

The *Formula of Concord* (1576-80) and *Satis Est*

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Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) has long guided Lutherans in their attempts to bring together the denominations. It defines the one holy catholic church, of which all true Christians are members, doctrinally, stating that the church is a gathering where “the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly.” Article VII’s *satis est* states, “it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine word.” And yet, the Lutheran Confessions of the sixteenth century condemned the teachings of other Reformation churches as well as the Papacy. Lutherans hope that by participating in discussions with the descendants of these sixteenth-century churches, doctrinal agreements will be reached that will render the Lutheran anathemas obsolete. This process has raised many important questions about the *satis est*. One of the most important questions is: how do the many other doctrines presented in the Lutheran Confessions relate to the doctrine of *satis est*?

Recently the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA, the largest Lutheran Church body in the United States), which subscribes to the Lutheran Confessions (contained in *The Book of Concord*), has declared that several Calvinist Churches are orthodox. Instead of achieving unity on the one issue over which Luther condemned Zwingli at Marburg in 1529, the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, *A Formula of Agreement* between the ELCA and Calvinist Churches states, “while remaining differences must be acknowledged, even to the extent of their irreconcilability, it is the inherent unity in Christ that is determinative. Thus, the remaining differences are not church dividing.” The Lutherans who have subscribed to this statement have not renounced their subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. They believe that even though the Calvinist Churches involved in the agreement still teach doctrines specifically condemned by the Lutheran Confessions, those Churches satisfy the *satis est* of the *Augsburg Confession*. These theologians have attempted to interpret the “gospel,” described in *satis est*, as a vague “inherent unity in Christ.” Is this interpretation correct?

While historical research cannot answer theological questions concerning the true nature of the Gospel or the correct relationship between various doctrines, it can help us to understand the motivations of the men who wrote the Lutheran Confessions, and provide us with *their* answers to such questions. The *Formula of Concord* contains the most specific condemnations of Calvinism found in the Lutheran Confessions. Its authors believed that churches that held doctrines condemned by the Lutheran Confessions, should not be recognized as part of the catholic church. The events that led to the *Formula’s* creation, and the *Formula’s* statements themselves, prove this thesis.

During 1576 and 1577 German Lutheran theologians composed the *Formula of Concord*. By that time doctrinal debates had plagued the church of the *Augsburg Confession* for almost thirty years. The princes of the German lands commissioned their theologians to construct a document that could be used as a norm for preaching in the churches of their territories. For late sixteenth-century German Lutherans the *Formula of Concord* defined the Gospel, describing certain doctrines as doctrines of the catholic (world-wide true) church and other doctrines as outside the catholic church.

With Martin Luther’s death in 1546, the Lutheran Church had lost its generally recognized leader. The Germans looked to Phillip Melancthon as the new leader of the Lutheran movement. He was strongly influenced by Humanism and used that tradition to help Luther learn the biblical languages. Melancthon also authored the *Augsburg Confession*, its *Apology* (1531), and the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (1537), to which the *Formula of Concord* would subscribe.

Melancthon’s Humanist background, however, pulled him away from Luther in several ways. First, Luther’s view of the bondage of the will stood in contrast to Melancthon’s Humanist feelings about human potential. Luther felt that the human will was completely corrupt and unable to play any role in conversion. Melancthon taught that the human will played a role in conversion. Second, Melancthon was willing to compromise certain points of doctrine for the sake of peace. Luther lived during a period when Charles V was unable to spend resources to confront the Reformation. Shortly following Luther’s death, Charles split the Schmalkaldic League and routed the German princes. Melancthon wrote the *Leipzig Interim* in 1548, which compromised Lutheran doctrines (which Luther had refused to compromise) in an attempt to placate Charles. Melancthon’s fear for the safety of the people became a powerful force in his theological and political decisions until his death in 1560. He most clearly illustrated this fact in his dealing with Calvinists, with whom Melancthon desired to form a united Protestant front.

