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**THE RISE OF ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN  
ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND 1558-1603**

**BETHANY EMMA WALKER**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of MA (by Research)

The University of Huddersfield

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## **Abstract**

This thesis, on the rise of anti-Catholic policy, language, and literature in Elizabethan England, is a chronological study of the most influential events of Elizabeth's reign, from the instigation of her Elizabethan Settlement in 1558 to the end of her reign in 1603. It will examine the legislative measures set out across her reign, going on to examine the textual and physical responses they prompted. . There are two key questions to be answered throughout the course of this thesis. Firstly, to what extent does anti-Catholicism change throughout the course of the Elizabethan Age? And secondly, how does Elizabeth's own opinion change towards Catholics as a result of the major events of her reign?

Throughout the course of this discussion it will be shown that although at the beginning of her reign Elizabeth showed remarkably little anti-Catholicism (at least not when compared to the more radical Protestants present in her government) as her reign progressed she became increasingly suspicious towards her Catholic subjects. We will discover that by the end of her reign she had thoroughly aligned herself with the anti-Catholic stance that her government had taken from the start. So too it will be revealed that anti-Catholicism was present in the Elizabethan Government from the very beginning, and indeed its origins went further back than the start of Elizabeth's reign, though the intensity and support grew exponentially as a result of both Protestant propaganda, and Catholic rebellion.

Aspects of Elizabeth's reign such as the early legislation, the Protestant propaganda, Elizabeth's excommunication from the Catholic church, and the Catholic plots against Elizabeth's life, together with existing discourses from notable historians and first-hand accounts will serve to demonstrate the changing scope of anti-Catholicism throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century, and will be the events around which the analysis of anti-Catholicism in Elizabeth's reign will be discussed.

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Thank you.

## **Introduction**

The issue of religion has been, and still is, an integral part of the history of human life and more often than not it is the cause of conflict rather than harmony. Religious identity in the Tudor period is particularly interesting and has been analysed countless times by numerous historians seeking to understand the changes that took place as part of the English Reformation. Under Henry VIII, England saw a major upheaval in its religious make-up with Henry's break from Rome, and its after effects would echo through the rest of the Tudor period, and well into the era of Stuart rule. The transition through the Reformation was one that took a long time, so long in fact that almost every monarch within the Tudor period had their own sort of reformation. During Elizabeth I's reign it was the struggle for religious supremacy between the Catholics and Protestants which would characterise the Elizabethan era, and it is this that this thesis will focus on.

The thesis will examine Elizabeth's reign with a view to discussing initial reactions to Catholics and Catholicism at the beginning of Elizabeth's rule and how anti-Catholicism grew and changed throughout the reign, discussing how Elizabeth's own attitudes changed because of the events and legislations that so characterised her time on the throne. This is a significant subject to write about as Elizabeth's church and religious identity is something that has been debated a great deal throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Several prolific historians have commented on the subject, such as Christopher Haigh, John Neale and Michael Questier, and almost every book written about Elizabeth's reign has some form of commentary on her religious views and the effects of various events

on the religious identity of England.<sup>1</sup> Neale for example, in a very early example of analysis of this subject, emphasises the influence of the 'Puritan Choir' in the Elizabethan courts and argues that their influence gave way to middle ground reformation, a '*via media*'.<sup>2</sup> Later works, including those by Christopher Haigh and Michael Questier, argue against the idea of *via media* as it suggests that the Reformation was brought about according to Elizabeth's own design. Christopher Haigh in particular argues that the outcome of the Reformation was not inevitable, rather the outcome was just one of numerous options.<sup>3</sup> All of these arguments, however, are concerned with the results of the Reformation and the position England was left in religiously. There is little written on the changing attitudes towards opposing religions *throughout* Elizabeth's reign, and it is here that this thesis comes in.

Anti-Catholicism is of particular interest here due to the lack of major published works on the matter, whilst religion is often mentioned in passing in perhaps one or two chapters, there are few major works on the specific effects of the Elizabethan reign on the changing face of anti-Catholicism detailing the circumstances *throughout* her reign. Admittedly, there are a lot of published works detailing Catholic persecution and recusancy, however, this thesis forges a new path, debating and discussing the differing levels of anti-Catholicism throughout the reign, and the events preceding, and succeeding, the changes that lead to changing attitudes. It deals with legislative measures laid out across Elizabeth's reign, and examines the social and political reactions on both religious side of the Elizabethan Reformation, going beyond the outcomes of carefully selected events during Elizabeth's reign to understand the motivations behind them. Reactions to the legislation will also be examined in close detail, including literary reactions and ending with the physically violent reactions which are a characteristic of Elizabeth's reign.

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<sup>1</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc.; Questier, M. (2006). *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640*. UK: Cambridge University Press.



Therefore, this thesis will attempt to draw upon the research that *has* been done and investigate the rise of anti-Catholicism in Elizabethan England and the reasons for it. For example, Alexandra Walsham has done extensive work into toleration in Elizabethan England, and her work laid the foundations for the arguments presented in the forthcoming chapters, namely her position that sixteenth century England cannot be judged by twenty-first century standards,<sup>4</sup> Research like this described above has helped to form the basis of this thesis, and has aided the investigation into the changing shape of anti-Catholicism in Elizabethan England.

The questions to be answered in the upcoming examination are as follows. Firstly, an attempt will be made to understand the extent to which anti-Catholic rhetoric changed as the reign progressed, and how various factors influenced its development, from legislation to social responses. Secondly, we will look to recognise how Elizabeth's own changing attitudes had a bearing on the development of anti-Catholicism across England and how her religious aims changed as her rule advanced. This will be demonstrated through a chronological approach to Elizabeth's reign in chapter one, as this is the best way to fully demonstrate changing attitudes and ideals and is the most efficient way to enable comparisons to be made between various stages of Elizabeth's rule, especially regarding her change in attitude towards the Catholic faith at the beginning of her reign compared to the end. It is the best way to utilise the historiography and primary sources, which are outlined in the forthcoming paragraphs, in order to produce the most coherent argument possible within this thesis.

By the end of this paper, an argument will have been made that states clearly that anti-Catholicism rose steadily throughout the first half of Elizabeth's reign, but from the instigation of the excommunication of Elizabeth by the Pope in 1570, anti-Catholicism rose to a drastic extent from which it could never recover during Elizabeth's remaining time on

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<sup>4</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

the throne. There will also be a case made that Elizabeth's own convictions had a high level of influence on the amount of anti-Catholicism that existed at various points during the reign, and a comparison will be made between carefully selected events and their effect on Elizabeth's own reactions.

The thesis will begin with an examination of the historiography surrounding the subject and the introduction of some of the main ideas within this school of thought. There will then follow three chapters, the first of which will detail the first pieces of legislation passed during Elizabeth's reign, the Act of Supremacy, the Act of Uniformity, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and Elizabeth's excommunication, examining how they laid the building blocks for what would become the Elizabethan Church, and the effect that they had on the setting of a precedent regarding anti-Catholic rhetoric throughout the course of Elizabeth's reign in sixteenth century England.

Chapter two will deal with the major textual responses of the 1560s, including the publication and re-publication of the *Acts and Monuments* in 1563 and 1570 respectively. It will be shown how this widely read piece of propaganda set anti-Catholicism on a rise that it would follow throughout the remainder of Elizabeth's reign. Alongside Foxe's work, several pamphlets from the same time period will be used to examine the social response to the various political events of the reign, and the effect on the wider population of England.

The final chapter will explore the culmination of the tensions which had risen through the political and literary components of Elizabeth's reign so far and will feature the most famous and most important rebellions against the Catholic regime, demonstrating how anti-Catholicism experienced a radical change through the duration of Elizabeth's rule.

The chapter will end with an analysis of the change in attitudes towards the Catholic people of England not only by the Protestant community, but also by the Queen herself, and will demonstrate the rising tide of anti-Catholic displays as Elizabeth's reign moved on.

All chapters will include the use and analysis of various primary sources, including letters, parliamentary papers, and contemporary literature to inform the arguments that are presented throughout the piece, and will be followed up with relevant and up to date

secondary material to support the thesis. Primary sources have been carefully chosen in order to best support the arguments presented in this work, and consist of letters, court papers, sermons and replies to major legislative orders throughout Elizabeth's reign, and together help to bring validity to the hypotheses that are presented. Secondary material such as online journals, physical library books, eBooks, and magazine articles, have again been chosen to support the thesis in the best way possible, and help to inform the debates around the questions that are asked. It was imperative that a wide range of sources were used within the paper as there are a number of viewpoints to take account of during the discussion, and this range helps us to do that. The range of sources used not only helps to validate the argument, but also lends support to the argument as a whole and helps to show the different levels of discussion through Elizabeth's reign. Starting with widely available public material such as *Acts and Monuments* and going right up to court sermons and parliamentary papers, the sources that have been selected help to enforce the argument from multiple different social levels, and reflects the thought behind each type of literature, demonstrating how anti-Catholicism was spread across a broad range of pieces of literature throughout the Elizabethan age.

By the end of the thesis, we will know and understand how anti-Catholicism emerged during Elizabeth's reign, and the path that it took throughout the sixteenth century, but most importantly we will know *why* it happened the way it did. We will also understand how Elizabeth's own attitude towards Catholicism shaped public opinion and the influence she had over the enforcement of anti-Catholic rhetoric towards the end of the Tudor period in England. Most of all we will discover what this meant for Catholics in England and what the future held for them based on the events of the sixteenth century.

## Historiography

The religious state of England in the sixteenth century has garnered much attention from historians over the years. Since the early 1930s historians have focussed on the reign of Elizabeth I and her effects on the religious composition of England, though many have disagreed profoundly on Elizabeth's intentions regarding the Protestants and Catholics. Disagreements stem from confusion surrounding Elizabeth's personal religious beliefs and the extent to which she used the appearance of Catholic tolerance as a political tool, to the influences on the Marian exiles and more radical Protestants on her legislation.

Sir J. E. Neale for example, one of the earliest and most notable writers on the subject, writes strongly in favour of the notion that Elizabeth used her apparent Catholic sympathy as a political tool, observing that at the beginning of her reign 'she was playing for time – time to establish her throne on popular support.'<sup>5</sup> Neale adheres to the traditionalist view of the Elizabethan Settlement, emphasising the relationship between Elizabeth and her parliament, and focussing on the religious state of the country at the time, particularly the divisions between Protestants and Catholics. He indicates that although Elizabeth initially set out to bring a more conservative settlement, she ended up being forced by the 'Puritan Choir' to maintain a more compromising stance, a *via media* between her own ideals of a carefully engineered Reformation with as little trouble as necessary, and the more far-reaching views of the most radical Protestant influences. He cites her sex as one of the driving forces behind this stating 'it was one thing to charm, it was quite another to rule'.<sup>6</sup> And in this, sex was an almost desperate impediment. The country had already made its first experiment of a woman ruler; and it was anything but a happy augury for the second.<sup>7</sup> Neale is a necessary inclusion in any study of religion in Elizabethan England, and his arguments here, though dated, help us to make a judgement

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<sup>5</sup> Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd. pg. 57

<sup>6</sup> Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd. pg. 57

<sup>7</sup> Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd. pg. 57

on the questions set out in this thesis by comparing the views of older historical sources with that of the more contemporary writers. Although Neale is outdated, his work provides validation within this thesis as a lot of what he says is useful as a basis for some of the arguments debated here.

Another proponent of traditionalist views of Elizabeth's reign was Diarmaid MacCulloch. Though writing over 20 years later than Neale, and was also a supporter of the traditionalist polemic, though he vehemently denies any notion of *via media* within the English Reformation, for him it is 'reasonably certain...that the situation was in fact precisely the reverse: the government for the settlement that it intended, and what hesitations there were, were caused by opposition from the other corner: conservative aristocrats and Mary's Roman Catholic Bishops.'<sup>8</sup> His views are in direct opposition to those represented by Neale, but are relevant to show a diverse range of opinions within the traditionalist writings of Elizabeth's reign. The traditionalist view of Elizabeth's reign is now somewhat outdated, though it is important to recognise it as it was the starting point for work on the English Reformation and was widely accepted until the mid-1960s. It is relevant to encapsulate these views, as they were the building blocks from which future ideas about Elizabeth's reign were formed and represent the early views on Protestantism and Catholicism in the mid sixteenth century.

A student of Neale's, G. R. Elton, was the next major influence upon the writing of the English Reformation. Though sometimes viewed as a traditionalist, no doubt in part due to his tutelage under Neale, his work has also been widely popularised amongst revisionist writers and his ideas that the Reformation was the work of a powerful central government engineering change through the catalysts of religion and politics. Often focussing on the work of individuals within the government, most famously Cromwell, he argues in '*Tudor Revolution in Government*' that the Reformation was sudden and came about practically all at once, changing the religious make up of Britain, apparently instantaneously within

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<sup>8</sup> MacCulloch, D. (1991). The Myth of the English Reformation. *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175735>.

Elizabeth's reign. Elton's views, though also outdated, are another important link in the historiography of the English Reformation and gave birth to the ideas that would be shaped by the works of Christopher Haigh and would eventually become post-revisionism.

Another important leader in the traditionalist view of the English Reformation is Patrick Collinson. His book *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* pertains to the idea that the puritan of the Elizabethan age intended the English Reformation to be over by the end of Elizabeth's reign, and wanted a 'further reformation' with the bigger picture in order to make this happen.<sup>9</sup> The implication of this within this thesis is that it provokes ideas of the influences around Elizabeth throughout her reign, from the 'Puritan Choir' as perceived by Neale, Collinson expands on his views and insinuates that the Elizabethan Reformation was engineered to meet a specific end.<sup>10</sup> As we have already seen, however, these ideas are now viewed as archaic within Elizabethan discourse, but again, it is important to recognise their place in the historiography of not only Elizabeth's reign, but also the English Reformation.

The historiography of the Elizabethan Reformation was moved significantly forwards with the publication of Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* in 1992. Duffy is now regarded as one of the most prolific revisionist historians, and his work is famous for focussing heavily on the Catholic experience of the reformation. Duffy himself is famously known as a fervent Catholic and, perhaps as a result of this, writes a much more scathing review of the Elizabethan Settlement, and indeed the Reformation as a whole. He emphasises what he perceived to be the intense anti-Catholicism present in the people of the reformation, and notes with a sense of loss that 'a generation was growing up which had known nothing else, which believed the Pope to be Antichrist, the mass a mummery, which did not look back to the Catholic past as their own...'<sup>11</sup> Though his writing certainly has undertones of Catholic favouritism, his work still represents a progression in ideas

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<sup>9</sup> Collinson, P. (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd.

<sup>10</sup> Collinson, P. (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd

<sup>11</sup> Duffy, E. (1992). *The Stripping of the Altars*. London: Yale University Press. p. 593.

surrounding the Elizabethan Reformation and represents an important point in the history of work around the Reformation. It is therefore extremely relevant to include in this thesis as his work builds on, and changes, ideas that were first presented in the traditionalist rhetoric by early authors such as Neale.

Revisionism found another supporter in the form of John Guy, another of the highly influential thinkers that surround the English Reformation. Taught by Elton, Guy is a firm believer that the outcome of the Reformation was carefully thought out and an intentional move, and that Anglicanism was the predetermined outcome stating that it was 'of course, all Elizabeth sought to enforce...'<sup>12</sup> and is developed further in his book *Tudor England*.<sup>13</sup>

The ideas presented by the revisionist writers, though much more contemporary than the traditionalist writers, have since been revised and as a result are now also considered to be a little outdated. They do however represent the important progression from the old ideas of the traditionalist writers to the now popular ideas presented in the writings of the post-revisionist authors. It is through the revisionist writers that different perspectives of the Reformation are represented, and new ideas are born.<sup>14</sup> For instance, Guy's assertion that Anglicanism was the inevitable outcome of the reformation, though now thought to be widely off the mark, lead to questions surrounding the outcome of the reformation and therefore is one of the reasons that post-revisionism exists.<sup>15</sup>

For example, Christopher Haigh's work forged a bridge between the revisionist ideas of the 1970s, and the Post-Revisionism that was borne out of those ideas. A student of Elton's, Haigh's work builds and expands on the work of Elton and his contemporaries and subscribes to the idea that the Reformation was a much slower process than Elton and his contemporaries made out, and that in fact in the localities, the reformation took a lot longer to take hold than previously thought. He writes, in '*The Reign of Elizabeth I*' that '1558-9 is too often regarded as a decisive turning-point' and this is a thought that is echoed through

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<sup>12</sup> Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 302.

