iconoclasm that are important to mention here. First, even in Protestant regions, not all destruction was legal, and civil authorities (regardless of their beliefs) generally frowned upon non-official destruction.[9] Simply because city officials were removing and burning images did not permit everyone to rush pell-mell into the churches, ripping and destroying as they went. Second, the emphasis that reformers placed upon the act of destroying images could fluctuate dramatically, so that a single year could contain most of the iconoclasm in a region for that decade. Third, few reformers agreed completely with one another about the theological motivation behind iconoclasm or what should be destroyed and by whom.[10]

Since the late 1980s, many historians have seen the Protestant church in England as an iconophobic institution after the year 1580. This thesis, which was first put forward by the late Patrick Collinson, has been heavily criticized over the last twenty years.[11] At the same time, there is a growing recognition that very few Protestants ever denounced all visual images, even all religious images. There has been for some time a silent admission that the relationship between the visual arts and the Reformation movements across Europe is much more subtle and complex than previously assumed. Protestants regularly failed to find consensus on many basic questions surrounding iconoclasm and image use. What constituted an idol? Should they be defaced or completely annihilated? Could legitimate images become idols? Could idols be reformed? Were there degrees of reverence/respect that someone could give to an image without committing idolatry? What degrees were appropriate? There are no cut-and-dry answers to these questions from the Protestant position in England.

IMAGES AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Alongside the destruction that has come to characterize the Protestant relationship with religious imagery, recent studies highlight the various

8. The Dutch Reformation's waves of iconoclasm, and the Calvinist theology behind these waves, has been studied by Crew, *Calvinist Preaching.*

9. Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 151–65.

10. Michalski still has the most thorough reading of the major continental Protestant positions on images, though he wrongly lumps John Calvin in with Andreas Karlstadt as an iconophobe: Michalski, *Reformation and the Visual* Arts, 1–74.

11. Collinson, "From Iconoclasm." For one of the earliest challenges to the iconophobia thesis see Watt, *Cheap Print*, 136–9.

ways that Protestants—from across the confessional spectrum—used images. The uses that Protestants in England found for images varies strikingly, undermining any strict, simplistic icon/idol paradigm. First and foremost, Protestants continued to employ images as works of art. Recent works on visual culture and art history have begun to balance out the long-held, oversimplified paradigm of Protestants being inherently iconoclastic. Art historical studies by scholars like Carl Christensen drew attention to the extensive use Lutherans made of certain art forms, particularly in the works of artists like Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Durer. Christensen writes, "Luther's theology . . . called for a somewhat more discriminating use of religious imagery than had characterized the Roman Catholic Church . . . . Yet it is equally clear that the reformer by no means intended to eliminate the contribution of the artist to the worship and teaching of Christendom."[12] This seems to hold true, though to a lesser degree, in the Calvinist reformation in the Dutch Republic, which was perhaps the most iconoclastic of the reform movements. Recent examinations of both painting and printed images have revealed a robust religious art culture.[13] Similarly, scholarship of early modern England demonstrates a burgeoning art culture that proudly displayed religious themes in paintings and interior decor.[14]

A second use that Protestants found for images were as tools in propaganda.[15] The anti-Catholic propaganda of Lutheranism in the 1520s, expertly analyzed by Robert Scribner, influenced Protestant visual culture in England, providing it certain visual tropes to excoriate Catholicism and positively depict things like justification by faith and the preaching of the Word.[16] The pope and the clergy were regularly depicted as the antichrist, the whore of Babylon, and the spawn of devils, and his disciples and followers were portrayed as dupes, idolaters, and fools.

A third use for images in Protestant England was book illustration. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, many of the woodcuts and engravings in Protestant books were quite similar to images that were being ripped from the churches, but this did not strike Protestant readers as duplicitous or hypocritical.[17] Protestants, both in England and continental Europe, often used pictures of Christ, God the Father, the Virgin, biblical events,

12. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation*, 65.

13. Works on the visual culture of the Dutch Republic include: Vanhaelen, *Wake of Iconoclasm*; Stronks, *Negotiating Differences*.