Melancthon’s compromises gave rise to the Gnesio-Lutherans, led by Matthias Flacius, who claimed to be the

adherents of Luther's teachings and refused to compromise with Catholics or Calvinists. A number of controversies plagued the Lutheran Church over the next decades. The Adiaphoristic Controversy of 1548-52 pitted Flacius against Melanchthon. They disagreed about which practices and doctrines could be compromised and which were not negotiable. In the mid-1550s arguments broke out over the relationship of good works played to salvation. The Lord's Supper remained a focal point of doctrinal debate in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. The Gnesio-Lutherans debated the Calvinists over the actual bodily or merely spiritual presence of Christ while the Phillipists (followers of Melanchthon) urged compromise.

As the Lutheran Church splintered, Calvinism grew stronger. In the mid-sixteenth century Calvinism spread throughout Europe. At the Diet of Evangelical Princes at Frankfurt in 1558, the princes pushed for a Phillipist understanding of doctrine that could lead to alliance with Calvinist territories. In 1559 Duke Johann Friedrich the Middlerer of Saxony commissioned Flacius to write the *Book of Confutation* in opposition to the growing tolerance of Calvinism. The Diet at Naumburg, in 1561, adopted the *Augsburg Confession* of 1530 as well as the altered version of 1540 in which Melanchthon softened the language concerning the Lord's Supper to allow for inclusion of Calvinists under the Confession. In 1563 the Lutheran Church in the Palatinate officially adopted Calvin's *Heidelberg Catechism*. The *Second Helvetic Confession* of 1566 unified the Calvinist Church beyond national boundaries. Calvinism achieved a unity that the Lutheran Church did not have, gained former Lutheran territories, and advanced its doctrine in lands that remained Lutheran.

The great question for the Lutheran princes and theologians was how to relate to Catholicism and Calvinism. Melanchthon's theology could be described as more Roman Catholic than Luther's. His belief that the human will played a role in conversion agreed with the Thomistic theology of the late medieval Catholic Church, which stressed the role of the human will and works in salvation. Luther's disagreement with Thomistic theology on the causes of conversion was closely tied to his belief in *sola gratia*. *Sola gratia* meant that human beings were entirely enslaved to sin, and that God saved them solely through his infused grace without any human merit. Many Lutherans, including many of Melanchthon's followers, believed that Melanchthon's theology of conversion was not Lutheran. They felt that the opposing Catholic and Lutheran doctrines of human potential were legitimate grounds for the continued independence of the Lutheran Church. Politically, the Peace of Augsburg left little reason for Lutherans to desire a reunion with the Church of Rome. These factors combined with the Counter-reformation, caused Lutherans to continue their historical condemnation of Catholicism.

The more difficult question was the relationship of Lutheranism to Calvinism. Lutherans could have joined the Calvinists in a united Protestant Church, remained separate but allowed for doctrinal plurality and mutual recognition, or they could have condemned Calvinism and attempted to purge it from Lutheran Churches.

To understand how the doctrine presented in the *Formula* related to the conditions necessary for the unity of the catholic church, an understanding of the events at Naumburg in 1561 is essential. At Naumburg the Lutheran princes attempted to reach consensus in their churches by defining "the gospel," as described in *satis est*, in vague terms without regard for historical doctrinal disagreements. Instead of declaring adherence to the original *Augsburg Confession* of 1530, favored by the Gnesio-Lutherans, or the altered pro-Calvinist version of 1540, favored by the Phillipists, the princes accepted both. But the princes misjudged the convictions of their theologians and received harsh rebukes upon return to their homes. The theologians believed the agreement was noncommittal and that controversy and discord would continue. Most lords withdrew their support for the agreement reached at Naumburg. Lutheran theologians had refused to recognize doctrinal vagueness as conducive to church unity.

In the aftermath of Naumburg it became apparent that Lutheran theologians would not accept doctrinal plurality. The *Formula* stood in contrast to the Naumburg agreement. Theologians, not princes, composed the *Formula*, which resulted in direct and specific doctrinal condemnations where Naumburg had attempted to sooth differences.

As part of the German princes' continuing attempt to unify the Lutheran Church, in 1576 Elector August of Saxony commissioned Jacob Andreae to organize a team of theologians from the Holy Roman Empire's Lutheran principalities for the purpose of writing a confession that would bring an end to internal disagreements. The group led by Andreae had a very pro-Luther, anti-Calvinist, and anti-Melanchthonian point of view. It contained many of Melanchthon's former students, but they had all distanced themselves from their master's views on human potential and the toleration of Calvinism.

