

Nevitt's project positions itself firmly in the now classic debate in Dutch art history as to whether images celebrate or proscribe the sensual pleasures they depict. This debate reached its climax in the late 1980s and has been continued ever since by scholars who address the same crucial question to a new corpus of material. Nevitt's book demonstrates that the core problem lies in the method of interpretation rather than in the ambiguous paintings; however, it makes no clear attempts to break out of the rigid framework that Dutch iconography imposes. Therefore, the purpose of this book has not entirely become clear.

One reason why the book's purpose remains partly obscure lies in the author's heavy dependence on texts for illuminating the iconographic ambiguities he encounters. Another reason may be found in the slightly arbitrary selection of material. The book focuses exclusively on works produced in the first half of the seventeenth century. A puzzling fact is why the merry companies of Dirck Hals have been omitted from the discussions. In the Introduction, Nevitt makes the intriguing claim that these early works are crucial for the understanding of the better-known tradition of paintings of love of the second half of the century, of which Vermeer and Ter Borch are the most prominent exponents, a claim that remains underdeveloped. The cover illustration of Vermeer's *The Concert*, therefore, is misleading as it presents a promising example of a celebrated tradition of love imagery that the book precisely does not address.

S. Mutchow Towers. *Control of Religious Printing in Early Stuart England*. Woodbridge, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 2003. viii + 296 pp. \$75.00. Review by STEVEN MATTHEWS, THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.

What effect did Archbishop Laud's policy of religious censorship have on the actual production of the presses? To readers unfamiliar with the topic of censorship in Stuart England this question can seem narrow to the point of irrelevance. This is especially true if it is assumed, as S. Mutchow Towers herself has summarized the

common view, “that censorship was but intermittently and inconsistently applied” (4). If, however, Laud’s censorship was effective in controlling the production of the presses, as Towers contends, then the significance is necessarily far reaching for the study of seventeenth-century British history and literature. This question would directly affect the assumptions with which we approach printed religious literature of the time (such as whether a given work reflected broad religious opinion or the permission, or even the revision, of a censor). Moreover, if Laud’s censorship was effective, then theology, and specifically the doctrinal controversies between Calvinists and English “Arminians,” could not be marginalized in discussions of the political events leading up to the Civil War, for Laud’s policy would have effectively suppressed a majority theological view, even as his detractors had claimed.

Behind Towers’ study is a narrative of a radical shift in seventeenth-century theological norms which has been emerging over the last few decades. This position was championed first by Nicholas Tyacke, then taken-up by Conrad Russell, Peter Lake, Kenneth Fincham, and others. The story is that of an established Calvinist orthodoxy which was swiftly supplanted in the reign of Charles I by what had been, until very recently, an extreme minority position of “Arminianism,” or what Tyacke more properly termed “anti-Calvinism.” By supplanting a more widely accepted Calvinist “orthodoxy” with an anti-Calvinist “orthodoxy” the heat was turned up significantly in the question of conformity, for the old advocates of a Calvinist conformity were now on the outside along with the Nonconformists.

This narrative has tremendous explanatory power for understanding the vehemence of the theological invective between the “puritans” and the Crown just before the Civil War, as well as the odd mix of theological positions among the anti-royalists afterward. The question still remains whether it occurred as Tyacke and others have maintained, or whether the tension before the war was essentially what Peter White and others have claimed—the

same century-old clash between a mediating conformity and its reformist detractors. In this latter view, the specific theological issues of the English Arminian controversy are given much less of a role in historical change, being but the adjuncts of a partisan political power struggle. Of course, if Calvinism had not effectively been supplanted, and actual practice under Laud had reflected some level of tolerance of Calvinism, then Tyacke's narrative would be weakened. A number of scholars have taken this position, including Kevin Sharpe and Sheila Lambert, who have argued that Calvinism was not suffering significantly in the Caroline reign, and they have portrayed censorship as "lax" and "inconsistent" in support of a view of a more tolerant Laudianism. Towers' study demonstrates that the opposite was true: in the later years of the 1630s the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism had been effectively suppressed in mainstream publishing, while Arminian publications flourished.