14. Hamling and Williams, eds, *Art Re-formed*; Hunter, ed., *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain*; Davis, *Seeing Faith*; Morton, "Images and the Senses."

15. For an overview of visual propaganda see Pettegree, *Reformation*, 102–27.

16. Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk*.

17. Davis, *Seeing Faith*.

and portraits of Protestant clergy to illustrate their books. The pictures of martyrs and heroic clergy in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (popularly known as the *Book of Martyrs*) is perhaps the most obvious example in England. The 1570 edition contained over one hundred woodcuts, depicting the deaths of saints from the early church to the reign of Queen Mary in the 1550s.[18] However, Bibles, prayer books, devotionals, theological tomes, and many other texts were illustrated with a variety of religious images. While some Protestants voiced concerns over particular illustrations—a few Puritans even condemned the 1568 Bishops Bible (see document 9) for some of its illustrations—on the whole, there was more acceptance than distaste for religious images in books.[19]

Finally, we must not neglect the fact that Protestants used images for devotional purposes. Although it may seem counterintuitive, and it runs in the face of a great deal of Protestant polemic, it is clear that Protestants employed visual images in specific contexts to aid in spiritual devotion and understanding. Both Joseph Koerner and Robert Scribner have studied how Lutherans put images to use in devotional contexts, and recent studies on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century church altars indicates that the visual was not insignificant to devotion.[20] Most of the printed images in English Bibles were intended to inspire and aid in devotional reading. The preface to the Geneva Bible, which was the most Calvinist of English translations, specifically states this as their purpose. Furthermore, one of the most popular ways of depicting biblical saints in Protestant prayer books was to have them kneeling in supplication before a symbol of God (usually the Tetragrammaton).[21]

THE REFORMATION IMAGE DEBATE

Iconoclasm shaped the English Reformation in many ways. Religious images played an important role in the culture of late medieval Catholic devotion, and they became a lightning rod for acts of reformed violence, perpetrated by both the monarchy and the populace, from the pre-Reformation Lollard movement and the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the Puritan movement

18. Luborsky and Ingram, *A Guide to English Illustrated Books*, I.365–82; King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 162–95; Aston, "The Iconography."

19. Margaret Aston has analyzed the debate over pictures of godly churchmen, including Theodore Beze's approval of such images in Aston, "Gods, Saints, and Reformers."

20. Koerner, *Reformation of the Image*; Scribner, *Religion and Culture*, 104–28; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

21. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 183; Davis, *Seeing Faith*, 206–10.

and the English Civil War.[22] Religious images were never simply pictures and statues, nor were they, as reformers would have us believe, only materialistic remnants of a corrupt Roman Catholic faith that had succumb to the allure of idolatry. Religious imagery came to be a marker of religious identity and confession, for both the Catholic Church and the various Protestant churches. What a person did to, or with, an image was also a profession of their own religious views on larger questions of faith and practice. People knelt before images, prayed to them, performed pilgrimages to them, burned candles before them, broke them, burned them, kissed them, bowed to them with reverence (with and without worshipful intent), ignored them, printed them in books, defended them as things indifferent, and used them to mock their religious opponents.

Images served as markers of religious identity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A person's inclination, or lack thereof, toward image use in religious devotion went a long way in announcing their own doctrinal and confessional positions. Even among different Protestant groups, a person's opinion of what images were tolerable, how they could be used in devotion (if at all), and the possibility of idolatrous worship provided a good indicator of the person's broader theology. These distinctions were not without meaning, and they are important to understand in order to fully comprehend the scope and complexity of the reformed movements.