These six men met in Torgua in 1576. The group composed what would eventually become the Epitome of the *Formula of Concord*, which condemned many of the radical teachings of the opposing Lutheran parties and sharply attacked Calvinism. They then sent the Epitome to all the Lutheran principalities of the Holy Roman Empire to be examined by the various princes' theologians and returned with suggestions. After the critiques returned, the authors explained the Epitome further, in 1577, by writing the Solid Declaration. They then sent it out for subscription in the various principalities.

As we shall see, the *Formula* condemned the radical teachings of the Phillipist and Gnesio-Lutherans, and sided with Luther in areas where his theology conflicted with Melanchthon's. The *Formula*'s authors condemned Calvin's teachings in areas they believed Calvin's theology conflicted with Luther's and adopted only the original 1530 edition of the *Augsburg Confession*, which, they believed, condemned the Calvinist doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

Since 1577 there have been many interpretations about how the *Formula* relates to and defines the catholic church. David Truemper states that according to the *Formula of Concord*, the preaching of the gospel and the administration and

distribution of the sacraments were sufficient for the unity of the catholic church. This statement agrees with the *satis est* of the *Augsburg Confession* (a confession which the *Formula's* authors intended to clarify, and to which the *Formula* subscribed). But Truemper then states that, according to the *Formula*, agreement in doctrine *about* the gospel and the sacraments is not necessary for that unity. Truemper fails to clarify the relationship of the other doctrines of the *Formula* to its allegiance to the *Augsburg Confession's satis est*. He allows a dichotomy to be setup, in which only the *Formula's* subscription to *satis est* is relevant to the unity of the catholic church, and the rest of the *Formula* merely contains doctrines *about* the gospel and the sacraments. This would be an accurate historical interpretation of the agreement temporarily reached at Naumburg. It is not an accurate historical interpretation of the *Formula*.

The theologians and princes responsible for the conception of the *Formula of Concord* believed Lutheran preachers in the 1550s-70s preached contradictory doctrines. That reason, not any belief that preachers disagreed in matters indifferent for the unity of the catholic church, led to the creation of the *Formula*. When the *Formula* spoke of doctrines, it meant pieces of the Gospel. The first paragraph of the Epitome stated that the Old and New Testaments were the rule and norm for judging doctrines and then cited a statement of Paul from the New Testament concerning contrary gospels. This paragraph made sense only if "doctrine" and "Gospel" were understood as synonymous. The *Formula* spoke of "the pure doctrine of the Gospel." It described the churches loyal to the *Augsburg Confession*: "they formulate Christian doctrine on the basis of God's word." The *Formula* simply used the word "doctrine" to describe specific proclamations of the Gospel.

Many sections of the *Formula* illustrate that its doctrines and condemnations of other doctrines are attempts to define the gospel. Article XI addressed God's eternal election of his chosen. It stated, "we should accustom ourselves not to speculate concerning the absolute, secret, hidden and inscrutable foreknowledge of God." It then encouraged, "we should consider the counsel, purpose, and ordinance of God in Christ Jesus, who is the genuine and true 'book of life' as it is revealed to us through the Word." The authors referred to their own doctrine of eternal election as "profitable and comforting to the person who concerns himself with the revealed will of God," while stating, regarding the condemned teaching, "disconsolate Christians can find no comfort in this doctrine but are driven to doubt and despair." Truemper shows that the chief article of the gospel according to the *Formula* is God's all encompassing grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the *Formula* condemned the view of God's eternal election which it believed could not comfort Christians. The *Formula* did not believe that one doctrine was simply better or more useful than the other; it stated that the condemned teaching was not a part of the Gospel. The *Formula* stated that the condemned teaching was the opposite of the gospel "not teaching the doctrine according to the will of God ...[but] under the direction of the devil, since everything in Scripture, as St. Paul testifies, was written for our instruction that by steadfastness and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." The doctrine of God's eternal election was one of the many parts of the Gospel that the *Formula of Concord* attempted to clarify for the catholic church.