<sup>13</sup> Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Duffy, E. (1992). *The Stripping of the Altars*. London: Yale University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

many later works on the English Reformation. Furthermore, he refutes that idea that the outcome of the Reformation was inevitable. He writes that though politically Protestantism was enforced in 1558-9, it was still somewhat uncertain and very few people believed it was an official piece of legislation, implying that even though the framework for the religion was firmly in place, there were still other factors that could influence the outcome, and idea that is prevalent amongst the post-revisionist school of thought.<sup>16</sup>

The ideas set out by Elton and the other revisionists gave a platform from which the ideas of the post-revisionists were born. From the traditionalists and revisionists came the idea that the results of the Reformation were the inevitable and only outcome. For the post-revisionists this is not the case. This seems more reasonable given that it is only with the benefit of hindsight that it could truly be stated that the Reformation was the only possible outcome. In other words, the outcome of the Reformation cannot be the only course of action since it was not set as an explicit aim in the first place. Though not unlike the revisionists work, this post-revisionist view of the Elizabethan age offers up a few more questions and explanations than were previously discussed, and it is therefore important to consider their views throughout this thesis.

Peter Lake's work examines more of the basics of revisionist thought and questions. Most commonly it argues that only in a political sense can the Reformation be considered complete by the end of Elizabeth's reign and this is a thought that has been supported by numerous historians including, as previously mentioned, Christopher Haigh, and perhaps most notably, Eamon Duffy. When regarding the actual religious state of England however, Lake states that although Anglicanism was an outcome, it should be one of many possibilities rather than being viewed as the only one, and therefore aligns himself with the post-revisionist school of thought. Lake's view that Anglicanism should be viewed as just one of many possible outcomes of the Elizabethan Reformation is one that is adopted in this

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<sup>16</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc.



thesis, as it is argued that although Elizabeth's government knew what they wanted, it was never certain, in the beginning, as to which ways things would go, and so Anglicanism cannot be said to be an inevitable outcome.

Susan Doran is also a fierce proponent of the idea that the outcome of the Reformation was not carefully planned. In her book '*Elizabeth I and Religion 1558-1603*' she labels the term *via media* as 'misleading since it implies...a well-thought-out principle upon which the church was founded, expanding on this she asserts that, 'the nature of the Church was greatly influenced by pragmatic political considerations, and its shape was formed as a result of serious tensions between the queen and her divines, which were never completely settled.'<sup>17</sup>

Michael Questier, a prominent post-revisionist historian, has written extensively on the subject of the politics of conversion within the English Reformation, and whilst this does have a part to play in the thesis, it is his work on the Catholic experience which is most relevant to the arguments presented within this piece.<sup>18</sup> It is important to consider alternative experiences within the parameters of this field of research, for example, the Protestants, the government, Elizabeth herself, and of course, Catholics. Questier is an important historian within the English Reformation for many reasons, his ideas of conversion throughout the whole Reformation are incredibly important, however for the purposes of this thesis, it is not only the substance of his work which is important, but also who and what it represents.<sup>19</sup>

Another section of the historiography around the Elizabethan Reformation which is important to consider, is the works that centre on Elizabeth herself. As this thesis is asking two main questions, one of them focussing on Elizabeth's own motivations, it is important to

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<sup>17</sup> Doran, S. (1994). *Elizabeth and Religion, 1558-1603*. New York: Routledge Inc.

<sup>18</sup> Questier, M. (1996). *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Questier, M. (1996). *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.; Questier, M. (2006). *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c.1550-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

include these ideas alongside those that focus more on the direction and driving forces behind the reformation itself.

Alexandra Walsham has written extensively on the role of toleration in Elizabethan England in her book *Charitable Hatred*.<sup>20</sup> The ideas presented in this important piece of discourse, most prominently the idea that to judge Elizabethan toleration according to twenty-first century standards is inherently the wrong way to go about things, have formed the basis for the work presented in this thesis. Walsham is currently at the forefront of the debates around Elizabeth's reign and is one of the most contemporary authors presented in this overview. Her work on Elizabeth and her standards of toleration, have changed the debate somewhat to focus more on Elizabeth as a person, rather than Elizabeth as one of many rulers of the Reformation.<sup>21</sup>

Judith Richards is another contemporary author who focuses on Elizabeth and her reign, and again, her ideas have influenced some of the arguments presented in this thesis.<sup>22</sup> Her argument is centred around the idea that Elizabeth intentionally set out her religious settlement to be deliberately inclusive and accommodating of the Catholic faith. Though this is not an idea which is subscribed to within this thesis, it is necessary to consider her work, especially considering the fact that yet again she is one of the most contemporary writers producing work at the moment, and though her ideas may not be something that is adopted within the thesis, they certainly provide the grounds for debate, especially in the first chapter when the beginning of the Elizabethan settlement is discussed.

Susan Doran, another popular contemporary author, as well as writing extensively on the whole Reformation, as detailed previously, has also weighed in on the debate surrounding Elizabeth's true religious intentions, a debate which is particularly prevalent in this thesis, and one which features heavily in the first chapter. She is perhaps the most pragmatic amongst the authors detailed here, as she maintains that in reality no-one knows

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<sup>20</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Richards, J. (2011). *Elizabeth I*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis.

exactly what Elizabeth's religious intentions were, and in acknowledging this, Doran leaves the debate open, though she does recognise Elizabeth's Protestantism and states that this was most like the motivation behind her actions.<sup>23</sup>

This thesis aims to demonstrate that anti-Catholicism during Elizabeth's reign was not a case of a well thought out plan and was not as deliberately engineered as others have implied. Throughout the course of this examination it will be shown that Elizabeth's religious attitude was much more reactionary and based on events as they happened, rather than being part of a big orchestrated scheme.

In light of this, it can be said that the argument presented in the coming chapters is well aligned with Susan Doran's argument and supports the view that the outcome of the Elizabethan Reformation was never, and could not have been, deliberately engineered.

The historiography surrounding Elizabeth's reign and the English Reformation is incredibly important to consider in any attempt at writing an analysis of this time. The views presented here demonstrate firstly how ideas change and evolve throughout time and how ideas presented a long time ago provide the basis for ideas that are now talked about today. It is also important because it helps to validate and inform our own decisions on the subject.

There is little doubt that in due course the opinions of contemporary writers will change again, and a whole new set of idea will be presented. But for now, post-revisionism is in its heyday and it is with these ideas that we must engage and discuss the Elizabethan Reformation.

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<sup>23</sup> Lancaster Pamphlets. (1994). *Elizabeth I and Religion*. [Pamphlet].

## Chapter 1- Early Elizabethan Legislation

In this chapter, the first part of Elizabeth's reign, from her accession in 1558 to the publication of the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1563, will be examined in order to determine the extent to which anti-Catholicism was present in the formative years of the Elizabethan Church. We will then move to look further into Elizabeth's reign, towards the Papal Bull ordering her excommunication, the response to which will help to demonstrate the changing tide of ideas throughout this time. We will see how Anti-Catholicism rose throughout the reign, and how Catholic responses fuelled the rise of support for Protestantism. There will be a detailed examination of the Act of Supremacy, the Act of Uniformity and some contemporary writings of those present as Elizabeth attempted to formulate her own ideas of what the church should be. We will then look at the Thirty-Nine Articles of religion and how they shaped Protestant doctrine, before moving to perhaps the most inflammatory moment of Elizabeth's reign, and the excommunication which tipped many, including to some extent Elizabeth, over the edge.

One of the themes running through the historiography on this particular area is toleration. It is something that is frequently discussed regarding Elizabethan attitudes to Catholics in the works of Alexandra Walsham, Eamon Duffy, Christopher Haigh, Patrick Collinson, and many others.<sup>24</sup> It will be demonstrated that although anti-Catholicism definitely existed at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, especially from the returned Marian exiles and the more radical amongst the Protestants, it was something that Elizabeth herself endeavoured to avoid as her own religious policy leant more towards an inclusive church to begin with, rather than alienating her Catholic subjects.

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<sup>24</sup> Collinson, P. (1982). *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625*. New York: Oxford University Press.; Haigh, C. (1988). *Elizabeth I* (4th Ed.). New York: Longman Inc.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.; Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.;

Firstly, it is important to define what is meant by 'toleration' in this context, as what it means to be tolerant is something that has evolved over time. Toleration as a concept has not always meant the same thing. We must firstly decide whether toleration existed in sixteenth century England, and if so, how was it defined? Only then can we proceed to understand the changing attitudes towards the Catholic faith. For instance, tolerance in today's society has a drastically different meaning to that of the sixteenth century and to judge the Elizabethan standards of tolerance by using modern definitions is not useful in any respect to determine what counts as tolerant in sixteenth century England, ideas change and evolve, and certainly ideas of tolerance. Nowadays for example, tolerance is focussed much more on ethnicity and minorities within Britain, as Avril Keating and Jan G. Janmaat write, tolerance is 'denoting acceptance of, and favourable and inclusive attitudes towards, various minority groups that are often marginalised and/or discriminated against by the majority'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, remarking on the changes in types of toleration in Britain, David Tollerton writes 'Britain is a far more diverse nation than it was in the years following the Second World War, and the tensions that result from society having to come to terms with this diversity have in recent years made themselves especially felt in political and media discourse.'<sup>26</sup> Here, is it particularly important to note the role of media in today's version of toleration, and how, considering the change in times and the differing definitions, it is unreasonable to hold the sixteenth century to account using the ideas centred around the 'complex social realities of contemporary Britain'.<sup>27</sup> Does this therefore mean, however, that no form of toleration existed in early modern England? Indeed, it does not. Though toleration in the modern sense of the word categorically did not exist, toleration in sixteenth century England held an entirely different meaning. Benjamin Kaplan, for example, writes that toleration 'was a social practice, a pattern of interaction among people of different

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<sup>25</sup> Janmaat, J.G. & Keating, A. (2017). Are today's youth more tolerant? Trends in tolerance among young people in Britain. *SAGE Journals*, 1-22.

<sup>26</sup> Tollerton, D.C. (2015). Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Religious Tolerance in Modern Britain and the BBC's Merlin. *Arthuriana*, 25 (1), 113-127.

<sup>27</sup> Tollerton, (2015). Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Religious Tolerance.

faiths' and that furthermore it was 'the peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths living together in the same village, town, or city'. To some extent, Kaplan is right, toleration was a much simpler concept in the sixteenth century, but nevertheless it certainly existed. However, Kaplan's interpretation could potentially be *too* simplified. It suggests an absence of awareness of the wider community in the minds of sixteenth century people, a lack of awareness of the goings on in the country and further away than just their neighbours. Toleration in sixteenth century England cannot merely be boiled down to simply living beside someone in peace, we will see that the public had a great awareness of the events in their country, and that in some cases they garnered national support. Far beyond that of just being neighbourly. No, toleration certainly existed, but it was on a much larger and more complex scale than Kaplan suggests.

In her book, *Charitable Hatred*, Alexandra Walsham writes extensively on this subject of 'tolerance' and from the outset remarks that this 'toleration' 'emphatically did not mean religious freedom. Nor did it proceed from indifference or neutrality'<sup>28</sup> which is the opposite of what modern definitions of 'tolerance' would lead us believe, and it is clear upon reading Walsham's argument that this debated concept of tolerance towards Catholicism during Elizabeth's reign was not, in fact, an act of permitting their 'religious freedom'.<sup>29</sup> So what then *does* it mean? Is it as Walsham proceeds to remark, 'to permit or license something of which one emphatically disapproved, to make a magnanimous concession to the adherents of an inherently false religion'?<sup>30</sup> This would certainly be an advantageous move for Elizabeth, especially at the beginning of her reign, and would fit well with the argument presented by Sir John Neale when he states the Elizabeth was 'playing for time, time to establish her throne on popular support'.<sup>31</sup> By 'contemning no-one' and 'neglecting no office', Elizabeth secured public support for her person rather than her policies, and it was support that came from Catholics and Protestants alike, all the while she kept her

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<sup>28</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd. pg. 70.

religious policies under wraps and offending no one religion.<sup>32</sup> It is easy to see why this was an advantageous move. To find further evidence of this, however, Elizabeth's reign must be looked at in its entirety. Are these the parameters by which to judge *all* of Elizabeth's reign? Or does the extent and purpose of toleration change over the course of Elizabeth's rule? Throughout the course of this thesis we will see a dramatic change in ideas of toleration due to various political events, such as the Elizabethan Settlement through to the excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 by the Pope, and the social responses they triggered. Toleration itself experienced a change in definition because of these events, and so too did the purpose of toleration. These changes were certainly due in part to political mandates, but Elizabeth's own views also influenced ideas of toleration in the mid to late sixteenth century. To be able to judge all of this properly, we must first look at the very beginning, and the 1558 Act of Supremacy.

### ***The Elizabethan Settlement, 1558-9***

Religion has been one of the most widely discussed topics within the broader study of the Elizabethan Reformation as it was religion which was the driving force behind the whole Reformation. Several notable historians exist within the subject, most of whom have devoted large parts of their careers to the study of the Elizabethan Church, including Christopher Haigh, a noted post-revisionist historian and proponent of the idea that 1558-9 is too often regarded as a turning point in the English Reformation.<sup>33</sup> As well as Haigh, Patrick Collinson and John Neale are both important influencers on the historiography of the Elizabethan Reformation, and Neale in particular introduced the important, though now rather dated, idea that Elizabeth's reign was influenced heavily by the 'Puritan Choir', a group of radical Protestants intent on engineering the Elizabethan Settlement to their own

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<sup>32</sup> Neale, (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. pg. 70.

<sup>33</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Elizabeth I* (4th Ed.). New York: Longman Inc.

advantage.<sup>34</sup> John Guy stands as the middle ground between Haigh and Neale. A representative of the Revisionist movement, Guy argues that the Reformation was a carefully thought out procedure and that Anglicanism was the inevitable outcome, and although this thesis rejects this idea, his work is important to consider when writing of changing ideas about the Elizabethan Reformation.<sup>35</sup> Judith Richards and Alexandra Walsham are some of the more contemporary writers who have influenced ideas within this thesis, Walsham has written extensively on ideas of toleration in the sixteenth century compared to the twenty-first century, and Richards is a supporter of the idea that the Elizabethan Settlement was an inclusive doctrine by design, something that has been considered within this thesis.<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth's own religious affiliations have been questioned, as have the actions of the people closest to her and the extent to which they influenced the outcome of the Reformation. Early arguments amongst historians on this subject begin with John Neale writing that Elizabeth was being governed by those around her, namely by the 'puritan choir' and, writes strongly in favour of Elizabeth taking a *via media* approach to the problem of the church, whereas later interpretations such as one by Susan Doran imply that the *via media* approach indicated a far higher level of intent than was present at the time of the Elizabethan Settlement.<sup>37</sup> Judith Richards indicates that the Elizabethan Church lacked any sort of conviction which would come with the settlement being a product of doctrine, and was rather more accommodating than a fully Protestant piece of legislation.<sup>38</sup> So, we can see that the questions of Elizabeth's effect on toleration, and how anti-Catholic rhetoric changed throughout Elizabeth's rule, are still in contention.

Something which encompasses both of these questions however is to look at the extent to which toleration changed throughout the reign, specifically regarding anti-

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<sup>34</sup>Collinson, P. (1982). *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625*. New York: Oxford University Press.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.

<sup>35</sup> Guy, J. (1988). *Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>36</sup> Richards, J. (2011). *Elizabeth I*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis.; Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>37</sup> Doran, S. (1994). *Elizabeth and Religion, 1558-1603*. New York: Routledge Inc.; Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.

<sup>38</sup> Richards, J. (2011). *Elizabeth I*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis. p. 54.