Before we go any further, it is worthwhile addressing a common misconception about images in the Reformation. It is important to avoid the overly simplistic paradigm that sets Protestants opposing images and Catholics defending them. John Dillenberger exemplifies this egregious generalization when he writes, "By definition, the Reformed tradition kept the verbal modalities so central that the visual was rejected . . . the sight lines of worship were different, all looking at one point, with attention only on hearing. Other sensibilities—seeing, tasting, smelling—had no place. Concentration must be on the Word alone in the medium of words, not the medium of sight."[23] Certainly, many Protestants destroyed or advocated the destruction of images that they considered idolatrous, and Catholics revered the same images as icons. However, treating either group as a homogenous whole is erroneous, as both Protestants and Catholics could vary in their beliefs about images from other individuals of the same creed. At certain times and places, Protestants also reverenced particular kinds of images, and Catholics were not above destroying, or even banning, choice

22. Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*; Phillips, *Reformation of Images*.

23. Dillenberger, *Images and Relics*, 190. For an excellent reevaluation of this view, see Milner, *The Senses*.

depictions and representations, such as certain representations of the Trinity.[24] Part of the reason that oversimplifications, like Dillenberger's, continue to hold intellectual traction is that many of the sources that speak to the debate over images are difficult to access. While scholarship on iconoclasm and the image debate has teased out many of the nuanced relations between early modern Christians and religious images, primary sources like John Martiall's *A Treatise of the Cross* or William Perkins's *A Golden Chain* remain largely in the hands of the specialist academic. The purpose of this volume is to take a step in the direction of remedying this deficiency by providing a selection of different works from various authorities in the sixteenth-century debate. The documents in this volume represent a variety of positions on religious images, from a multitude of arguments and lines of reasoning.

Although it would not be unfruitful to identify every individual argument, it is sufficient for our purposes here to identify four major categories of the debate that all of the arguments fall into. First, many of the debates centered on the use and interpretation of particular biblical passages. All sides found scriptural justification for their views. Those who defended the use of images in religious devotion turned to the examples of the Old Testament temple in 2 Chronicles 3, which describes how Solomon was ordered to build statues of the cherubim. Also, the veneration of angels and divine visions (e.g., Genesis 18, Joshua 5, and Daniel 9) are identified as examples of appropriate forms of veneration. On the opposite side of the debate, iconoclasts martial verses that command and give examples of the destruction of images in the Old Testament (e.g., Deuteronomy 4, Isaiah 30, and 1 Kings 15). Also, the lists of sins in the New Testament that identify idolatry among them are often noted (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6, Galatians 5, Ephesians 5, and Colossians 3). Of course, the most important scriptural reference was the commandment against idolatry in Exodus 20. Iconoclasts noted this as irrefutable evidence against image veneration, whereas those who reverenced images believed it was directed only at images that were truly idols, which they defined in two ways. First, idols could only be representations of pagan gods that were being used in divine worship. Or, second, idols were images that had suffered idolatrous abuse, by being treated as God.

Second, the Reformation image debates were linguistic disputes. In particular, the authors focused on the distinction between Latin words meaning images (*imago* and *idolum*) and the distinction between types of worship (*dulia* and *latria*). Concerning the first distinction, a great deal of ink was spilled explaining, as Catholic writers will say, that while the Latin

24. Hallebeek, "Papal Prohibitions," in van Asselt, et al., eds, *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, 353–86.

words are used for two words in Greek (*eikon* and *eidolon*), Protestants conflate their meaning to mean only idol in their condemnation of idolatry, when they argue that all images are potentially idols. This, for Protestants, will take a dangerous turn at the end of the sixteenth century, when Catholic writers raised the question of how Protestants determined when this conflation is not appropriate. The distinction between *dulia* and *latria* was as equally influential, as Catholic writers distinguished between types of veneration, a lesser kind offered to saints and kings (*dulia*) and a greater kind offered only to God (*latria*). While Protestants will initially dismiss this distinction as mere dissimulation, they will develop their own distinctions to separate kinds of honor that they pay to representations of the monarchy, the Bible, and God.