The central area of disagreement between Lutheranism and Calvinism was the Lord's Supper. The authors' handling of the dispute in the *Formula* shows that they did not make Truemper's distinction between the Gospel and statements about the Gospel. According to the *Formula*, the words of Christ's institution were the foundation of the Lord's Supper and what truly made it a sacrament. Article VII quoted Luther's *Large Catechism*, "The Word, I say, is what makes this sacrament and so distinguishes it that it is not mere bread and wine but is and is called Christ's body and blood." The Lutheran princes felt they needed the *Formula* to bring about consensus (concord) over the Lord's Supper. In the portions of the Lutheran church that the Gnesio-Lutherans described as Crypto-Calvinist, the clergy had taught that the words of institution, "This is my body..." were to be taken figuratively. The clergy had interpreted the foundation of the sacrament, Christ's words, in two different and mutually exclusive manners.

One camp held that the words "This is" meant, "This signifies," while the other felt that "This is" meant, "This is." The fact that both parties used the same words did not convince the authors that both were preaching the Gospel. To the literal view the *Formula* subscribed, to the former it stated, "we reject and condemn with heart and mouth as false, erroneous, and deceiving all Sacramentarian opinions and doctrines." Truemper's analysis fails to clarify this point. What the authors believed to be the foundation of the sacrament was nothing other than a statement *about* the sacrament, that Christ's body and blood were present in the bread and wine. They felt that a change in the teaching about the words of institution was not consistent with "the Gospel ...in its purity," which the *Augsburg Confession* stated was necessary for the unity of the "Christian church."

If the dichotomy allowed by Truemper's analysis sets too tight a limit on the many doctrines of the *Formula* in relation to the unity of the catholic church, what are the limits its authors intended? First, the *Formula* recognized its temporal limitations. Its authors allowed for future clarifications of the Gospel, which would equal future clarifications of *satis est*. The authors of the *Formula* pledged allegiance to the Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as "the glorious confessions of the faith—succinct, Christian, and based upon the Word of God—in which all those heresies which at that time had arisen within the Christian church are clearly and solidly refuted." The *Formula* saw the Creeds as proper responses for their times and aimed to be the same kind of response in the late sixteenth-century German lands, to doctrines it believed to be current heresies. In the Preface, the princes pledged, "If the current controversies about our Christian religion should

continue or new ones arise, we shall see to it that they are settled and composed.” Late sixteenth-century German Lutherans saw confession as an ongoing process that was as old as the church itself and would not end with the *Formula's* publication.

The *Formula* stated that it wished to introduce no new teachings, but to return to the truth that had been obscured by the papists and enthusiasts. It stated, “We have from our hearts and with our mouths declared in mutual agreement that we shall neither prepare nor accept a different or new confession of our faith.” The authors subscribed to the ancient creeds because they believed that the *Formula's* doctrines agreed with every truly Christian doctrine ever articulated. The princes ordered their theologians to write the *Formula* because they believed that the word of God needed to be clarified in the midst of the current controversies. They believed that times had changed and previously undisputed teachings had been assailed. The Apostle’s Creed did not discuss the issue of whether or not Christ’s body and blood were actually present in the wine and bread, because the church universally held such a doctrine. As far as the authors of the *Formula* knew, the meaning of the term “dead,” used in reference to man’s lack of natural ability to believe in God, might be attacked in the future, just as the meaning of “is” in the words of institution had changed in the sixteenth century. It must be remembered that the Germans felt the *Formula* was necessary only forty-five years after the presentation of the *Augsburg Confession*. The *Formula* was not an attempt to make a final and complete confession. It was seen as useful in the German lands of the 1570s for ending the disputes that were occurring in the Lutheran Church and in bringing about concord. The authors state, “we introduce and cite these writings as a witness to the truth and as exhibiting the unanimous and correct understanding of our predecessors who remained steadfastly in the pure doctrine.” They saw the *Formula*, like the Gospel, as timelessly true, but the *Formula's* specific task as historically relative.