Catholicism. Although it is apparent from an early age that Elizabeth aligned herself more with Protestantism, as 'the living symbol of her father's break with Rome' this is to be expected.<sup>39</sup> Especially since, being so young, her feelings regarding religion would have been far from certain. What is important however is that from the outset, Elizabeth presented herself as God's instrument and maintained this throughout her reign, and Elizabeth's determination towards presenting herself as God's instrument on earth, not only spoke of a strong personal conviction behind her actions, but also sent a message to the godliest amongst her subjects. A message which meant a strong religious guidance throughout her reign, and a message which meant that whatever happened, it was done in accordance to God's will, something both Protestants and Catholics alike understood. For some however, this was not specific enough and questions were raised as to which religion, and which version of God, she would ultimately align herself.<sup>40</sup> This confusion is perhaps most apparent in the legislation which passed through parliament throughout Elizabeth's reign, starting with the Elizabethan Settlement in 1559 and moving right through to the Act of Parliament of 1585. The reign of a king or queen is often defined in some part by the legislative measures that are passed during their rule, and for Elizabeth, her reluctance to set out a clear religious doctrine in these first Acts of Parliament makes it clear to see why people were confused, and why many Protestants were especially disconcerted. The Elizabethan Settlement was supposed to be Elizabeth's attempt to bring religious clarity to England in the wake of the religious upheaval that had been plaguing the country since the time of Henry VIII, and in this she certainly failed.

Elizabeth was faced with a difficult task, one which the events of the last decade had laid out for her. Under Edward VI, Protestantism had been worked into a clear and recognisable Church of England, which carried the hope of a much-needed period of religious stability after Henry. But with his death came the accession of Mary I and once

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<sup>39</sup> Jones, N.L. (1984). Elizabeth's First Year: The Conception and Birth of the Elizabethan Political World. In C. Haigh (Ed.). *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (pp. 27-53). Hampshire: The Macmillan Press LTD.

<sup>40</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Elizabeth I* (4th Ed.). New York: Longman Inc.

again the country was thrown into religious turmoil. Under Mary, Protestants had suffered profusely in her attempt to establish a dominant and total religion, and it was expected by Protestants that, with Elizabeth's succession, Protestantism would once again be in favour with no Catholic influence, or at least not enough to pose a serious threat. Alexandra Walsham encapsulates the confusion surrounding religion at the time when she writes: 'against the backdrop of a volatile domestic and international political context, no religious regime could be certain of retaining power...'<sup>41</sup> Eamon Duffy too notes that this was the third instance of religious upheaval in a handful of years and that confusion at this time was understandable.<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth had inherited a religiously unstable country, and her Settlement was intended to address the problems this had produced.

Almost as soon as Elizabeth took office, William Bill delivered the first sermon of the Elizabethan Government. Bill was a Protestant, and this was not a coincidence, in fact, it was very deliberate. Soon after Elizabeth's accession it was decreed that all preaching was to be stopped pending the reaching of an agreement on the religious stance of Elizabeth's government, and it is no coincidence that Bill, a Protestant, was the first preacher to be heard at court.<sup>43</sup> It sent a strong message of Protestant intent from within the Elizabethan government and at least reassured those Protestants who were uncertain about Elizabeth as a ruler, that religion would be on their side, not only that but Elizabeth was being careful to allay and concerns which might cause uproar before she had even had chance to hold Parliament, since had he been a Catholic there would have been immediate questioning of Elizabeth's religious intentions. Later, Elizabeth came to the throne amidst a world of expectation. The more radical amongst the Protestants were hopeful for a vengeful rule after Mary, and the Catholic population hoped for a continuation of the previous years, though realistically they knew that this was less than likely. However, there was a glimmer

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<sup>41</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Duffy, E. (1992). *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400 - c.1580*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. p. 565.

<sup>43</sup> University of York. (2011). *Preaching the Elizabethan Settlement*. Retrieved from <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/crems/documents/seminars-events/Preaching%20the%20Settlement.pdf>.

of hope for the Catholics, as Elizabeth not only started out keeping her religious inclinations firmly under wraps, but also was more defiant than anyone had expected. For one thing, she refused to marry, and not only that, but before her coronation Elizabeth paraded herself around, including everybody and excluding no religion.<sup>44</sup> It certainly seemed, that although Elizabeth would likely be a stringent Protestant, there was a possibility that she would be less eager to conform to the ideas of other people, preferring to rule in her own way, and consequently perhaps not being as harsh towards Catholics than the Protestants around her had hoped for. Judith Richards remarks on the seemingly inclusive nature of the Elizabeth Settlement, stating 'Elizabeth's church was intended to be as inclusive as possible, so she was always strongly hostile to those who demanded more sharply defined doctrinal reforms in either direction'.<sup>45</sup> So according to Richards, it was not unreasonable to hope that Elizabeth would exhibit tolerance of both religions in equal measure, although it had never happened before, and there were those who had set out to make sure that it would never happen.

From the beginning of her reign, most radical Protestants and those with whom they had made acquaintance in Europe, expressed fervent desires that Elizabeth would continue the work that her brother had begun. Those who had returned from the continent had returned to England harbouring Calvinist ideals, and the religious policies of Elizabeth's brother Edward had been far closer to what they expected of a religious settlement, they hoped that Elizabeth's reign would bring a return to this ideal. So already it can be seen that anti-Catholicism had taken hold in the most radical Protestant minds, it just so happened that these radical Protestants also happened to be some of the most influential in Elizabeth's circle.

In a letter of 1559 from Rudolph Gualter to the Queen, Gualter looks fondly on the memory of Edward proclaiming him 'most pious of memory, who when scarcely out of his boy hood, was an object of admiration to all...by reason of his remarkable godliness and the

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<sup>44</sup> Neale, (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. p. 66.

<sup>45</sup> Richards, J. (2011). *Elizabeth I*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis. p. 54.

restoration of religion, and bravely overthrew the tyranny of antichrist throughout his realm.<sup>46</sup> He then proceeds to advise the Queen on the course of action he feels best with regard to religion, stating 'with your favour gladden the church, which is eagerly expecting from your majesty the true maintenance of doctrine and religion.'<sup>47</sup> It can be seen from this that Elizabeth was already expected to exhibit a certain amount of anti-Catholicism as soon as she was crowned, many were certain that a hard line approach from the beginning would ensure the success of Elizabeth's regime, and for them a firm Protestant stance was the way to go. Gualter, though a significant thinker, resided abroad, which meant that Elizabeth didn't necessarily need to take notice of what he was saying. However, surrounding Elizabeth were her bishops, many of whom shared Gualter's views, and could serve to impress their importance upon Elizabeth. William Barlow, for example, was noted for his anti-papist views, a retained 'old hatred of Romanism', and 'his readiness to repress obstinate adversaries, especially "Papists"'.<sup>48</sup> So, the first two Acts of Parliament were put in motion.

The Act of Supremacy 1559 was not the radical Protestant proclamation that many had hoped it would be, indeed it had encountered opposition the first time it had been proposed and it had to undergo some editing. The result was, as Patrick Collinson puts it, 'a compromise in the lively political sense that it was the outcome of manoeuvres in which both the queen and the Protestants were forced to yield some ground.'<sup>49</sup> In *The Reign of Elizabeth I* Norman Jones remarks that Elizabeth had 'set out to return England to the legal religion of Edward VI and had succeeded', however, the settlement that emerged from Elizabeth's reign was not a return to the much yearned for Edwardian Act of 1552, and the

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<sup>46</sup> Gualter, R. (1559). Letter from Rudolph Gualter to Queen Elizabeth. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters, comprising the correspondence of several English bishops and others, with some of the Helvetian reformers, during the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (pp. 3-8). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Gualter, R. (1559). Letter from Rudolph Gualter to Queen Elizabeth. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters*. p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> White, F.O. (1898). *Lives of the Elizabethan Bishops of the Anglican Church*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/stream/livesofelizabeth00whit#page/10/search/barlow>. p. 10

<sup>49</sup> Collinson, P. (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd. p. 35.

role of Protestantism in the country was 'demonstrably weak'.<sup>50</sup> If Elizabeth was setting out to return England to the state of Edward VI she failed. For one thing, Elizabeth was downgraded from 'Supreme Head' to 'Supreme Governor' of the Church of England and was added into the Act to abate those who had suggested that a woman could not be head of the church. It was simply irrational to suggest that a female be titled 'Supreme Head'. Alongside this, a ruling was made that 'all and every archbishop, bishop, and all and every other ecclesiastical person...shall make, take, and receive a corporal oath upon the Evangelist, before such person or persons as shall please your highness...'<sup>51</sup> Where Edward had instated a recognisable and stabilised Church of England in the eyes of the Protestant people, most were unsure as to the direction of the Elizabethan Settlement, at least at the beginning.<sup>52</sup> Many, most notably the returned Marian exiles such as John Jewel and Edwin Sandys, had their own ideas about what the Bill should have been, harbouring a desire to introduce the Calvinist ideals and influence to which they themselves had conformed whilst exiled. Furthermore, bishops such as Matthew Parker and Edmund Grindal also showed fierce support for an extreme version of Protestantism. Matthew Parker was consulted when devising the Edwardian prayer book some year previously and was noted to strongly approve of the ideas it set out. Grindal, 'returning to England on the day of Elizabeth's coronation...at once took part in all the measures then adopted for the promotion of Protestantism', and was especially notable for his fervent agreement with the Puritan movement.<sup>53</sup> 'The bishops who had recently returned from exile,' writes Patrick Collinson, 'had taken a number of initiatives which served to impart to the Church a character which was more protestant than the queen had evidently intended, especially in the externals of

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<sup>50</sup> Jones, N.L. (1984). Elizabeth's First Year: The Conception and Birth of the Elizabethan Political World. In C. Haigh (Ed.). *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (pp. 27-53). Hampshire: The Macmillan Press LTD.; Williams, P. (1979). *The Tudor Regime*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 258.

<sup>51</sup> Constitution Society. *ELIZABETH: STATUTES*. Retrieved from [http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech\\_081.html](http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech_081.html).

<sup>52</sup> Collinson, P. (1982). *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>53</sup> White, F.O. (1898). *Lives of the Elizabethan Bishops of the Anglican Church*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/stream/livesofelizabeth00whit#page/62/search/promotion>. p. 63.

ceremony and worship,' thus illustrating the desire to return to Edwardian standards.<sup>54</sup> This intent can be further demonstrated in some of the contemporary letters, most notably one from Francis, Earl of Bedford to Rudolph Gualter proclaiming, 'I can truly promise that this our religion, wounded and laid low as it were...and now, by God's blessing, again beginning in some measure to revive, will strike its roots yet deeper and deeper..', so too, in a letter to Peter Martyr, Sir Anthony Cook writes, 'we are now busy in Parliament about expelling the tyranny of the pope, and restoring the royal authority, and re-establishing true religion.'<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it can be clearly seen that the intent of the Marian exiles was to influence the decisions of the crown and make the Reformation immediately and certifiably anti-Catholic, and not only that, but these views were more widely shared, especially amongst Elizabeth's bishops.

There were a few indications that this was going to happen, as Christopher Haigh writes, Elizabeth could be seen to be recruiting Protestant ministers and removing some of the more radical Marian leaders, again prompting hope for a return to the standards of Edward VI.<sup>56</sup> Patrick Collinson further states, however, that the bishops had less success in this than they would have hoped, with Elizabeth enforcing her own rules when it came to things like restoring her crucifix to her chapel.<sup>57</sup> Judith Richards too observes that the established settlement was 'more an exercise in religious accommodation than of doctrinal rigour' and this idea that an inclusive approach was favoured by Elizabeth can be demonstrated through a few examples.<sup>58</sup> Yes Elizabeth had been removing the more radical Catholic ministers from office, but she had also kept some Catholic ministers whom it was

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<sup>54</sup> Collinson, (1982). *The Religion of Protestants*. p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> Cook, A. (1559). Letter from Anthony Cook to Peter Martyr. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters, comprising the correspondence of several English bishops and others, with some of the Helvetian reformers, during the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (pp. 13-14). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 13.; Russell, F. (1560). Letter from Francis, Earl of Bedford to Rudolph Gualter. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters, comprising the correspondence of several English bishops and others, with some of the Helvetian reformers, during the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (pp. 36-38). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 37.

<sup>56</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc. p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Collinson, (1982). *The Religion of Protestants*. p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Richards, (2011). *Elizabeth I*. p. 51.

hoped would conform to the Elizabethan ideals, and therefore was not entirely excluding the Catholic religion.<sup>59</sup> It was instances like these that meant, as Alexandra Walsham notes, that the Protestantism that came about under the Elizabethan Settlement came 'without the transparency or clarity for which many returning exiles fervently wished'.<sup>60</sup> This lack of 'clarity' within the movement of Protestantism is something that historians have picked up on, and is one reason why, after the Act of Supremacy, there was still some confusion about Elizabeth's attitudes towards Catholics. Others, however, speculate that this dilution was to be expected and that 'in such circumstances any settlement would have had to contain elements of compromise'.<sup>61</sup> Though this is true to some extent, there is remarkably little anti-Catholicism to be found within the Bill itself, especially considering the power and extent of the Protestant forces that surrounded Elizabeth. It is at this point that we can see why some argue that Elizabeth was expressing tolerance towards the members of the catholic community. With the emergence of the Supremacy Act, it seemed to be the belief of the more radical Protestants, the Marian exiles included, that Elizabeth was far more sympathetic of the Catholic faith than they had hoped, especially considering some of the concessions she had made in order to instigate her settlement. Factors such as the participation of Catholic priests in Elizabeth's clergy, and the differing characteristics between Elizabeth's regime when compared to the past times of Edward, meant that most Protestants felt dissatisfied with the direction of Elizabeth's settlement, believing it to be a sign of Catholic influence over the Queen.

Elizabeth had hoped to avoid the offence of either religion at this early stage of her reign, and yet in doing so had managed to offend the most radical of her Protestant allies who, although relatively small in number, held significant positions within the Church. Compromise proved to be of the utmost importance at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. As previously mentioned Elizabeth was forced to change titles from Supreme Head of the

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<sup>59</sup> Haigh, (1988). *Profiles in Power*. p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> Sheils, W.J. (2013). *The English Reformation 1530-1570*. Oxon: Routledge. p. 55.

Church to Supreme Governor, and this was due in no small part to her sex. As Sir John Neale notes, 'it was one thing to charm, quite another to rule. And in this, sex was an almost desperate impediment. The country had already made its first experiment of a woman ruler; and it was anything but a happy augury for the second'.<sup>62</sup> So, even before Elizabeth had been crowned, she was surrounded by much doubt, not helped by the record of her sister. It was therefore of the utmost importance that Elizabeth avoid stirring up trouble not only as a political tool, but also as a personal one as well, especially since she had stated her intentions regarding marriage with the utmost clarity. This careful negotiation can be seen quite clearly in the early stages of the reign, and as Sir John writes, Elizabeth was 'playing for time, time to establish popular support' and when the time came she 'let her religious policy gradually unfold itself'.<sup>63</sup> Though much of what Neale has written on the subject is now rather outdate, in this case there is some accuracy in that Elizabeth was holding back. Some think quite the opposite however, Brett Usher, for example, when discussing the Act of Supremacy writes, 'give or take a handful of doctrinal nuances, these measures returned the church of England to the point on the Protestant map which it had occupied from 1552 until Edward VI's death one year later'.<sup>64</sup> Had this been the case, however, then there would be no question of whether Elizabeth was succumbing to the Catholic influence, and as we have already shown, there were a few key differences in Elizabeth's Act when compared to Edward's, and therefore it is most emphatically not a return to the Edwardian system. Neale's interpretation certainly holds some credence here, as it is clear that Elizabeth was waiting until her rule was well established before making a definite religious ruling. Anne Somerset too makes an interesting point, and says that for Elizabeth and her government, though they were having to 'settle for less than what they wanted' the Supremacy Bill did at least go some way towards establishing Protestantism,

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<sup>62</sup> Neale, (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. pg. 70.

<sup>63</sup> Neale, (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. pg. 65.