Third, the image debates employed historical arguments, drawn from patristic texts, church history, and church tradition. Both Catholics and Protestants pulled passages (regularly out of context) from a variety of church fathers, including: Cyprian, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus, Eusebius of Caeasaria, and John Chrysostom. For Catholic writers, most influential were the eighth-century treatises on images by John of Damascus. His arguments were regularly employed by Catholic authors, from the defense of laymen's books and historical examples of Christians using images for different kinds of veneration.[25] For iconoclastic Protestants, however, a letter from Pope Gregory the Great to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, was among the most popular sources. In the letter, Gregory condemned the iconoclasm of saints' statues. Protestants pointed to this letter as the beginning of illicit image worship.[26] Although these precedents were never considered sufficient on their own to warrant image veneration or condemnation, both Protestants and Catholics were careful to address them and to contest the other's use of particular sources.

Fourth, and finally, the debates stressed the distinctions between kinds of images and kinds of image veneration. The debates emphasized the practical use and/or abuse of images as a demarcation between image and idol. There was no consensus among Protestants as to the exact line separating the use and abuse of images, making this one of the more ambiguous—and thus hotly contested—topics of the debates. Since most Protestants considered images, themselves divorced from any context, to be *adiaphora* (things indifferent), images were neither essentially virtuous nor essentially corrupt and could potentially be used for either purpose. Determining when idolatry

25. Louth, ed. *Three Treatises*.

26. Gregory, "Epistle XIII," in NPNF, 2nd Series, vol. XIII, II.297–98.

occurred became a key issue. For the early reformer Martin Bucer (document 3), idolatry happened when images were brought into the churches, and many English Protestants followed this line of reasoning. Others, even Puritans like William Fulke, deviated from Bucer, stressing instead the ways that images were used in churches (i.e., an image of the queen could be set up without fear of idolatry).[27] Multiple factors could play into this question: location, historical use/abuse, popular appeal, color, size, dimensions, and what was represented. However, there was not ever any precise litmus test, short of devotees kneeling before an image and calling it God, that all Protestants agreed upon that could distinguish an image from an idol.[28] On the other hand, Catholic defenders of image veneration stressed that images of biblical and Christian figures could not be mistaken for idols, nor abused as idols were abused. However, they are not all in agreement here. Some, following the example of Thomas More, refused to admit the possibility that an icon could be corrupted, whereas others like Nicholas Sander (document 14) conceded the point, at least theoretically. Nevertheless, Catholics argued that, whatever the potential for idolatrous abuse, images continued to be valuable, as reminders of scriptural events and truths, as foci of reverence, and as laymen's books for those who could not read the scriptures.[29]

ABOUT THE DOCUMENTS

The documents that I have brought together for this volume are intended to be representative and indicative, rather than a comprehensive compilation of everything written on the subject. That being said, this book suffers from the shortcomings of all such collections. There are many sources that have not been included that arguably could have been, as the debate on images was taken up by many polemicists and theologians. What *From Icons to Idols* lacks in its exhaustiveness, I trust it will make up for in the authority and variety of its selections. Here, we have selections by writers from all walks of life: leading Protestant and Catholic theologians, Protestant bishops, Catholic cardinals, linguists, polemicists, printers, noblemen, and commoners. The types of texts from which these selections derive are no less diverse. Some are polemical works dripping with venom, others are careful theological tomes, as well as collected sermons. There are sermons intended as rote homilies, a catechism for those with limited education, and a private letter between cousins on opposites sides of the Reformation divide. What

27. Fulke, *A Defence*, 204.
28. Davis, *Seeing Faith*, 45–60.
29. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 130–32; Wandel, *Voracious Idols*, 49–51

is most interesting in all of this diversity of writer and text is that on the one hand the major arguments, sources, and ideas remain relatively consistent. As we noted above, most of the arguments for or against images fall fairly comfortably into four categories, with much of the material being reused across several decades. On the other hand, there is a great deal of evolution as well. Different arguments and lines of reasoning are given more attention at certain times. The earlier arguments never fully evaporate, but later writers build upon aspects of them, abandon some parts, and place new issues at the forefront of debate.