Its authors placed a second limit on the *Formula's* in relation to *satis est*. They did not hold its adoption by churches as necessary for their inclusion in the catholic church. The princes wanted it to be adopted by the portion of the catholic church, in the Holy Roman Empire, known as the Evangelical Church (the name of the German Lutheran Church). The doctrinal disputes took place in the Lutheran Church, and the *Formula* targeted the Lutheran Church. The princes of the German lands that called for concord pledged to enforce the *Formula's* doctrines in their respective churches. Elizabeth I sent word to the princes at Naumburg that she believed all Protestants should form a united front against the Pope; the Germans ignored her. This event helps illustrate the fact that the princes wanted to unify their churches, not churches outside their jurisdiction. They did not even include any Lutheran theologians from outside the Holy Roman Empire among the *Formula's* authors, nor did they send the Epitome anywhere other than German principalities when they sent it out to be critiqued. The authors of the *Formula* did not define the catholic church as the group of churches that subscribed to it.

Churches that did not subscribe to the *Formula* could still be included in the unity of the catholic church. The Rule and Norm (introduction) spoke of the churches of the *Augsburg Confession*, and stated that the Scriptures, Creeds, *Augsburg Confession*, and Luther’s writings should be used to settle disputes in *those* churches, because of the universal recognition they had received before the current disputes arose. Some of those documents were irrelevant to other churches throughout the world.

The *Formula* stated what its authors believed to be the pure doctrine of the Gospel necessary for the unity and existence of the catholic church, as defined by the *Augsburg Confession's satis est*. The *Formula's* language was historically and culturally relative. Its adoption was politically and ecclesiastically relative. However, its authors felt that it was no less than a current proclamation of the timeless Gospel and fell into the same category as the *Augsburg Confession* it intended to clarify and called, “a genuinely Christian symbol which all true Christians ought to accept” Churches whose doctrines contradicted any doctrine of the *Formula* were not to be recognized as fellow members of the catholic church. The sixteenth-century German Lutherans who wrote the *Formula of Concord* believed that all of its doctrines were explanations of what *satis est* called “the gospel.”

The Nature of the Beast: Satan Portrayed in Seventeenth Century English Ballads

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Early modern England social historians have observed a dichotomy between a popular and an elite culture. In addition to differences in wealth and opportunity, the two ends of the cultural spectrum reveal different views of reality despite a common national identity. An historian can study the writings of the highly educated, elite component of English society and reconstruct their religious beliefs, but these tenets may not be held by the majority of the less-educated

English population. Thus, in order to understand early modern England as a whole, it is necessary to understand the composition of popular culture and how it may have differed from that of the elite.

A flashpoint for examining this cultural dichotomy is the study of seventeenth-century English perceptions about the Devil and his relations with society. While a great deal of work has been completed with regard to elite views of Satan, it is often more difficult to delineate a popular view of the Devil and reconstruct what the majority of people believed when the available primary source material has often been mediated through the elite-dominated printing process. While unprinted witchcraft confessions might reveal additional insights about Satan, these sources are also mediated in that they are written and potentially influenced by elite culture. To understand the elite view of Satan, historians can access their writings and reconstitute the more educated views of the Prince of Darkness. But the English masses, only a portion of whom may have been able to read and write, rarely left behind written testimonies detailing their religious beliefs.

Printed sources—pamphlets, broadsides, and chapbooks—can still inform us about the people and the obscured beliefs of a past society. One of the most easily recognized and informative sources on popular culture is the ballad. While both the elites and popular cultures had ballads and poetry, one can distinguish the ballads of the popular culture as they were often written in black-letter and carried the cheapest price. It is particularly helpful to recognize that literacy was not restricted to the educated and a large number of the common people were literate. While it is difficult to generate robust statistics regarding literacy, historians estimate that anywhere between 15 and 60 per cent of the lower classes were capable of reading.

This article explores how ballads written in seventeenth century England portray the Devil. The ballads collected in the *Pepys Ballads*, *Roxburghe Ballads*, and *Pack of Autolycus*, suggest that Satan had a variety of manifestations, only two of which will be explored here. The first one is the relationship between the Devil and witchcraft and the second how the fear of Satan and his temptations served to warn against sin. These ideas will be compared with those presented by major English social historians in order to test their arguments and see how the information collected from ballads can augment their arguments with regard to popular culture and the Devil.