<sup>64</sup> Usher, B. (2014). New Wine into Old Bottles: The doctrine and structure of the Elizabethan Church. In S. Doran & N. Jones (Eds.) *The Elizabethan World* (pp. 203-268). Oxon: Routledge.



and so could be viewed as a small victory for Elizabeth and the Protestants.<sup>65</sup> A combination of Neale's interpretation and that of Somerset's seems most likely here. Although it is definitively true that it could be seen as a small victory for Protestantism, the notion that Elizabeth was settling for less than she wanted is somewhat inaccurate. There are those who maintain that Elizabeth's reformation was a return to the Edwardian standards. Susan Clegg, for example, states emphatically that '...any historical interpretation that regards the Elizabethan Reformation of religion inept, *ad hoc* or a compromise...needs reconsideration,' and maintains that the Elizabethan settlement was an effort '...to restore the Church of England to Edwardian Protestantism, indeed...to the state of the Church as it had existed at the end of Edward's reign.'<sup>66</sup> However, as already stated, the more moderate elements of the Act of Supremacy were not there by accident, Elizabeth was 'playing for time' and aiming to cause the least offence possible.<sup>67</sup> While it is certainly true that she had to make some concessions, this only served to help her in her goal of avoiding offence. Here Neale would argue that it served to help her policy of *via media* succeed; but considering this Elizabeth should have been able to get the Act through without adjusting, it seems unlikely that *via media* was her goal here. Though the more radical Protestants were still offended that Elizabeth was far less radical towards the Catholic faith than they had hoped, had she not accepted some of their amendments there is no doubt that her settlement would have caused further offence. Furthermore, it seemed that these concessions were something that the Protestants had feared. Even before the publication of the Act of Supremacy, in a letter to Elizabeth, Rudolph Gualter expressed concern about the influences surrounding Elizabeth declaring:

*'we know that there are not a few persons, who, though they perceive that popery can neither honestly be defended, nor conveniently retained, are endeavouring by and by*

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<sup>65</sup> Somerset, A. (1997). *Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). London: Orion Books Ltd. p. 99.

<sup>66</sup> Clegg, C.S. (2016). The 1559 Books of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Reformation. *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 67 (1), 94-121. Retrieved from <https://www.cambridge-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/core/journals/journal-of-ecclesiastical-history/article/1559-books-of-common-prayer-and-the-elizabethan-reformation/50333805D3C626BC4B61F2DE28C0DAA4>. p. 119.

<sup>67</sup> Neale, (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. p. 64.

*to obtrude upon the churches a form of religion which is an unhappy compound of popery and the gospel...*<sup>68</sup>

However, according to Walsham's definition of tolerance, Elizabeth would have had to 'permit or license' the Catholic religion, and when looking at the Act of Supremacy it can be clearly seen that this is not the case. Indeed, it goes so far as to mention the abolition of all 'foreign power' and does not *permit* anything of the Catholic inclination whatsoever.<sup>69</sup> We can surmise from this that at the beginning Elizabeth was initially being non-committal regarding the question of religion and it would seem upon first look that Elizabeth was merely being wary rather than tolerant. The second part of Walsham's argument, however, is that in order to be tolerant one must 'make a magnanimous concession to the adherents of an inherently false religion' something which Elizabeth *does* do, and so she makes the move from being non-committal to actually making some concessions. For one thing, though initially she wanted to abolish the Catholic ideal that Christ is present during the mass, this was then reinstated as part of the Settlement, along with permission for the wearing of ceremonial vestments, which are in themselves images of the Catholic faith, during mass. In addition to this, Elizabeth and those around her accepted that she should not be given the title of Supreme Head of the Church as we have already seen.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, adhering to Walsham's expansion of her argument, Elizabeth does not seem to display *any* degree of 'moral discomfort' when passing her Settlement, which only contributes more to the idea of tolerance of the Catholic faith.<sup>71</sup> All of these concessions point without doubt to Elizabeth displaying a certain tolerance towards the Catholic faith, though still outwardly she showed no favourable feelings towards it. In fact, frustratingly, Elizabeth appears to display no strong feelings in favour of either faith initially, and this is something that incensed the Protestants around her. Elizabeth was maintaining her policy of

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<sup>68</sup> Gualter, R. (1559). Letter from Rudolph Gualter to Queen Elizabeth. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters*. p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> The Constitution Society. *Elizabeth: Statutes*. Retrieved from [http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech\\_081.html](http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech_081.html).

<sup>70</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 14.

<sup>71</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 4.

a certain degree of religious acceptance, and it was certainly not the harsh take that the more radical amongst the Protestants had hoped for.

The Act of Uniformity, passed around the same time as the Act of Supremacy, was much more geared towards the inner workings of the mass and the order of prayer, it was specifically designed to go alongside the Book of Common Prayer, and it marked a turning point for Elizabeth. The passage of the Act brought with it the placement of a new Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, previously mentioned as a radical Protestant, and perhaps most notably, saw all but one of the bishops of England dismissed. Although this was carried out as a result of the Act being passed, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this was going to happen anyway. Elizabeth was at the beginning of a brand-new era for the Crown, and these bishops had all held office under Mary's rule as well. The Act enforced a more moderate version of the prayer book which had been used since 1552 and changed the wording of a few key parts, most notably the fact that the Catholic notion that Christ is present at all Masses was removed, perhaps to placate the Protestants. Again, however enforcement of these rules was somewhat lukewarm and lacked the strict Protestantism that many had hoped for. The Act also made it mandatory for the population to attend mass at least once a week stating:

*'all and every person and persons inhabiting within this realm or any other the queen's majesty's dominions shall diligently and faithfully, having no lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resort to their parish church or chapel accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof, to some usual place where common prayer and such service of God shall be used in such time of let, upon every Sunday and other days ordained and used to be kept as holy days'*<sup>72</sup>

So, although the Act of Supremacy as a standalone is not a particularly strong indication of religious leaning, when put alongside the Act of Uniformity it only serves to emphasize the lack of a definitive religious policy, and again shows that anti-Catholicism was not particularly strong with Elizabeth at the current time. Indeed, this is something

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<sup>72</sup> Constitution Society. *ELIZABETH: STATUTES*. Retrieved from [http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech\\_081.htm](http://www.constitution.org/sech/sech_081.htm).

which was commented upon in a letter from Richard Hillies to Henry Bullinger in 1562.

Hillies writes:

*'the queen appears to be considering the evils that may possibly be hanging over us, and is apprehensive lest any misfortune should arise to the realm...that is, lest any foreign prince...should be stirred up by the Roman pontiff or any other foreign papists who adhere to him, to find some occasion of quarrel against her.'*<sup>73</sup>

As can be seen here, even a few years on from the initial enforcement of the Act of Supremacy, the overwhelming fear that the Catholic faith would disrupt and take over England was still very much present in the minds of the most Protestant in England. This again highlights the uncertainty which clung to England in the wake of the Elizabethan Settlement, and how dissatisfied both religions were with the outcome.

Elizabeth's actions were at the forefront of ideas of religion, though most Protestants in England did not wait for Elizabeth to show her endorsement of Protestantism to formulate their own anti-Catholic ideals. The outcome of the Act of Supremacy was, to say the least, unsatisfactory in the eyes of the returned exiles, and most were determined that through their influence, a much more overtly Protestant agenda would be established.

Amongst the returned exiles was scholar and bishop, John Jewel. In 1562, now that the Act of Supremacy was firmly established, he published his 'Apology of the Church of England'. His work is an excellent, contemporary example outlining the beliefs of the most radical Protestants, and is rife with anti-Catholic language. Though he notes that both religions share certain characteristics, his denouncement of the Catholic faith is vehement, especially when it comes to discussions about Rome. Opening with an early version of the apostle's creed, he goes on to vilify those who adhere to the Catholic faith addressing the fact that 'these men slander us as heretics, and say that we have left the Church and fellowship of Christ,' moving on to announce, 'we have, indeed, put ourselves apart not as heretics are wont, from the Church of Christ, but as all good men ought to do, from the

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<sup>73</sup> Hillies, R. (1562). Letter from Richard Hillies to Henry Bullinger. In J. Hunter (Ed.) (1842) *The Zurich Letters, comprising the correspondence of several English bishops and others, with some of the Helvetian reformers, during the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (pp. 82-84). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 8.

infection of naughty persons and hypocrites<sup>74</sup> His particularly damning words also attacked the Pope stating:

*'but yet he which giveth commandment that he should be called "Vicar of Christ", and the "Head of the Church;" who also heareth that such things be done in Rome, who seeth them, who suffereth them...which have taught the people that fornication between single folk is no sin...neither can he forget, how himself doth maintain openly brothel houses, and by a most filthy lucre doth filthily and lewdly serve his own lust.'*<sup>75</sup>

These harsh words perfectly served to illustrate Jewel's intense hatred of the Catholic faith, and his anti-Catholic doctrine aimed to influence Elizabeth, the less radical Protestants around her, and the Protestant community throughout the country. He attacked the most highly regarded living figure in Catholic doctrine and was doing so publicly, a bold move, but one which could hardly be avenged in the current climate. There is no denying that his work was popular. In fact, so widely received was his work that most people would have either read it or heard of its teachings, for 'as his reputation grew so did the authoritative status of the Apologie'.<sup>76</sup> The work even reach overseas and was translated into numerous languages.<sup>77</sup>

One of the biggest blows dealt by Jewel, however, is his request of the Catholic faith, that they 'let us know, I beseech you, what proper mark and badge hath that church of theirs, whereby it may be known to be the Church of God.'<sup>78</sup> By saying this, Jewel is invalidating the Catholic faith and their beliefs, he is condemning them and stating that their beliefs are inherently wrong, they have no right to be calling their church the Church of God, and the right should go to the Protestant Church. It spread so widely and so quickly that it is foolish to suppose that people did not see this. It continued to spread not only over England but into what we now know as Western Europe, alongside being translated into

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<sup>74</sup> Project Canterbury. (1888). *The Apology of the Church of England*. Retrieved from <http://anglicanhistory.org/jewel/apology/04.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Project Canterbury. (1888). *The Apology of the Church of England*. Retrieved from <http://anglicanhistory.org/jewel/apology/04.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Craig, J. (2008). *Jewel, John (1522–1571), Bishop of Salisbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14810?docPos=1>.

<sup>77</sup> Craig, J. (2008). *Jewel, John (1522–1571), Bishop of Salisbury*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14810?docPos=1>.

<sup>78</sup> Project Canterbury. (1888). *The Apology of the Church of England*. Retrieved from <http://anglicanhistory.org/jewel/apology/04.html>.

many languages so that it was accessible to all people. This meant that Jewel's anti-Catholic work was read and taken on board by hundreds of thousands of people, and not only that but some of these people would conform to his ideas, spreading the feeling of anti-Catholicism. Jewel was a well-respected scholar who was appointed as Bishop of Salisbury. He was therefore, a trusted and important theologian of the era, a man with access to the ear of the Queen. He was not the only one either, as Patrick McCullough observes, anti-Catholic rhetoric is highly prevalent in sermons from the first twenty-five years of Elizabeth's reign and 'dominates that body of material to a striking degree'.<sup>79</sup> So Jewel was in an advantageous position, along with other preachers, as from here he could hope to influence her decisions and her laws in such a way that they became more overtly Protestant, and he did have a little success. His 'Challenge Sermon' was the first court sermon printed during Elizabeth's reign and was distinctly anti-Catholic in its nature, featuring 'a refutation of seven points of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice that Jewel challenged any papist to defend...'<sup>80</sup> At the very least this means that Elizabeth heard the sermon, and given that it was preached several times to the public *and* printed, it meant also that the public were exposed to his teachings. It is also worth stating here that Elizabeth cannot have objected in any great capacity to Jewel's preaching, and is perhaps indicative of her later views. Though not actively endorsing Jewel's rapport, Elizabeth does nothing to stop it being heard. Though it cannot be said for certain whether Jewel's sermon directly influenced anyone's anti-Catholicism, it is very easy to see how his teaching could have far reaching effects and be largely influential.

Nevertheless, this shows that although Elizabeth was endeavouring to keep the balance between the two religious ideologies, anti-Catholicism was still very much alive, and it is with the publication of sermons and other religious writings that we can see a slow movement beginning in favour of the Protestant faith. As Patrick McCullough observes,

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<sup>79</sup> McCullough, P. (1998). *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching, Volume 1*. UK: Cambridge University Press. p. 94.

<sup>80</sup> McCullough, (1998). *Sermons at Court*. p. 94.

throughout the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, numerous preachers, including Jewel, 'urged the establishment of a preaching clergy as the only way to fend off popish wolves.'<sup>81</sup>

As we have already seen, in the years before there had been several instances of religious turmoil, and England was stuck in a cycle of religious polarisation. By refusing to be just another complete change in religion, Elizabeth had made sure that she was not favouring a particular religion, and maintaining the middle ground. Though admittedly she was doing this through confusion rather than a willingness to co-exist. It would take further years for Elizabeth to begin defining the religious state of England.

### ***The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion***

Religion continued in much the same vein throughout much of the 1560s, as detailed previously, and only one other major religious piece of legislation was enforced in this decade, the Thirty-Nine Articles, although they were equally unclear as the stance of the Crown on religion. Because of this continuation of circumstances, so too, the religious confusion continued with the Thirty-Nine Articles of religion doing very little to avert it. In 1563 the Thirty-Nine Articles were drawn up largely by Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury and a prominent theologian, and were built upon ideas that Thomas Cranmer had built under Edward's rule.<sup>82</sup> It was another attempt by the church to offer resolution to the religious confusion running rife across the country, though it did very little to settle people's minds. Whilst there is no harsh anti-Catholicism within the Articles, the very fact that it was intended to set out the state of religion for the country, specifically Calvinist influence, ensured Catholic faith was being evermore refuted. Even more importantly, the bill known as bill 'B' of the 1571 parliament, proposed confirmation to the Articles and was

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<sup>81</sup> McCullough, (1998). *Sermons at Court*. p. 94.

<sup>82</sup> O'Donovan, O. (2011). *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*.

Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hud/detail.action?docID=3306188#>. p. 5.

intended to be used as a 'test by which to purge the ministry of lurking papists.'<sup>83</sup> As Alexandra Walsham states, it was firmly set on Calvinist foundations, though she acknowledges that 'they too contained areas of ambiguity that sowed seeds for future ambiguity'.<sup>84</sup> However, though Walsham is correct when she states that further ambiguity is possible, it is unlikely that this would happen with a strong Calvinist influence. Indeed, a Calvinist influence was more likely to breed a stronger anti-Catholicism than anything else. Calvinism was brought to England by the exiled bishops after they had spent time on the continent learning and adopting its rules, and was a far more radical version of Protestantism than had been seen in England so far. It differs from Catholicism on the most fundamental of beliefs, for example belief in certain elements of the mass, and furthermore, in Calvinist belief salvation is predetermined by faith, whereas in Catholicism it is measured on a person's merits throughout their life. Calvinist influence in England from Elizabeth's own bishops, would result in a much harsher regime against Catholics and a much quicker Reformation. Had Elizabeth adopted Calvinist doctrine she may have avoided some of the later revolts from her Catholic subjects, but there is no doubt that her reign would have seen much more violence and religious upheaval than was gained by remaining evasive in the beginning towards religion.

The problem remained that the general population were still contesting the point of the 'true religion', and were still unsure about what was allowed and what was not.<sup>85</sup> Sources of this confusion were the continued references to 'Christians' which was indicated inclusion of both Protestants, Catholics, Calvinists and indeed anybody who subscribed to a God fearing religion, and meant that the argument over which church was the *true* church became even more unclear. Instead the talk of Christians, rather than a clear rhetoric against 'papists' shows an allowance and acknowledgment of other religions, alluding to the fact that once again, Elizabeth was refraining from alienating her other subjects.

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<sup>83</sup> Collinson, P. (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd. p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 14.