The documents in the first part of this book represent the period of the Early Reformation, from before Henry VIII's break with Rome in the early 1530s until the reign of his daughter Queen Mary in the 1550s. This period contains perhaps the greatest variety of opinions on religious images, reflecting the fluctuating state of the English church.[30] Most importantly, it is clear in this section that images faced challenges from within and without Catholic orthodoxy (document 1) and that there is no Protestant consensus on images. William Tyndale (document 2) voices a more tolerant view of images than Martin Bucer (document 3) or John Calvin (document 5), but none of them completely condemned visual arts.

The second part of this book looks at the image debate in the Elizabethan years (1558–1603). Although two of the documents (documents 11, 15) were written before this period, the authors' influence in England became most profound in the latter half of the sixteenth century as a new generation of English Protestant clergy, who had cut their teeth on the writings of the continental reformers, took the reins of the church. The 1560s were a critical decade in the image debate of this period. Not only were two substantial Catholic apologies on image veneration (documents 13 and 14) written in these years, but also there were several conflicts within the Church of England dealing with imagery (see the introductions of documents 8, 9, and 12). While Queen Elizabeth's royal injunctions against images echoed her brother Edward's in many respects, there is clearly a shift toward a moderate view of iconoclasm. Not only did the queen keep a golden cross in her private chapel, and defend public monuments like the Cheapside Cross, which stood in the center of London, but she also insisted that stained glass windows be spared and that her bishops don the appropriate vestments during church service.[31]

30. For more on the English official religion during this period see Ryrie, *The Gospel*; MacCulloch, *The Boy King*.

31. Budd, "Rethinking Iconoclasm."

The third and final part of this book, which deals with the post-Reformation years during the reign of James I (1603–25), demonstrates the continued importance of the image debate to English religion. It begins with a debate between the Calvinist theologian William Perkins and the future Catholic bishop William Bishop. Perhaps most significantly in this section, it is evident that Protestant views on images have not fused together, as there is still a great difference between the modifying language of Richard Montagu (document 21) and Perkins's assault on Catholic idolatry (document 17). The debate is also part of the larger Catholic polemics and apologies of the day (documents 18 and 20), as well as the more accessible statements of catechetical dogma (document 19). Finally, document 22 offers a fitting conclusion to this collection, summarizing and echoing many of the essential debates surrounding images and placing the image debate in a context (a private letter) in which it is rarely seen.

NOTES ON THE TRANSCRIPTION

Any transcription or translation work must balance faithfulness to the original texts alongside the need to communicate clearly with the modern reader. Here, I have erred on the side of communication when necessary. The documents in this collection have been modernized as much as possible without clouding the meaning of the original. Thus, spellings (e.g., hath, doeth, iustice, etc.) have been updated, but arcane words (e.g., cavillation) have been retained, and a note on the meaning included when necessary. Likewise comma usage has been modernized and standardized. Slashes (/), which were common elements of grammar in the sixteenth century, have been replaced with semicolons or commas where appropriate. Colons have been replaced by periods when they clearly indicate the end of an independent clause. Inconsistent capitalization of the first letter of certain words (e.g., images, reformers, etc.) has been modernized when it is appropriate and not indicating a proper noun. "God" has been capitalized throughout, when it is a reference to the Christian God, and "Church" has been capitalized when it is a reference to the universal body of Christ.

Most of documents are presented here as large excerpts from the originals, and some are complete translations. However, several of them, because of space constraints and the length of the original, have been limited. Whenever text has been removed from the transcription, ellipses have been used to indicate it. When a portion of removed text is substantial (more than one paragraph), then the ellipses is preceded and followed by a paragraph break.

Greek and Hebrew fonts have been retained whenever they are employed, and likewise for any time an author places Greek script into Latin font. Quotes from foreign languages have been set off in italics, whereas quotations in English have been placed within quotations marks. Quotes from scripture have been transcribed as they are given in the original, which were often translations of the author's own making; however, when an established translation is used, it is identified in the notes. Also, while modern translations and editions of classical and patristic sources are provided in the notes, all quotes taken from these documents (unless otherwise indicated) have been retained as they were quoted. Finally, when a footnote begins "Margin note," this indicates a note from the original author. All other notes are mine.