Towers' main approach to the issue is through publication statistics. As a target year, she chose 1637 when a new Star Chamber Degree concerning printing meant that Laudian control over the press was at its height. She works up to this date by decades, considering 1607, 1617, and 1627 before coming to 1637. For each year she took samples of religious writing and examined them according to their doctrinal content, paying special attention to those doctrines which most clearly separated Laudian "Arminians" from Calvinists. Towers' focus on the actual doctrinal content of the books is an important contribution of her study, for, as she noted, "censorship was of subject, not of author" (13). This highlights an important distinction which has seldom been observed, with the result that previous studies have been skewed: Calvinists might still be able to publish under the height of censorship, but they were unable to publish anything genuinely Calvinist. Another important contribution of Towers' study is her careful attention to the significance of historical dates pertaining to censorship. Previous studies have often treated the years of the reign of Charles I indiscriminately, as if the control mechanisms for censorship were fully established throughout. Towers has paid careful attention to the gradual way in which full religious

ensorship was implemented: from the basically permissive licensing policy of Archbishop Abbot, through a transition period (represented by her sampling from 1627) in which both Laud's more restrictive policies and Abbott's more permissive ones were in place, to 1637, when Laud, now Archbishop himself, effectively stifled Calvinism in print production, according to the doctrinal content of books from that year. When publications from 1637 are compared with the earlier years of 1607 and 1617 the shift from Calvinism to Arminianism described by Tyacke is clear. This material is compelling, though it would be more so if Towers' findings had been clearly and systematically arranged in tables and summaries in the appendices to each chapter. As it stands, the appendices merely point the reader in the direction of the works which were used in the sample, and the skeptic is left only with the option of reproducing the study to check the results. Admittedly, this is probably in line with the editor's preference, and it reflects a general trend away from anything which might look like the quantification of social history. Nevertheless, when a broad analysis is used, summaries of the findings are immensely helpful.

However, Towers' study is not confined to broad analysis. That which she demonstrated in general, she first observed in the specific, and notably in the examples of Thomas Taylor, a puritan, and Thomas Jackson, a divine with Arminian tendencies. Sheila Lambert had previously used these very same men to demonstrate that censorship was not effective, claiming that, in spite of their differences, they had very similar publication histories and were successfully published even after the Caroline changes in religious policy were put in place. Towers, looking a bit more carefully, demonstrated that this was true only to a point—that point being the mid to late 1630s when Taylor's publications tapered off to nothing and Jackson's increased. Throughout the book, but in the chapter dealing with Taylor and Jackson especially, Towers demonstrates a keen grasp of the subtleties of seventeenth-century theology. In Towers' treatment, Taylor's puritanism was a complex affair, and Jackson was not truly an "Arminian." They differed precisely on those points of unconditional election and the

interaction of creature and Creator (with the accompanying assumptions about the value of ceremony and sacraments) which separated a true Calvinist from one who questioned the distinctive doctrines and focus of Calvinism. This attention to getting the theological issues right is commendable and refreshing in a field where convenient labels are still used to paper-over the genuine diversity of the era. Peter White's caveat that a simple dichotomy between Calvinism and Arminianism should not be allowed to oversimplify the range of theological opinions in this era should always be heeded (8), but Towers is not guilty of such an oversimplification.

On the basic question of the effectiveness of censorship prior to 1640, Towers' study is considerably more nuanced than previous considerations of the topic, and it is a good model of valid historical argument. Tyacke's narrative is powerfully supported here, but the usefulness of Towers' book extends beyond its address of a specific debate in the field. Throughout, it contains useful summaries of the issues actually dividing the Church of England at the time. It also provides a narrative in its own right of the course of censorship in the period, which can profitably inform both literary and historical studies pertaining to religious literature, censorship, the Civil War, and the history of the Church of England. Finally, it has much to say about the actual influence of Laud and his policies, the significance of religion and ideas in historical causation, and the mechanisms by which effective censorship may occur.

Robert Thomas Fallon, ed. *The Christian Soldier: Religious Tracts Published for Soldiers on Both Sides During and After the English Civil Wars, 1642-1648*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003. xviii + 200 pp. + 8 illus. \$35.00. Review by ELLEN J. JENKINS, ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY.

How can a good Christian also be a good soldier? This dilemma of conscience was already ages old in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Christians opposed each other in bloody warfare.