Furthermore, it can be seen in the Articles that the authority of the Church is fully valid, and for both religions, regardless of who is head of the church, whether it be government or the Pope, for the early modern mind religion is the people's authority, and so again there is this notion of the Thirty-Nine Articles being an inclusive piece of legislation. As Alexandra Walsham stated, however, there was an increasing amount of Protestant agenda within the Articles, more so than had been seen the Elizabethan Settlement. For one thing, in Article XXVIII: Of the Lord's Supper, it can be seen that the Elizabethan Church makes the official ruling on the eating of the Sacrament, declaring that transubstantiation 'cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.'<sup>86</sup> Though not explicitly mentioning Catholics, the Article is a clear refutation of the notion of transubstantiation, and therefore a direct attack on one of the core Catholic beliefs. Through this, the Articles are urging Catholics to comply to a different type of religion completely, and is an example of the Anti-Catholic rhetoric that can be seen throughout the Thirty-Nine Articles. Furthermore, in Article XXXVII it is stated 'the Queen's majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England...The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England', another bold statement of the Queen's power over the Pope, and yet another example of distinct anti-Catholicism within the Articles.

Through these articles we begin to see the firm foundations of Elizabeth's religious regime, though the Queen herself seemed reluctant to endorse them, having never actually supported them directly. There were still many ambiguities, from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, through the Act of Supremacy and up to this point, there had however been a slow movement towards firm Protestantism and an anti-Catholic agenda. It must be noted , that thus far Elizabeth was still being exceedingly careful when it came to her attitudes towards Catholics, so much so that people were still voicing their concerns in letters to those on the continent, writing their dissatisfaction with the inherent Catholicism

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<sup>86</sup> The Victorian Web. (2001). *The 39 Articles of Religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/39articles.html>.

which seemed underlying in the religious policies of Elizabeth's early reign, and it is this which was the most ambiguous of everything covered here. Elizabeth up to this point, was not being tolerant of Catholics by Walsham's standards, rather letting them exist until it was within her power to enforce rules against them. She was maintaining the balance between the two religions until her own rule gained a legitimacy which would enable her to finally start implementing her religious agenda. Her constant lack of firm Protestantism was a point of contention for the more radical Protestants who felt that Elizabeth should create a hard-line religion immediately, but ultimately it bought the Queen time. Time to engineer her ideas and to put her carefully thought out plan into motion.

From here Elizabethan religion then continued in much the same vein from the publishing of the Articles in 1563 for at least the next five years, with very little changing, though tensions were still exceedingly high, and the aims of the more Calvinist among the Protestants remained the same. Anti-Catholicism was beginning to appear, though was notably absent in the Queen's actions, and for a while Elizabeth maintained her position of not openly defying the Catholic faith, though she was never actively endorsing it either. It would be a few years, however, until Elizabeth's intentions were prompted to appear, and when they did, the Catholic people would look back on the first part of Elizabeth's reign and realize how lenient those first years had been.

### ***Pope Pius Excommunicates Elizabeth***

As we have seen, although Elizabeth was reluctant to take definite aim at the Catholic cause, the makings of an Anti-Catholic movement were definitely coming together. Rising tensions through the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign meant that as the reign wore on, something had to give.

As it turned out, in a way the Catholics set the ball rolling themselves, and the excommunication of Elizabeth in the Papal Bull gave reason to the Anti-Catholic cause. The timing of the Papal Bull was also significant. After a period of unrest in the wake of the 1569

Northern Rising the Bull played on the heightened fears of the Protestant population and showed how the Catholic faith was a legitimate threat to the safety of Elizabeth, and her country.

The effect that the bull had on the Catholic people was an interesting one. Before the Papal Bull was published, i.e. before 1570, English Catholics had taken advantage of a medium ground, a sort of loophole, where they could morally be loyal to their Queen and their religion as there was nothing in Catholic doctrine to state otherwise and therefore could justify a loyalty to both. In this case however, loyalty is not to be confused with conformity. Loyalty to the Queen meant loyalty to the country, rather than loyalty to the Queen's religion. Even in 1559 conformity to some Protestant ideals was viewed as 'equivalent to crossing a theological rubicon' and was 'already a recognised sign of Catholic dissent and defiance.'<sup>87</sup>

In 1570, however, the order came that Catholics were to disassociate themselves with the Queen and anything she stood for, and this came from the highest of Catholic orders, the Pope Pius V. Titled *Regnans in Excelsis* the bull dismissed Elizabeth's authority in England and lamented the Protestant hold over England stating:

*'...the number of the ungodly has so much grown in power that there is no place left in the world which they have not tried to corrupt with their most wicked doctrines; and among other, Elizabeth, the pretend Queen of England and the servant of crime, has assisted in this, with whom as in a sanctuary, the most pernicious of all have found refuge. This very woman, having monstrously usurped the place of supreme head of the Church in all England to gather chief authority and jurisdiction belonging to it, has once again reduced this same kingdom – which had already been restored to the Catholic faith and to good fruits – to miserable ruin.'*<sup>88</sup>

This bull serves to demonstrate the offence felt by the Catholic Church and is an excellent indicator of the building mistrust towards Elizabeth at this time. It goes some way to explaining the reactions of the Catholic people from 1570 onwards. Though Elizabeth's

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<sup>87</sup> Walsham, A. (2016). Supping with Satan's Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post-Reformation England. In A. Morton & N. Lewycky (Eds.) *Getting Along: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England - Essays in Honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* (pp. 29-56). Oxon: Routledge. p. 33.

<sup>88</sup> Papal Encyclicals Online. (Updated 2017). *Regnans in Excelsis: Excommunicating Elizabeth I of England, Pope Pius V - 1570*. Retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius05/p5regnans.htm>.

reign thus far had not been completely free from uprisings and opposition, the ones that *had* taken place were mostly in a few isolated areas, and did not happen often, though anti-Catholicism had continued to grow. And as stated before, Catholics had no explicit instruction to openly defy the Queen. The issue that arose from the release of the Papal Bull is that the Catholic people now had clear instruction on how to conduct their religious lives and, as Michael Questier shows, according to doctrine, you could not now be Catholic and loyal to the crown.<sup>89</sup> It is tempting, then, to write of the Catholic people as either 'loyal' or 'disloyal', but as Questier again notes, 'the distinction between different expressions of Catholicism in this period were distinctly porous', there was no clear distinction within the Catholic religion.<sup>90</sup> This is not just true of the Catholic community either. The Protestant people were inconsistent when delivering penalties, and repeatedly tried to change the parameters which would require penalties against the Catholic people.<sup>91</sup> In theory, the Papal Bull was meant to sharpen the divide between the Catholic and the Protestant communities, however it cannot be forgotten that these were people who lived together, often in close proximity to each other.<sup>92</sup> For them to put the Bull into practice was not as simple as following a doctrine.

Though the instructions came from the Pope, the enforcement of this was problematic considering the Pope lived in Rome and the fact that there was very little guidance available for the Catholic people now that there were few Catholic clergy left in England. As Adrian Morey points out, 'to be effective the excommunication of the Queen should have come twelve years earlier, Her formal deposition was bound to be a futile gesture without the pledged support of the Catholic Powers.'<sup>93</sup> Not only that, but as Michael Questier writes, at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign 'the Elizabethan state, like all early

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<sup>89</sup> Questier, M. (2006). *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c.1550-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>90</sup> Questier, (2006). *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c.1550-1640*. p. 159.

<sup>91</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 35

<sup>92</sup> Walsham, (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. p. 35

<sup>93</sup> Morey, (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. p. 57

modern states, did not have the administrative resources at its disposal to coerce and repress dissent,' and indicates that, with the correct timing, the Catholic resurgence could have succeeded in at least causing a huge problem for the government, if not overthrowing them entirely. With the timing as it was however the Catholic people were, as Morey aptly describes them with the title of his chapter, a 'flock without a shepherd'.<sup>94</sup> With no method of enforcement and no support from the more powerful in England, Rome's orders were left to languish, and therefore the reaction was weak compared to what it could have been had the order for excommunication come at the beginning of the reign before the bishops were removed. It was vital at this time that the Catholic people presented a united front, especially considering the volume of demonising rhetoric that was being aimed at them, and the publication of the Bull was badly timed for this purpose. It meant that Catholic England now entered a period of directionless ideology, and a decision as to whether their religion or their nation was their priority, in essence it created division amongst the Catholic community, rather than the unity that they needed to display.<sup>95</sup>

The Bull itself ultimately was not met with much support, due mainly, as detailed previously, to the lack of resources available to enforce the doctrine. As Patrick McGrath observes, 'no provision was made for its enforcement by Catholic princes. They were not even officially informed that it had been issued.'<sup>96</sup> The effects, however, were felt most harshly throughout the rest of Elizabeth's reign and this weak reception does not mean that the government didn't take the Bull seriously. In fact, it was this Bull and the consequent plots against the crown which triggered a period of harsher and far more violent form of Catholic persecution. The Catholic community in England had very little in the form of a reaction to the Papal Bull, indeed, 'the vast majority never saw it, and it could always be argued that it had not been officially communicated to them,' and so arguably, it is with very little provocation that the government and the Protestants used the Papal Bull as a

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<sup>94</sup> Morey, (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. p. 40.

<sup>95</sup> Morey, (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. p. 58.

<sup>96</sup> McGrath, P. (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*. London: Blandford Press Ltd. p. 70.

religious tool to condemn the Papists and declare them to be on the side of Satan.<sup>97</sup>

Alexandra Walsham puts it best when she writes that 'although widely ignored, it coincided with, and contributed to, the growth of recusancy and its increasing identification by the authorities with political disloyalty', McGrath too notes that 'it was hardly surprising that the government used the bull with great effect to argue that Papists were henceforth bound to be traitors'.<sup>98</sup> The anti-Catholic semantics were given a firm platform with the publishing of the Papal Bull, and the subsequent events throughout the reign enabled anti-papery to 'ride continually on a fear of domestic plots and schemes to meddle in the settlement of religion and succession to the throne'.<sup>99</sup> The result of the Bull was complete vilification of the Catholic Pope and the Papists in England, and with it came a veritable tidal wave of anti-Catholic rhetoric, based almost entirely on the now distinctly separate Catholic religion. It was as Claire Cross wrote: 'the bull of 1570 aroused very considerable prejudice against Catholics in England which found immediate expression in anti-Catholic legislation.'<sup>100</sup>

The Bull prompted an almost immediate reply from the government in 1571 when a Bill was passed banning the bringing of Bulls from Rome into England.<sup>101</sup> It marked a clear exclusion of outside Catholic influences, and from there England saw a marked increase in anti-Catholicism. Moreover, Elizabeth gave her assent to an act which 'made it high treason to say that she was not the lawful queen or that she was a heretic or schismatic,' a further display of anti-Catholicism in the wake of the Papal Bull.<sup>102</sup> Alexandra Walsham notes that only those Protestants who were 'fixed and firm in their convictions' could communicate

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<sup>97</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*. p. 71.

<sup>98</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*. p. 71.; Walsham, A. (2016). *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*. New York: Taylor & Francis. p. 89.

<sup>99</sup> Questier, M. (1997). Practical Antipapistry during the Reign of Elizabeth I. *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (4), 371-396. Retrieved from [http://www.istor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.istor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents). p. 372.

<sup>100</sup> Cross, C. (1969). *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*. Great Britain: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. P. 40

<sup>101</sup> Cross, (1969). *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*. p. 40.

<sup>102</sup> Cross, (1969). *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*. p. 40.

with Catholics 'but they were not to do so for the mere sake of "pleasure and recreation"'.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, Swedish reformer Henrich Bullinger published a reply to the Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth in 1572, and this demonstrates the attitude of Protestant reformers towards the Bull itself, stating 'religion and iustice were openly assaulted; nei|borod and charitie were treacherously despised: God and godlinesse were wickedly impugned: our most vertuous and renoumed Princes Maiestie was traitorously impea|ched'<sup>104</sup> He proceeds then to label Pope Pius as the 'Romishe Anti|Christ' who aimed to draw Elizabeth 'away fro~ the obedience and love of her true husband Christ, to the adulterous imbracing of Sathan.'<sup>105</sup>

One further example of the blatant anti-Catholic polemics which were now frequenting English politics is a bill of 1571 which gained support in both Houses of Parliament and pledged to impose 'quarterly attendance at church under pain of heavier fines, and compulsory annual participation in the communion,' a blatant attempt to further suppress English Catholicism and 'a real credal test for temporizing papists.'<sup>106</sup> Though this bill is a clear indicator as to the stance of the Elizabethan Parliament at this time, it also gives an interesting insight into the Queen's motivations towards Catholics. It is true that Elizabeth was growing more suspicious of the Catholic faith by the day, however, other than the failed uprising in 1569, she had experienced very little physical opposition to her reign, and although there were now several plots against her life in the planning stages, she had no knowledge of these at the time. It is significant then, that Elizabeth vetoed this bill and

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<sup>103</sup> Walsham, A. (2016). Supping with Satan's Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post-Reformation England. In A. Morton & N. Lewycky (Eds.) *Getting Along: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England - Essays in Honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* (pp. 29-56). Oxon: Routledge. p. 45.

<sup>104</sup> Bullinger, H. (1572), *A confutation of the Popes bull which was published more then two yeres agoe against Elizabeth the most gracious Queene of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, and against the noble realme of England together with a defence of the sayd true Christian Queene, and of the whole realme of England.*

<sup>105</sup> Bullinger, H. (1572), *A confutation of the Popes bull which was published more then two yeres agoe against Elizabeth the most gracious Queene of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, and against the noble realme of England together with a defence of the sayd true Christian Queene, and of the whole realme of England.*

<sup>106</sup> Collinson, P. (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son Ltd. p. 164.

therefore stopped its progress.<sup>107</sup> It indicates that *still* Elizabeth harboured an instinct to be fair, rather than outright condemning the Catholic faith, and in terms of anti-Catholicism, though Parliament needed no more persuasion as to the treacherous ways of the Catholics, Elizabeth still needed something to push her.

These reactions demonstrate the religious climate caused by the publication of the Papal Bull and it is clear, that although the Catholic people did very little in the way of reacting to the bull initially, the government were quick to condemn and quick to use the bull, to their own advantage. In fact, according to Cross, very few Catholics 'behaved in an overtly hostile way towards the Elizabethan state, yet the government always contended that they were punished for their treasonable activities, not for their religious beliefs.'<sup>108</sup> That is not to say, however, that it did not prompt any reaction at all. In fact, in subsequent years a number of large scale reactions would be attempted, though all were thwarted, giving more fuel to the Protestant anti-Catholic cause.<sup>109</sup> It is clear to see however, that 'from 1569 onwards the papacy undoubtedly strove to overthrow the Queen.'<sup>110</sup> And so, from these events and their effects, we can clearly see how Anti-Catholicism changed throughout Elizabeth's reign. More specifically we can see how and why the movement gained such momentum. From the early stages of the reign, when so little was certain, through legislative turmoil and rising tensions, it can be seen that Anti-Catholicism rose significantly and steadily throughout Elizabeth's rule, and this was not only due to Protestant suspicion, but also to Catholic strictness, and orders from their highest office. It helps to understand the legislative journey of Elizabeth's reign, and how this may have had an impact on the social aspects of England under her rule.

However, Legislation is not the only area of Elizabeth's reign to be considered in answering our question. We must now look to the social history, the propaganda and literature which swept through England and broke many allegiances

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<sup>107</sup> Collinson, (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. p. 164.

<sup>108</sup> Cross, (1969). *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church*. p. 42.

<sup>109</sup> The most notable being: The Ridolfi Plot, The Throckmorton Plot, and The Babington Plot.

<sup>110</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*. p. 71.





## **Chapter 2 – Anti-Catholicism in Literature: John Foxe and the English Martyrs**

As we have seen, in the first part of Elizabeth's reign, surrounded by pressure and expectation, Elizabeth remained reluctant to bring religious definition to her reign, though the foundations of her church were well on their way to becoming established. Elizabeth herself may have preferred to appear ambivalent, but the legislation and anti-Catholic polemics sweeping through England certainly were not. Through this legislation, a clear, Protestant stance can be seen to emerge, and alongside it came virulent, Catholic opposition. Anti-Catholicism, though undoubtedly present throughout this first ten years, was not nearly as developed as it would become due to the influencing factors of the next few years of Elizabeth's reign. As we will see in the upcoming discussion, although Elizabeth's plan had thus far led to the avoidance of any major opposition, it also meant that for both Catholics and Protestants alike, there was an increased feeling of frustration and a desire to see some form of action from the Queen and her Parliament. It is here that arguments on toleration really begin to take hold. In the forthcoming chapter we will see how religious toleration really began to be tested, by both religions, and we will discover how this affected Elizabeth herself, her reign, and the effects on the religious make up of England.