The first area of focus concerns the relationship between the Devil and witchcraft. In *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas distinguishes between popular and elite conceptions of witchcraft based on the presence of Satan. That is, the English intellectuals and clergy defined witchcraft as the union between a witch and Satan through the signing of a diabolical compact that was sealed with the blood of the witch. Thomas also states that the association of Satan with witchcraft may have resulted more from continental influence than indigenous belief on the part of the English clergy. On the other hand, Thomas argues that the common people did not readily accept the Devil's involvement with witchcraft. The only feature of popular belief that could be considered remotely diabolic was the presence of the witch's marks and familiars. According to Thomas, the people probably did not connect Satan with witchcraft and primarily viewed witchcraft as maleficium, or inflicting harm on others through supernatural powers without the use of satanic power.

James Sharpe, in *Instruments of Darkness*, disagrees with Thomas's generalizations by focusing on the East Anglia witch trials of 1645-47. According to Sharpe's argument, these trials challenge the traditional interpretation of English witchcraft that reduces the importance of Satan in the beliefs of popular culture. The confessions given at these trials yield concepts that exceed maleficium and suggest possible associations between witchcraft and Satan at the popular level. While these testimonies could bear the influence of the witch-hunter Matthew Hopkins, Sharpe posits that the witchcraft confessions challenge the view that popular beliefs on witchcraft were non-diabolical and highlight the need for further research.

As confessions come from non-elite members of society and exhibit a covenant between the witch and the Devil that is sealed in blood, Sharpe implies that a redefinition of popular witchcraft beliefs is in order. He is quick to point out, however, that any conclusions drawn from these testimonies are tenuous since beliefs about witchcraft were constantly changing. Despite the weaknesses of the confessions, they do suggest that the division between learned and popular views on witchcraft is an oversimplification and that the populace may have believed Satan was involved with witchcraft.

In his synthesis of early modern England, *Popular Cultures in England, 1550-1750*, Barry Reay reiterates and extends Sharpe's ideas by stating that scholars have traditionally assumed that beliefs on Satan differed between the popular and elite cultures. Reay disagrees with the dichotomy of popular and elite by claiming that a belief in Satan extended into the popular literature through pamphlets and ballads. Cheap pamphlets and ballads on witchcraft may have bridged any gap that existed between the elites and the less educated parts of society. The ballads of the early and mid-seventeenth century show a belief in demonology and the Devil, which suggests that these printed sources served as inroads into the popular culture whereby learned ideas could take root among the masses. It should be underscored, though, that one of Reay's overarching theory is that the popular-elite dichotomy is less useful to describe early modern England and he stresses the importance of diversity and multiplicity of the culture.

From looking at the secondary sources, one observes that perhaps the literature of popular culture (in this case, ballads) did, indeed, show a connection between witchcraft and Satan. What can the ballads themselves add to this argument? Of the ballads surveyed, four illustrated an association between witches and the Devil. While no concrete conclusions can be extracted from these ballads concerning the ubiquity of Satan in popular witchcraft belief, they do support the arguments

presented by Sharpe and Reay, while perhaps slightly contradicting Thomas.

The earliest ballad, *Damnable Practices of Three Lincoln-shire Witches*, was written in 1619 and describes how a mother and two daughters became witches through the influence of the Devil. Satan appears to the three women and offers them unlimited powers and familiars in exchange for their souls. Accepting the terms, these women then sealed the covenant with drops of their own blood.

And as it seemd they sould their soules,
For service of such Spirits,
And sealing it with drops of blood,
Damnation to inherits.

Thus, by the power of the Devil, these three women were given the power to inflict whatever misery and destruction they saw fit upon the local lords, children and cattle. This ballad, written in black-letter, suggests that popular beliefs in witchcraft could have included conceptions of Satan, thus supporting the assertions of Reay and Sharpe. In addition, this excerpt bolsters a theory proposed by Clive Holmes that popular beliefs included an association between witchcraft and a family blood relationship. According to Holmes, the popular belief was that the female descendants of witches would inherit their unholy powers.

Witchcraft Discovered and Punished, printed in 1682, tells of three women from Devon who are convicted of witchcraft and association with the Devil. These women are said to have sold their souls to Prince of Darkness, but there is no mention of a covenant sealed with blood or any inherited powers. Satan is depicted as the source of the witches' power, but like the ballad about the Lincolne-shire witches, he allows them to use their powers for their own personal desires. To distinguish them as witches, Satan gives them peculiar witch's marks.