John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* will provide the framework for this chapter, and a detailed examination of the work will provide an insight into the motivations behind its publication but will also give way to an analysis of both the Catholic and Protestant responses to it. A further look at other forms of literature from the time will come together with the analysis from the *Acts and Monuments* to form a picture of how anti-Catholic polemic increased, and how Elizabeth herself presented a harsher attitude towards the Catholic religion as a result of the rebellion and the subsequent literature.

Thus far, though the Queen herself appeared to be ambivalent on the matter of religion, a fierce anti-Catholicism was beginning to emerge, born from increasingly Protestant legislation, and rising tensions between the two religions. Up until this point, although there had been much talk of Elizabeth's policies, both in parliament and in everyday life where many debates were held by both Protestants and Catholics alike, there had been very little physical and violent demonstrations between the two religions save for a few small and isolated events independent of the actions of the queen and her government. Elizabeth's reign had thus far avoided a great religious uprising, and the delay in defining her religious policies, whether intentional or not, mean that people were too unsure as to the attitudes of the crown to be able to convincingly form a physical show of opposition. That doesn't mean to say, however, that there weren't other effective forms of anti-Catholicism available. Some of the most hard-hitting and influential material lay not in the violence of demonstration, but in the written word. As we will see in the forthcoming chapter, anti-Catholicism in literature could be just as influential.

### ***Foxe's Book of Martyrs***

John Foxe's '*The Acts and Monuments*', better known as Foxe's Book of Martyrs, was a significant piece of Elizabethan literature, the revised edition being published in 1570, another in 1576. In fact, Foxe's book was consistently published and re-published in England right into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this alone proving its popularity. This makes it one of the most relevant contemporary sources from the most turbulent period of Elizabethan England, and more importantly for us it was the most vehemently anti-Catholic document to emerge from the whole of Elizabeth's reign. It featured commentary from events that transpired in the time leading up to Elizabeth's reign, and extolled the tales of those who had died for the Protestant cause, those who had held the faith, and were therefore to be respected and remembered as icons of the Protestant movement, but also to be avenged.

Though originally published in 1563, the book expanded throughout Elizabeth's rule in order to keep up to date with the results of current events and was ultimately immensely successful. It must be remembered that Foxe's book was read widely and by many people, most of whom were not learned scholars, but members of the general public (both Protestant and Catholic) at whom this piece of propaganda was aimed. It was a book for the masses, and intentionally so. For instance, the fact that the *'Acts and Monuments'* was published in English, though a small thing, is significant. Foxe's first book, *'Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum'* was written in Latin, the language of the more educated members of Elizabethan society.<sup>111</sup> English was a far more accessible form, and so it is significant that Foxe chose this for the *'Acts'*, making it available to a much wider audience, indicative of the fact that this piece was intended as a piece of propaganda. Not only this, but added popularity came not just from the religious climate, but also with approval from the Queen herself, something which cannot be ignored.

Foxe's writing is necessary to examine because of its purpose. This essay concerns itself with the rise of anti-Catholicism in Elizabeth's reign and there exists no other more influential piece of anti-Catholic propaganda than this book. As Patrick Collinson notes, Foxe was writing 'a history designed to replace the received catholic history of the Christian Church...'<sup>112</sup> so too does Christopher Haigh when he writes, 'John Foxe would condition his readers to a Protestant understanding of their nation's past, its recent excoriating experience under Mary, and its future destiny.'<sup>113</sup> Here it is clear that Foxe intended the Book of Martyrs to be received as a piece of propaganda, it was written specifically to spread word of the Protestant hardships and to instigate a feeling of camaraderie amongst all Protestants, and was clearly designed to control the thoughts and opinions of those who

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<sup>111</sup> Loades, D. (2005). Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Face of England. *History Today*, 55 (12), 40-49. Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-139521202/foxes-book-of-martyrs-and-the-face-of-england>. p. 42.

<sup>112</sup> Collinson, P. (2011). *John Foxe as Historian*. Retrieved from <https://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=more&gototype=&type=essay&book=essay3>.

<sup>113</sup> Collinson, P. (1984). The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion. In C. Haigh (Ed.). *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (pp. 27-53). Hampshire: The Macmillan Press LTD. p. 176

read it. Not only that, but whilst the Queen mostly resided in London, the book was effective at spreading Protestantism to even the furthest reaches of England, enabling the Queen to make England's transition to Protestantism quicker and smoother, and the founding beliefs were already being laid, and the process of vilifying the Roman Catholic faith was well under way. For the previously less ardent Protestants the popularity of Foxe's work sought to bring out a more fervent, more radical group of Protestants to join those who already existed around the Queen, and the Acts and Monuments served as an accessory to that aim. As Thomas Freeman states, 'martyrology will arouse powerful emotions, particularly when many of the martyrs it describes were executed within living memory.'<sup>114</sup>

It was a piece of work meant to appeal to the hearts and core beliefs of all English Protestants, to inspire a movement to rid the world of Catholicism by demonstrating the evils that had already happened under a Catholic leader. It appealed to people's emotions, and their motivations, and most of all, their humanity. It targeted their most ardent beliefs and challenged the basic human ideology to stand up for your beliefs and reject those that are wrong and ungodly. It is easy to see why it struck a chord with so many people, and why it gained the notoriety and popularity we observe today.

Not only did Foxe's work inspire some of the less radical Protestants, it also prompted a remarkable slew of opposition from its Catholic readers, not unsurprisingly. One of the main triggers for the Catholics was the calendar of Protestant martyrs detailed at the beginning of the book, and, according to Freeman, no other part of the book proved to be more controversial.<sup>115</sup>The repercussions lasted generations, with 'religiously inspired attacks

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<sup>114</sup> Freeman, T. (2010). The Power of Polemic: Catholic Responses to the Calendar in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'. *Cambridge University Press*, 61 (3), 475-495. doi: <https://doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1017/S0022046908005940>. p. 477.

<sup>115</sup> Freeman, T. (2010). The Power of Polemic: Catholic Responses to the Calendar in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'. *Cambridge University Press*, 61 (3), 475-495. doi: <https://doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1017/S0022046908005940>. p. 477.

continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>116</sup> One such Catholic response came from famous Catholic and controversialist, Thomas Harding. Harding, in a lengthy tirade, disparages Foxe's book, stating:

*'Al these, and many others of like qualities, murderers, theeues, Churchrobbers, rebelles, and Traitours...haue ye made Martyrs. I speak not of Sir Iohn Oldcastel, and Sir Roger Acton, put to death for high treason whom nevertheless Foxe hath canonizate for holy Martyrs.'*<sup>117</sup>

This is an excellent example of how well Foxe's book worked. Not only did it inspire Protestants, it also prompted harsh backlash from Catholics, which can only have been further help for the Protestant cause, providing yet more material to discredit the religion. Foxe was incredibly clever in the way that he worked with *Act and Monuments*. It differed from edition to edition as he found new narratives, new objections to old narratives and it was updated frequently (or frequently where a book is concerned at least) in line with the requirements of the Protestant cause, including discrediting the words of known Catholics and vilifying them for its readers. Not only that, but he managed, as Harding laments, to make people see past the fact that actually these martyrs may not have been good or decent people. He makes people blind to the fact that these people had actually committed crime.

One of the most noticeable differences when looking at the various editions side by side, is the fact that compared to the 1563 edition, the 1570 edition is substantially larger, by seven whole books! This drastic increase in content speaks of the increase in demand for inspiration to spur on the Protestant cause. It indicates the popularity of the previous version, the logic of supply and demand being that if people are offered more, they'll take more. And so, further editions are published, which get larger every time, filled with more

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<sup>116</sup> Freeman, T. (2010). The Power of Polemic: Catholic Responses to the Calendar in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'. *Cambridge University Press*, 61 (3), 475-495. doi: <https://doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1017/S0022046908005940>. p. 478.

<sup>117</sup> Harding, Thomas. (1567). *A rejoindre to M. Iewels replie against the sacrifice of the Masse. In which the doctrine of the answer to the. xvij. article of his Challenge is defended, and further proued, and al that his replie conteineth against the sacrifice, is clearly confuted, and disproued.*

accounts of people the population can identify with, and all the while stirring up more support for Protestant superiority.

Foxe often took eyewitness accounts and worded them in such a way as to bring out the most damning statements, to detail the most inspirational stories and, most importantly, to spread the propaganda against Catholics. He was, for all intents and purposes, a journalist. A reporter of popular and social histories of the suffering endured by so many under the reign of Queen Mary. Where the Queen struggled to enforce her teachings across the wider country, Foxe's book reached the localities, the most far away and remote places, spreading its message more efficiently than anything had previously, another explanation for its rapidly building popularity. Furthermore, the book not only appealed to those in the localities, but also those with every level of education, whether they could read or not, the book had something for everyone, as demonstrated by the picture below. <sup>118</sup>

**The burning of M. Iohn Rogers, Vicar of S. Pulchers,  
and Reader of Paules in London.**



Fig. 1. *The burning of Maister Iohn Rogers, Vicar of S. Pulchers and Reader at Paules in London.*

<sup>118</sup> Foxe, J. (1570). The burning of Maister Iohn Rogers, Vicar of S. Pulchers and Reader at Paules in London. [Illustration]., Retrieved from <https://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&gototype=&edition=1570&pageid=1701>

Images form a large part of Foxe's manuscripts, in all versions. The significance here being that pictures are just as powerful and emotive as words. Seen here is the burning of John Rogers, whose case we will examine shortly, one of the many burnings depicted in the manuscript. There are subtle anti-Catholic indicators even here, and it means that the message of anti-Catholicism can be broadcast to even those with no education. We can see a man on a pyre surround by Catholic spectators, most of whom look jubilant to be witnesses to the event. Catholics are stoking the fire, sitting haughtily on horses, jeering and cheering, and expressing support for the Protestant burning. Even the simple few words leaving his mouth are telling in themselves. The words 'Lord receiue my fpirit' indicate a godliness and a righteousness emanating from the Protestant victim. They indicate a direct link with God and serve to reaffirm the message of Protestantism being the true religion. Furthermore, the figure itself is that of a godly being, not in pain, not fearing death, but his last earthly thought being for his God, again indicative of the notion of true religion within Protestant thought. It's a figure people can look up to, can aspire to be. It sets an example, which is perhaps the most compelling part. It suggests that even in death, Protestants retain a godliness and a pureness which makes them far superior to Catholics, so superior, that they need not fear death, for God will treat them how followers of the 'true faith' should be treated...he will save their spirit.

So, as we have seen, Foxe was extremely adept at tailoring his content to suit a target audience. From edition to edition he took oral histories and changed them according to his requirements, often editing a single history over several editions, which in reality spanned generations, 'to create an edifying and dramatic, but entirely fictitious, tale of divine retribution.'<sup>119</sup> Alexandra Walsham too notes the dubiousness of Foxe's sources branding the sources of such stories to be 'otherwise anonymous individuals who relied upon such untrustworthy sources as childhood memory, local folklore and alehouse

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<sup>119</sup> Freeman, T.S. (2000). Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. *The Historical Journal*, 43 (3), 601-623. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/pdf/3020971.pdf>.



gossip.<sup>120</sup> Thomas Freeman also agrees, stating that Foxe's writings are 'clearly rooted in such sources'.<sup>121</sup> Dubious though these sources may have been, their use is undeniable. As Freeman states, the stories in the Book of Martyrs 'were the products or local hatreds, grievances, and vendettas', and they struck a chord with so many people, triggering a nostalgia for times past when the Catholic religion was discredited, and when Protestants saw a promising future for themselves.<sup>122</sup> Perhaps a reason why these stories are so changed is through the passing from generation to generation the hope and lessons to be learned from past mistakes.

So, what exactly was it about this book which made it so suited to the Protestant cause, apart from the obvious Propaganda? Well, at the time, England had been rocked by rumours of unrest in northern England, and these were becoming ever more prevalent. In a letter from November of 1569, the Privy Council wrote to Sir George Bowes stating that 'wee have heard by dyvers meanes of some late troubles, or rumours, growne in those north partes,' and urging him to relay 'what assemblies of any numbers of late tyme you have heard of worthy of suspition, or what provisions of armour, shott, and munition...'<sup>123A</sup> certain desperation can be detected within this letter, and it is clear that for the Queen and the Government, the threat of rebellion was a particularly dangerous one. In his reply George Bowes notes the growing animosity towards the Protestant faith stating, 'about that tyme, sundry warnings and messages sent by zelyous persons to their frinds, beyng protestants, to warn theym to beware and provide for their sayftes', a statement which clearly shows the atmosphere in the north and the growing concern for the safety of the

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<sup>120</sup> Walsham, A. In Freeman, T.S. (2000). Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. *The Historical Journal*, 43 (3), 601-623. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/pdf/3020971.pdf>.

<sup>121</sup> Freeman, T.S. (2000). Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. *The Historical Journal*, 43 (3), 601-623. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/pdf/3020971.pdf>.

<sup>122</sup> Freeman, T.S. (2000). Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. *The Historical Journal*, 43 (3), 601-623. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/pdf/3020971.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> Privy Council. (1569). Letter from the Privy Council to Sir George Bowes. In C. Sharpe (Ed.) (1840) *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569* (pp. 7-8). London, J.B. Nichols and Son. p.7.

protestant peoples.<sup>124</sup> And so, the anti-Catholic sentiment emerging in the wake of the 1569 rebellion was not totally without cause. And it was needed. K. J. Kesselring notes that 'in the wake of the rebellion, dismayed southern Protestants demanded rigorous execution of the papist rebels; in the following months they were placated with hundreds of victims drawn from the poorer rank and file', and described religious feeling as 'intense anti-papist sentiment'.<sup>125</sup> No doubt these feelings were intensified by proximity to the ruling centre of England, and similarly, anti-papist feeling was distinctly less so in the northern territories of England.

There was a sudden air of desperation emanating from the Protestant side, who had been scared into action by the northern gathering against their cause. Action which was contributed to by Foxe's writings, which reminded Protestants of the suffering they had endured at the hands of the Catholic queen, with specific accounts of martyrs for the cause.

For example, as mentioned earlier, one account of John Rogers and his wife Mary Rogers features their examination before the council. It recounts their lives and beliefs in the Protestant church 'until such a time as Queene Mary obtayning the crowne, banished the Gospell and true religion, and brought in the Antichrist of Rome wyth hys idolatry and superstition'.<sup>126</sup> And when asked of her attitude towards the apostle's creed Mary Rogers replies thus:

*'I fynde not the Byshoppe of Rome there. For [catholike] signifieth not the Romish Church: It signifieth the consent of all true teaching churches of all tymes, & all ages. But*

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<sup>124</sup> Privy Council. (1569). Letter from the Privy Council to Sir George Bowes. In C. Sharpe (Ed.) (1840) *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569* (pp. 7-8). London, J.B. Nichols and Son. p.7.

<sup>125</sup> Kesselring, K.J. (2005). Mercy and Liberality: The Aftermath of the 1569 Northern Rebellion. *The Journal of the Historical Association*, 90 (298), 213-235. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/j.1468-229X.2005.00330.x/full>

<sup>126</sup> John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online. (1570). *Queene Here begynneth the xj. booke wherin is discoursed the bloody murderying of Gods Saintes, with the particular processes and names of such good Martyrs, both men and women, as in this tyme of Queene Mary were put to death. The story, lyfe, and Martyrdome of Maister John Rogers. Mary. M. Rogers examined before the B. of VVinchester.* Retrieved from <https://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&gototype=&edition=1570&pageid=1695&anchor=idolatry%20and%20superstition#kw>.

*how should the Bishop of Romes church be one of them, which teacheth so many doctrines that are playnly and directly against the woorde of God?*<sup>127</sup>

The strong wording of both quotes, and the staunch determination behind Mary's statement are just one example of numerous cases brought before the Council of Queen Mary, and some didn't even get that luxury and were put to death unjustly in the Protestant eyes. It served as a reminder to the people of the persecution and suffering they had endured because of their faith and denial of the Catholic faith. People reading this piece of writing would be greeting with more harsh and derogatory statements about the Pope and the Catholic faith and would remember a time past under Mary's rule.

For example, in Foxe's examination of John Roger's case, Popery is referred to as a pestilence and a superstition, and remarks are made again and again to the days of King Edward and the 'true doctrine' of the time.<sup>128</sup> His recount of Iohn at his own trial is particularly compelling, when he writes 'he would not depart, but stoutly stode in defence of the same, and for the trial of that truth, was content to hassard his lyfe.'<sup>129</sup> The way he portrays these martyrs, as morally and physically strong, defiant and honourable, speaks of setting an example to the rest of the Protestant community, of saying 'look at this, look at the glory to be gained from staying true to yourselves and your religion.'

The book instilled a sense of pride in people for their own religion and served to strengthen religious beliefs, protestant beliefs, giving people a reason and an excuse in their eyes to carry on with the anti-Catholicism in their lives. It gave people validation in their own faith and served to confirm in their eyes that their religion was not only supreme in England but was also the right and true religion, the Godliest. Perhaps most importantly of all, it promoted unity amongst Protestants, and meant that their cause was made stronger and their resolve firmer. This was material that was being read all over England, by

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<sup>127</sup> John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online. (1570). *Quene Mary. M. Rogers examined before the B. of Winchester*. Retrieved from <https://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&gototype=&edition=1570&pageid=1697&anchor=byshoppe%20of%20rome%20#kw>.

<sup>128</sup> John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online. (1570).

<sup>129</sup> John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online. (1570).

everyone, not just Protestants but Catholics as well. They were reading about the inherent evil in their own religious beliefs, and how they were the believers of the 'antichrist', the wrong religion. It was enough to instil an anger in the Catholic people and a sense of purpose in the Protestant people, bringing the religious turmoil to an all-time high. Tensions on both sides rose, and now even the Queen is more obviously in favour of a strictly Protestant England.

Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was not without support either. It was by no means the only anti-Catholic publication to emerge from Elizabeth's reign. In fact, it was pretty much *only* anti-Catholic pamphlets which emerged with consent from the Government, for obvious reasons. They could publish what they wanted, and if something came through that they didn't like, it wouldn't be published. Simple.

Of the numerous pamphlets which did make through however, it is easy to surmise why popularity for the Protestant cause grew so quickly and with such ferocity after endorsement from the Queen. Most of these documents were printed, which meant fast reactions to social events, and fast distribution across the country. A massive advantage for those seeking to purge the Catholic faith from England. They could play upon fresh emotions and turn them into hatred towards the Catholic faith. They urged people through these publications, to turn on their neighbours, their friends, the hidden papists with the work of the devil inside them.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there was no hesitancy displayed when it came to attacking the core beliefs of the Catholic church. For example, one urges the importance of the true religion in the belief of God stating 'bycause the God of truth is not to be knowen but in truth.'<sup>130</sup>In '*A Mirrour of Popish Subtleties*' Robert Abbot writes 'verily the

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<sup>130</sup> Abbot, R. (1594). *A mirrour of Popish subtilties discovering sundry wretched and miserable euasions and shifts which a secret cauilling Papist in the behalfe of one Paul Spence priest, yet liuing and lately prisoner in the castle of Worcester, hath gathered out of Sanders, Bellarmine, and others, for the auoyding and discrediting of sundrie allegations of scriptures and fathers, against the doctrine of the Church of Rome, concerning sacraments, the sacrifice of the masse, transubstantiation, iustification, &c. Written by Rob. Abbot, minister of the word of God in the citie of Worcester. The contents see in the next page after the preface to the reader. Perused and allowed.*

Sacraments which we receiue of the bodie and blood of Christ are a diuine thing, by reason whereof, we also by them are made partakers of the diuine nature, *and yet there ceaseth not to be the substance or nature of bread and wine.*<sup>131</sup>

Perhaps one of the most interesting pamphlets to emerge from Elizabeth England is authored by a man called Lewis Evans. Though initially he was a Catholic, he was converted to Protestantism and proceeded to produce some of the most virulent anti-Catholic discourse to exist at this time. Published in 1570, the same year as the second edition of the *Acts and Monuments* his work '*The hatefull hypocrisie, and rebellion of the Romishe prelacie*' is amongst the harshest of anti-Catholic conversation. He begins with an attack upon the Catholic people, suggesting 'if lewde lighte headdes shall rebell against their soueraign lady, who (o Lorde) can bit deteste them? Who can but abhorre them? Yea, if they rebelle against God, & authoritie, who (trowe ye) can hold his peace?'<sup>132</sup> An open attack on the intelligence of the Catholic followers, and the disgust it arouses in him is a harsh opener to an altogether virulent and vile attack on the Catholic faith. He moves on to reassuring readers that 'God that seeth the inwarde partes, the meaninges of men, will detecte theyr Hypocryse...he will suppressse all tumultes' an assurance for readers that God recognises the Catholic faith as something inherently wrong and unjust, reaffirming their beliefs that they believe in the true religion as set out by God himself. It gives support to the Protestant faith and an assurance that God recognises Protestants to be good people, the people who do the work of the true religion. For the early modern minds, this assurance was needed amongst a population who were questioning everything about the state of English religion at the time and gave confidence to the more hesitant Protestant radicals.

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<sup>131</sup> Abbot, R. (1594). *A mirrour of Popish subtilties discovering sundry wretched and miserable euasions and shifts which a secret cauilling Papist in the behalfe of one Paul Spence priest, yet liuing and lately prisoner in the castle of Worcester, hath gathered out of Sanders, Bellarmine, and others, for the auoyding and discrediting of sundrie allegations of scriptures and fathers, against the doctrine of the Church of Rome, concerning sacraments, the sacrifice of the masse, transubstantiation, iustification, &c. Written by Rob. Abbot, minister of the word of God in the citie of Worcester. The contents see in the next page after the preface to the reader. Perused and allowed.*

<sup>132</sup> Evans, Lewis. (1570). *The hatefull hypocrisie, and rebellion of the Romishe prelacie.*

Further to this, he uses the fear of the oppressing Catholicism as a scare tactic, stating 'for mine own part, I se every day more, & more, the filthie fruites of the Romish sinogogue' using the already deep rooted and real fear of a Catholic infestation to spur the Protestant population into action. From here, Evans moves to attack the highest level of Catholic authority, the Pope. In a furious attack on Rome, he denounces the Pope's position as:

*'the whore of Babilon, the mother of ydolatrie, & fornicatio~, the sanctuarie of heresy, and the schoole of errour' and, using truly vile language, besmirches the position of the Catholic priests of England, announcing them to be 'thieues, & murthers, rather katchers, then feeders: rather killers, the~ kepers: rather deceauers, the~ doctors: they be the messengers of Antichrist, and the subuerters of Christ his sheepe.'*<sup>133</sup>

This attack on the authority figures of the Catholic church urges the Protestant population to see past the normal person, to the perceived evil within and the inherent wrongness of everything they stand for. Not only that, but it is done so with truly abhorrent language, demonstrating that there was no notion of conservatism or basic decency when it came to disparaging the Catholic Church.

Evans' attack on the Catholic population, well circulated and no doubt widely read, was one amongst many anti-Catholic pamphlets to make their way around England. Coupled with the inestimable success of the *Act and Monuments*, it is safe to say that amidst the confusion of mid-reign Elizabethan England, a veritable tidal wave of Protestant persuasion was released, and anti-Catholicism turned dramatically into a trend of sorts. The role of the written word was an important one, it connected with people on a more emotional level that could be achieved by legislation, it made the Catholic threat seem ever more real, and it was this fear which drove Protestants up and down the country to adopt a much more anti-Catholic stance.

It is easy to see why these works were so popular, and why they, well, worked. The publications came directly through the government and the Queen, at least the legal ones did, and were therefore seen as instructions to live by. They struck fear into the Protestant

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<sup>133</sup> Evans, Lewis. (1570). *The hatefull hypocrisie, and rebellion of the Romishe prelatie.*

psyche to spur them into action, and they virulently denounced the most core Catholic beliefs, values, and figureheads brutally exposing their inherent wrongness, and 'proving' that God would see through the treachery of Catholicism and expel it. They made the population feel that they were doing God's noble work in vilifying the Catholic faith, and most of all, united the cause and in doing so made it stronger than it had been since Edwardian times. We have seen how the language and meaning of these discourses infiltrated the minds of the English Protestant community, and how popular they were, but now we will move on to seeing the effects, the aftermath, and discussing how anti-Catholicism swelled to the heights it did towards the end of Elizabeth's reign.

### **Chapter 3 – Plots to Overthrow the Crown**

Up until this point in Elizabeth's reign, around the end of the 1560s, we have seen Catholics and Protestants attempt to vilify each other, all the while struggling to identify the grounds on which to do so. Rulings at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign meant that confusion was the enemy of the day rather than religious identities, and no one religion could be sure of their status. It was assumed that Protestantism would become the dominant religion in England and soon after this as Elizabeth's slight Protestant favouritisms emerged. This was reinforced a decade into her reign with severe anti-Catholic polemics emerging to a ferocious degree around the time of the publication of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Catholics too now had actual instructions against loyalty to Elizabeth. Where previously it had been perfectly reasonable for a Catholic to be loyal to their Queen and their religion, the excommunication issued in 1570 was an edict of unprecedented consequence and was not only something that boosted the anti-Catholic polemics from the Protestants, but also kickstarted a stronger Catholic identity in England that would change the face of the Elizabethan Reformation. The Bull, whilst remaining unenforced in England, was the turning point in Catholic identity during the Elizabethan Reformation and was the proponent of stronger anti-popery, and much higher counts of recusancy, the strongest reaction to a decree of this nature during the whole period of Elizabeth's reign.

In the forthcoming chapter, we will examine some of the later plots against Elizabeth, and their effects on anti-Catholic rhetoric of the time, we will journey through the latter years of Elizabeth's reign and see the lasting legacy of the Bull and its effects on anti-Catholic rhetoric and the consequent reactions from the Catholic people, through examinations of the plots against Elizabeth and the religious climate towards the end of her reign. The forthcoming examinations will show how the Protestant government, and Elizabeth herself, were becoming increasingly violent and punishing as a result of Catholic



actions and it will be demonstrated that problems, not only in England but on the continent also, cast a shadow over English Catholics to provoke further fear from English Protestants.

### ***Overthrowing Elizabeth: The Plots of the Catholic Cause***

The Papal Bull of 1570 was followed by a succession of Catholic plots against the crown, with increasing intensity, and led to a further increase in anti-Catholic polemics designed to further repress the Catholic faith. But why turn to violence? Well, there are those individuals who, under the reign of any monarch, would plot their death, but these plots were not so generic; as Christopher Haigh states 'these conscientious objectors wanted the true church they had known before Elizabeth came to the throne.'<sup>134</sup> Catholics had so far endured close to twenty years of discrimination and condemnation. Many were being persecuted for very little, as Haigh writes, 'when recusants were indicted at quarter sessions or assizes, certified absence was enough to convict them, and their reasons hardly mattered.'<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, Peter Marshall presents an interesting idea that Catholicism turned to violence in the latter half of Elizabeth's reign due to the Protestant attitude that Catholicism could be contained.<sup>136</sup> Although he is talking here about the aftermath of the St Bartholomew's Massacre (which will be touched upon later in the chapter) the notion is applicable throughout the course of Elizabeth's reign. The more confident Protestantism became, the harder the Catholics had to fight, and this eventually meant turning to violence.

The first of the major plots was the Ridolfi plot of 1571 and was designed to end with Mary Queen of Scots on the throne of England and with Elizabeth dead. It involved between

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<sup>134</sup> Haigh, C. (2007). *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/HUD/detail.action?docID=415945>. p. 186.

<sup>135</sup> Haigh, C. (2007). *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/HUD/detail.action?docID=415945>. p. 185.

<sup>136</sup> Marshall, P. (2017). *Heretics and Believers : A History of the English Reformation*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/HUD/detail.action?docID=4849026>. p. 510.

6000 and 10,000 Spanish troops landing in England, aiding in a rebellion, much like had been seen in the North in 1569, capturing Elizabeth and securing Mary on the throne.<sup>137</sup> The plot even had the backing of the Pope, which is a clear indicator that the papacy and certainly the more radical Catholics were determined to do anything they could to usurp Elizabeth's position on the throne.<sup>138</sup> In fact, according to Arnold Meyer, 'the pope laboured with all zeal to excite the English to rise and destroy Elizabeth' and although this statement is a little too radical, it does give a sense of how the papacy had reacted to the anti-Catholicism experienced after the Papal Bull.<sup>139</sup>

One of the main problems that the plot had to overcome however, was the fact that most of the main conspirators from a previous, small scale rebellion, that of the Northern Earls in 1569, were now behind bars.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, Elizabeth and her government were becoming increasingly suspicious of their Catholic subjects, including those who were for all intents and purposes, safely locked up, one example being the man 'Baillly' who was convicted and held in prison for attempting to carry contraband books and coded letters to the Ridolfi conspirators.<sup>141</sup> Robyn Adams, in her assessment of conspiracies within prisons in Elizabeth England, notes 'it was not only the prisoners who were subject to intense scrutiny: their visitors and correspondents were often under suspicion and very closely observed as well.'<sup>142</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that suspicions from the government and the crown were at an all-time high for Elizabeth's reign, having already experienced one uprising, whether or not it was thwarted, the Papal Bull excommunicating Elizabeth essentially gave cause to the Catholic people to 'take up arms against her', not that they did this in such a direct way, but the suspicion was not without cause.<sup>143</sup> In fact the caution that came with

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<sup>137</sup> Cyril Hamshere: Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company. (2000). *The Ridolfi Plot 1571*. [History Today], p. 32.

<sup>138</sup> Morey, (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. p. 78.

<sup>139</sup> Meyer, A. (1967). *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*. Oxford: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. p. 90.

<sup>140</sup> Adams, R. (2009). 'The Service I am Here for': William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72 (2), 217-238. doi: 0.1525/hlq.2009.72.2.217.

<sup>141</sup> Adams, (2009). 'The Service I am Here for': William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571. p. 222.

<sup>142</sup> Adams, (2009). 'The Service I am Here for': William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571. p. 230.

<sup>143</sup> Meyer, (1967). *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*. p. 270.

heightened suspicion was one of the main components in uncovering the Ridolfi plot, that and the fact that the plot was not particularly well thought out, nor orchestrated very well.<sup>144</sup> It also gave even more validation to the Protestant propaganda machine, and gave the Protestant cause even more reason to discredit the Catholic values.

In 1581, another blow was dealt to the Catholic cause. In the time since the Ridolfi plot Elizabeth and her government had become increasingly concerned for Elizabeth's safety, especially since rumours of yet more plots were beginning to surface, and as a result some legislative measures were put in place to try to suppress Catholic motivations against the queen. The definition of treason was changed, and as Patrick McGrath describes it, 'reconciling or being reconciled to the Church of Rome, and from 1585 any priest ordained by the pope's authority since 1559 and being in England was by that very fact guilty of treason.'<sup>145</sup> It was a direct attack on the Catholic laity, and designed to stamp out Catholic teaching. It reveals the increasing anti-Catholic intent within the Elizabethan Government, and the suspicions that were the root cause of this. When the future plots against Elizabeth's life were discovered Protestants had everything they needed to prove the devilish tendencies of the Catholic faith.

These plots against Elizabeth's life and reign came after a build-up of over a decade of unrest, fear, and uncertainty, from both perspectives. Another thing worth considering however, is the fact that it wasn't just in England that these experiences occurred. In fact, one huge event in French history which had a marked effect on the state of English Protestantism was the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1570.