And that they had about their bodies strange
And proper Tokens of their wicked change,
As pledges that, to have their cruel will,
Their Souls they gave unto the Prince of Hell.

Thus, like the previous ballad, one sees the Devil as the benefactor of malevolent power—all for the price of a soul. But there is also the presence of the witch's marks in conjunction with the diabolic pact.

A ballad printed in 1628 called *The Tragedy of Dr. Lambe* provides a different perspective. While the ballad itself focuses on the beating and subsequent death of a conjurer named Dr. Lambe, the ballad mentions how Lambe was continually using powers given to him by the Devil to harass his neighbors. Lambe's pranks and tricks would eventually bring about his demise at the hands of sailors and Satan was powerless to help his servant.

They beate him to the ground,
And meaning to dispatch him,
They gave him many a wound,
The Deuill could not watch him,
to keep him sound.

Like the two previous ballads, this ballad is another example from popular literature where Satan appears in tandem with the practice of witchcraft.

A different perspective of Satan's involvement with humanity through witchcraft comes from a ballad printed in 1670, *The Judgment of God shewed upon one John Faustus*. A variation upon an old legend, the ballad of Dr. Faustus doesn't deal explicitly with witchcraft; however, it does show how one man sold his soul to Satan in exchange for worldly success. Like many witchcraft cases, though, Faustus signs his name in his own blood upon the Devil's register.

Twice did I make my tender flesh to bleed,
Twice with my blood I wrote the Devil's deed,
Twice wretchedly I soul and body sold,
To live in [pleasure], and do what things I would.

The tale of Faustus illustrates the selling of one's soul to Satan for powers in this world. Malcolm Gaskill, in his essay,

“Witchcraft and Power in Early Modern England,” mentions the story of Faustus as providing a parallel to the witchcraft scenario where the soul is sold in exchange for material gain. Gaskill also suggests that this fictional paradigm pervades every aspect of print culture from high literature to cheap pamphlets and ballads. A certain tension exists in relation to ballads concerning Drs. Lambe and Faustus. Both of these figures would be members of the elite classes; however, they are represented in a typically popular literature. While this raises a questions about which culture is represented in these ballads, the ballads and their black-letter print do represent a popular medium of cultural expression.

Some historians may still espouse a split between a popular and an elite culture, but with regard to the Devil and his associations with witchcraft, ballad evidence readily suggests that perhaps the popular cultures did, indeed, have a conception of the Devil. In accordance with Reay and Sharpe’s interpretations, these ballads illustrate the possibility that the association of Satan with witchcraft was not restricted to the elite culture.

It is important to realize that the Devil also played a role in the religion of the people outside of witchcraft. It can be difficult to delineate a popular view of Satan because of the multiple subcultures present in England. For example, when Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down* discusses the seventeenth-century Ranters, Quakers, and others, he notes that each of these groups believed in the Devil but characterized him in different ways. Hill argues for some uniform belief, however, as many English people believed in a world where God and Satan constantly intervened. Likewise Reay argues that most ideas of the Devil in a religious context were in relation to death, judgment, and the punishments inflicted by the Devil in Hell. Reay also suggests the difficulties in this approach due to the dynamic nature of religion. It is also Reay’s opinion that ballads are excellent sources of information for studying popular religion because they were often a source of information for the public.

Ballads mentioning the Devil in relation to religion support Reay’s arguments. In *St. Bernard’s Vision*, the soul speaks with the corpse of a recently deceased man. Each blames the other for their earthly sins. This ballad also contains a section where the Devil describes the various punishments that he inflicts upon people for their sins. Some get molten lead poured down their throats, while others are fried in sulfur.

A second manifestation of the Devil in the English ballads was a fear of Satan and how his temptations served to warn against sin. These ballads often served to reinforce morality and warn people against various forms of misbehavior. Keith Thomas briefly mentions Satan’s role as a tempter and instrument of God’s punishment. He describes the Devil’s desire to divert human souls from the path of God, which is an idea repeated several times in the ballads.

Written in 1681, the ballad, *Strange and True News from Westmoreland*, tells the story of Gabriel Hardin’s return home from an evening of drinking. Hardin’s wife, observing his inebriated state, tries to guide him to bed, but he strikes and kills her. Suddenly, Satan appears to punish this grievous sinner.

The Devil then he straight laid hold,
On him that had murdered his wife;
His neck in sunder then he brake,
And thus did end his wretched life

Satan appears to the murderer as his judge and executioner, punishing the man for his sin of murder. Satan is also seen as the cause of sin in ballads that warn people away from various sinful activities like drinking, suicide, and swearing.

Other ballads elaborate upon this theme of the Devil as a warning and depict Satan operating under God’s permission and alluring people toward sin. Written in 1629, a ballad entitled *A warning for wiues* depicts the story of a wife who murders her husband with a pair of scissors. The ballad warns that the Devil rules women who kill their husbands, and also discusses the relationship between God and Satan. Satan seems to work with God’s permission to bring about sinful activities on earth.

She long had thirsted for his blood...,
And now her promise she made good,
So heaven gave permission
To Satan, who then lent her power
And Strength to do’t that bloody houre

A second example of this kind of behavior comes from a ballad written in 1628 about another wife who killed her husband. In *A warning for all desperate Women* a wife kills her husband by stabbing him in the heart. When asked to recount her actions, the wife says she was acting like the Devil and that he gave her the strength to kill her husband. This ballad shows Satan’s role as a tempter but does not mention his role as a tool of God.

Besides acting as the catalyst for wives to kill their husbands, the Devil also tempted people to commit suicide. One ballad, written in 1662, tells of George Gibbs taking his own life. The story begins by describing Satan as a tempter who is

bringing so many poor souls into sin. The Devil is also shown constantly tempting Gibbs to the point where he's ready to kill himself by ripping open his own abdomen and removing his innards with his hands. Gibbs said he tried to resist Satan's temptations, but he eventually submitted. The ballad ends by warning its audience not to give into the Devil's temptations and to reform their behavior.

Trust not too much to your own strength
to God continual pray
Resist the Divil elce at length,
hee'l lead you his Broad way

Illustrating sin through Satan's temptations serves as a warning against misbehavior. In *The Devil's Conquest*, a young woman curses, swears, and invokes Satan's name. At one point, she claims the Devil would set her straight if she neglects the work required by her temporal employer. Satan holds her to her word and kills her. The moral was not to swear, curse, or speak the Devil's name in vain.

So to conclude remember still,
Swearing and Cursing ends in woe,
If you let the Devil have his will,
hee'l prove the worst and greatest foe.

A similar lesson is given in *Terrible news from Brentford*, written in 1661. A group of drunken Englishmen gather in a bar and decide to drink a health to the Devil. Upon doing so, the Devil appears and kills each man. Again, Satan's appearance warns against drunken misbehavior.

And keep us still from great excess
of drinking which is evil;
And never in such drunkenness
drink healths unto the Devil.

Finally, a ballad written in 1678, *Sad and dreadful news from Horsleydown*, tells the tale of one Dorothy Winterbottom, who was renowned for cursing, drinking and multiple other vices. Ultimately, the Devil ends up coming for her and taking her life, but the ballad illustrates how Dorothy's minor sins could become worse through the Devil's influence because small sins open the way for larger ones.

Her vices were many as people express,
Being given to curse and to drink to excess:
Which gave the foul Tempter a way to get in,
And still urge her on for to multiply sin:

In each of these three ballads, the Devil appears as a way of preventing and illustrating various types of sin. These ballads also seem to support the ideas espoused by Thomas and Reay concerning popular religion in seventeenth century England.

While one must exercise caution in drawing concrete conclusions from these ballads, they suggest that the popular belief in Satan associated him with witchcraft and religion as a source of temptation, warning, and punishment. These ballads provide support for and elaborate upon the ideas presented by Barry Reay and James Sharpe, but they also add to provide a new perspective on the research of Keith Thomas and his arguments regarding Satan's involvement in witchcraft. Certainly, the Devil contributes a dynamic and frequently satirical element within the ballad culture, but, more importantly, the ballads offer a unique opportunity to illuminate how the popular culture in England understood Satan and his role in the world. By looking at these ballads, it is apparent that the Devil represents a method of social control and embodies the punishment for breaking the traditional rules and mores of English society. Drinking, cursing, and violence were all common elements of popular culture, but popular culture also emphasized that they, if not properly moderated, could easily incur the wrath of Satan.