England was still dealing with the after effects of the 1569 rebellion in the North, and though in the end it did not prove to be much of a threat to the crown, the mere fact that the Catholics had rallied together and gone as far as rebelling was something of an

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<sup>144</sup> Cyril Hamshere: Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company. (2000). *The Ridolfi Plot 1571*. [History Today].

<sup>145</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I*. p. 181.

awakening for English Protestants and served to further heighten their suspicions of the perceived evil threat. As Michael Questier puts it, 'while that rebellion, led by the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, was utterly crushed, this did not mean that the political inclinations of northern Catholics ceased.'<sup>146</sup> It is plausible that they feared another rebellion, similar to that which had rallied around Mary, and so the actions and increased anti-Catholicism that emerged from 1569, is perhaps not a total overreaction.<sup>147</sup> Indeed K. J. Kesselring notes that 'in the wake of the rebellion, dismayed southern Protestants demanded rigorous execution of the papist rebels; in the following months they were placated with hundreds of victims drawn from the poorer rank and file', and described religious feeling as 'intense anti-papist sentiment'.<sup>148</sup> Although England would now be virtually free from serious plots against Elizabeth's life, the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre took Europe by surprise, and struck fear into the hearts of English Protestants.

In August 1572 an estimated 10,000 French Protestants (Huguenots) were slaughtered on orders from the French Royal Family. According to an eyewitness account, 'so it was determined to exterminate all the Protestants and the plan was approved by the queen.'<sup>149</sup> The brutal murder of this many Protestants sent shockwaves across the world, and naturally, Queen Elizabeth herself was disgusted at the killings, but her public response to the event was somewhat altered, the problem being that to condemn the French royals would be destroy any chances of a friendly alliance with France. As Nate Probasco comments, 'Both Elizabeth's religious convictions and her astute diplomacy tempered her

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<sup>146</sup> Questier, M. (1997). Practical Antipapistry during the Reign of Elizabeth I. *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (4), 371-396. Retrieved from [http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>147</sup> Questier, M. (1997). Practical Antipapistry during the Reign of Elizabeth I. *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (4), 371-396. Retrieved from [http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/175891?pg-origsite=summon&seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>148</sup> Kesselring, K.J. (2005). Mercy and Liberality: The Aftermath of the 1569 Northern Rebellion. *The Journal of the Historical Association*, 90 (298), 213-235. Retrieved from

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/j.1468-229X.2005.00330.x/full>

<sup>149</sup> Modern History Sourcebook. (1998). *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, Aug. 24, 1572*. Retrieved from <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1572stbarts.asp>.

reaction to the events in France, preventing any straightforward response.<sup>150</sup> So why is this event relevant in discussions of English anti-Catholicism? Well, it is the reactions of Elizabeth and her government which are of interest to us here.

English Protestants had long feared an uprising from the English Catholic population, and the fact that such an event happened in a country so close at hand acted as a confirmation of their fears. According to Philip Benedict, commenting on the situation in France, 'to a degree, it appears, the Protestants seem almost to have invited the hostility of the Catholics by their behaviour.'<sup>151</sup> This echoes the fears of the Protestants in England who had already witnessed the fact that Catholics were beginning fight back against Protestant regimes, and it heightened the fear of the damage of which Catholics were capable.

Although the French situation at the time was a mirror image of that of England (in that rather than Protestantism being the preferred religion, it was Catholicism) the lessons to be learned are the same as if they had happened in England. Benedict intimates that to a Catholic, a Protestant attack on any of their core belief was a threat to the whole community.<sup>152</sup> Protestantism in England had been discrediting Catholic beliefs for almost a decade by this point, and therefore by the logic applied in this statement, the threat of a Catholic uprising was more than likely. Furthermore, in the wake of the massacre it happened that the whole of northern France became 'almost exclusively Roman Catholic,' and thousands upon thousands of Huguenots renounced their religion in favour of the

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<sup>150</sup> Probasco, N. (2011). Queen Elizabeth's Reaction to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In C. Beem (Ed.) *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (pp. 77-101). United States: Palgrave Macmillan. p.77.

<sup>151</sup> Benedict, P. (1978). The Saint Bartholomew's Massacres in the Provinces. *The Historical Journal*, 21 (2), 205-225. Retrieved from [https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2638258?pq-origsite=summon&seq=14#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents.p.218](https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2638258?pq-origsite=summon&seq=14#page_scan_tab_contents.p.218).

<sup>152</sup> Benedict, P. (1978). The Saint Bartholomew's Massacres in the Provinces. *The Historical Journal*, 21 (2), 205-225. Retrieved from [https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2638258?pq-origsite=summon&seq=14#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents.p.218](https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/stable/2638258?pq-origsite=summon&seq=14#page_scan_tab_contents.p.218).

Roman Catholic Church.<sup>153</sup> This was a manifestation of the very real fears which the Protestants of England had long held, a real example of the threat from Catholicism.

These heightened suspicions can be demonstrated in looking at some contemporary texts. A letter from Sir Humfrey Gilbert details the perceived threat and advises the receiver to make sure the Queen has an appropriate response to the situation pointing out '...the danger ready to fall on her if she does not look to taking revenge for these atrocities, seeing that if the opportunity favours them [the Papists] there is nothing else to look for but the tragical destruction of all the Protestants in Europe.'<sup>154</sup> The Elizabethan Government was disgusted by this 'most horrible and detestable murder', and as we can see, they hurried to assist the Queen in condemning the act and taking preventative measures to avoid the same in England.<sup>155</sup> This is further evidenced in a letter from the Earl of Morton to the Earl of Leicester, a month after the massacre, which states, 'there is great danger to them of the same religion in other countries; some remedy should be provided whereby men can defend themselves should occasion arise.'<sup>156</sup> But what of Elizabeth herself?

We have already established that circumstance prevented her from giving a straight forward response, but this does not mean that she did not want to. As Nate Probasco notes, 'her contemporaries observed the Queen's great agitation over the massacre,' though acknowledges that perhaps this trepidation is justified given the religious climate of England at the time.<sup>157</sup> And he's right, the religious climate was steadily growing even more hostile than it had started out, and this manifested itself in Elizabeth as suspicion. She was

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<sup>153</sup> Probasco, N. (2011). Queen Elizabeth's Reaction to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In C. Beem (Ed.) *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (pp. 77-101). United States: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 83.

<sup>154</sup> 'Elizabeth: September 1572', in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 10, 1572-1574*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1876), pp. 173-186. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol10/pp173-186> [accessed 19 August 2018].

<sup>155</sup> 'Elizabeth: September 1572', in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 10, 1572-1574*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1876), pp. 173-186. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol10/pp173-186> [accessed 19 August 2018].

<sup>156</sup> 'Elizabeth: September 1572', in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 10, 1572-1574*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1876), pp. 173-186. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol10/pp173-186> [accessed 19 August 2018].

<sup>157</sup> Probasco, N. (2011). Queen Elizabeth's Reaction to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In C. Beem (Ed.) *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (pp. 77-101). United States: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 90.

constantly wary of her situation, and in the wake of the massacre, became even more so. Her reaction, whilst muted, was still significant. She began fiercely building the strength of her military, 'adding to her fleet, and buttressing England's defences, especially at the strategically significant harbour city of Portsmouth, which the French had sacked four times during the fourteenth century.'<sup>158</sup> By October 1572, 'various English counties had been called to arms,' again demonstrating how the threat of a Catholic invasion spread panic amongst English Protestants and even into the Queen herself.<sup>159</sup> The fear that a Catholic rebellion would somehow spread, disease-like, into England and challenge that which English Protestants held dear, the true religion, was the trigger the Protestant regime had been waiting for.

Compounded with the after effects of Elizabeth's excommunication and the Ridolfi Plot, the massacre on St Bartholomew's day, though an overseas event, only served to demonstrate the evils of which the Protestant cause had been denouncing since the beginning. It gave credence to the Protestant preaching that Catholicism was inherently evil, and only served to strengthen the Protestant regime in the end. It was an unfortunate event for English Catholics, who had so disgraced their religion with the excommunication and the Ridolfi Plot, as it only stacked more evidence against them, and did nothing to improve their popularity in England.

Although the massacre raised fears and heightened suspicion, there were a few things to consider. Mainly that the massacre in France had been decreed by the rulers, authorised by France's governing body, something that Protestants in England could be certain would never happen in their country, at least, not against them. So yes, although this was unlikely to happen in England, it still provided yet more motives to be wary of the

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<sup>158</sup> Probasco, N. (2011). Queen Elizabeth's Reaction to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In C. Beem (Ed.) *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (pp. 77-101). United States: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 86

<sup>159</sup> Probasco, N. (2011). Queen Elizabeth's Reaction to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In C. Beem (Ed.) *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (pp. 77-101). United States: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 86

Catholic faith and those who adhered to it. The massacre provided Protestants in England with martyrs; Francis Walsingham, the queen's foreign correspondent, almost became one of them. It served as a reminder to the English protestants of exactly what they were fighting against, and what they were suppressing. It provided proof that they were doing the right thing, for look what could happen if the Catholics were allowed to congregate. If they were left alone. Furthermore, there is no doubt that it created more pressure on Elizabeth to finalise more exacting policies against Catholicism.

So, it can be seen from this event, how the separate instances of Catholic rebellion in the years leading up to the bigger plots against Elizabeth's life, pushed the Protestant community to be harsher, more suspicious, and generally more unpleasant to the English Catholics, and demonstrates the reasons behind rising tensions in the country. It offers an explanation as to why both religions became firmer in their beliefs, and perhaps also explains why Elizabeth's religious policy began to evolve into a strong Protestant alignment the further her reign progressed. It offers a background to the plots we are discussing in this chapter and warrants consideration when studying them. The next two major plots to threaten Elizabeth took place rather later in her reign, the first in 1583, and another in 1586. The plots of Throckmorton and Babington, together with the Ridolfi plot lead to even more Catholic suppression, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and a level of anti-Catholicism as yet unseen in Elizabeth's reign. Both were plots against Elizabeth's life, and both were unsuccessful, ending with the conspirators executed and Elizabeth and her government a lot wiser. The reaction of the Protestant people however, was entirely predictable. Armed with more evidence of the treacherous wrongdoings of those of the Catholic faith, anti-Catholicism in England began to thrive. In 1587, after both plots had been thwarted, Richard Crompton, a Protestant lawyer, wrote of the fates of those involved in the latest plots:

*'was not the saide Throgmorton, about two yèeres las past executed as a Traytor for that cause...was not Babington and thirteene other, also exe|cuted in the xxviii. Yèere of her highness raigne, as Trai|tors for the like crimes. And lastly, haue not fourtèene Iesuites,*



*and Seminarie Priestes, within these fiue yèeres bèene erectued as Traytors, for practising to withdrawe her Maiesties subiects, fro~ there due allegy\ance to her highness, and for that intent, from the Reli\gion now established, to the Religion of Rome...<sup>160</sup>*

This account demonstrates the increase in anti-Catholicism in the later stage of Elizabeth's reign, especially after the plots against her life. For one thing, in the wake of the Babington plot, Babington and *thirteen others* were executed, and although Babington was certainly central to the conspiracy, the thirteen others were not all central conspirators. It demonstrates a desire in the government to thoroughly rid themselves of any threat from the Catholic people and sends a message to the Catholic population that even a small part in *any* attempts on the Queen's life would mean death. Furthermore, fourteen priests a Jesuits were then executed, leaders of the Catholic faith and people who acted as guides towards the Catholic population, executed for trying to spread Catholicism in England. These were harsh sentences by Elizabethan standards, and it reflects the changing attitudes towards Catholics as Elizabeth's reign continued, and it was emphatically not a favourable change.

If there was one thing, however, that marked a true victory over the Catholic faith, it was the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. After her part in the plots against Elizabeth became undeniable even for her, Elizabeth (though rather reluctant to execute a queen) signed Mary's death warrant.<sup>161</sup> As Crompton observed, 'shee was obdurate in malice against her royall person, notwithstanding her Maiestie had shewed her all fauours and mercie, as well in preseruing her hing\dom, as sauing her life, and saluing her henour. And

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<sup>160</sup> Crompton, R. (1587). *A short declaration of the ende of traytors, and false conspirators against the state & of the duetie of subiectes to theyr soueraigne governour: and wythall, howe necessarie, lawes and execution of iustice are, for the preseruation of the prince and common wealth. Wherein are also breefely touched, sundry offences of the S. Queene, co[m]mitted against the crowne of this land, & the manner of the honorable proceding for her conuiction thereof, and also the reasons & causes alledged & allowed in Parliament, why it was thought dangerous to the state, if she should haue liued.*

<sup>161</sup> Doran, S. (2007). *Mary Queen of Scots: An Illustrated Life*. Euston Road, London: The British Library. p. 177.

therefore, there was no place for mercie...'<sup>162</sup> Mary's death marked a drastic blow for the Catholic community in England, who had lost the symbol of their cause, the reason behind the plots against Elizabeth's life, and unfortunately, any claim that the Catholic people had over the throne of England died with Mary.

For the Protestants however, Mary's execution marked a huge success, and from it was born even more anti-Catholic material and rhetoric, after all, as Patrick Collinson writes 'the execution of the Scottish queen would be more a political than judicial act,' a demonstration of Protestant power.<sup>163</sup> In fact, although it is undeniable that Mary had done wrong, it seems that there was doubt in the minds of some Protestants as to whether her execution was entirely lawful, and this again highlights how the motivations behind her death were more political than anything else. There was even a defence of her execution published anonymously, which was very wise given the circumstances, in 1587 addressing and justifying Mary's death, the main argument being that in the case of treason, Mary forfeited all rights to the privileges that came with being a queen, 'although I should graunt that she was an absolute Queene, and in respect thereof, had diuerse priuiledges incident vnto her person: yet in this case all priuiledges that goe to, and fo|lowe the person, are excluded...a man priuiledged in his person, in case of treason, cannot alledge his priuiledge.'<sup>164</sup>

This era of thwarted plots gave the Protestant authorities the grounds on which to reasonably condemn the Catholic faith, and a reason to begin putting to death those who they perceived posed the greatest threat, namely Catholic priests. Catholic priests, the spiritual leaders of the Catholic people in England, the authority figures from whom

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<sup>162</sup> Crompton, R. (1587). *A short declaration of the ende of traytors, and false conspirators against the state & of the duetie of subiectes to theyr soueraigne gouernour: and wythall, howe necessarie, lawes and execution of iustice are, for the preseruacion of the prince and common wealth. Wherein are also breefely touched, sundry offences of the S. Queene, co[m]mitted against the crowne of this land, & the manner of the honorable proceding for her conuiction thereof, and also the reasons & causes alledged & allowed in Parliament, why it was thought dangerous to the state, if she should haue liued.*

<sup>163</sup> Collinson, (1967). *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. p. 309.

<sup>164</sup> Anon. (1587). *A defence of the honorable sentence and execution of the Queene of Scots exempld with analogies, and diuerse presidents of emperors, kings, and popes: with the opinions of learned men in the point, and diuerse reasons gathered foorth out of both lawes ciuill and canon, together with the answeere to certaine obiections made by the fauourites of the late Scottish Queene.*

Catholics took their cues. It is easy to see why they were a clear target for the Queen's Protestant authorities. As William Cecil writes, 'with their forces vnder banners displayed, inducing by notable vntruthes many simple people to followe & assist them in their traitorous actions.'<sup>165</sup> The Protestant motivations however, were not so much concerned with bringing about proper justice, though in their eyes they had legitimate cause, as parading their own power in the wake of the plots and demonstrating their political strength. Patrick McGrath puts it best when talking of the deaths of some of the Catholic and Jesuit priests, 'it is quite true, then, to say that the motives of the government in putting the priests to death were partly political. Their own actions were not political, but they were killed because the government maintained that what they did...would have political consequences.'<sup>166</sup> In this way, we can see a transition from Catholicism being something Protestants are morally against but have to live with at the beginning of the reign, to Catholicism becoming synonymous with treason, and is an excellent example of the rise of anti-Catholicism throughout Elizabeth's reign.

Anti-Catholic rhetoric continued harsher and more frequent than before as 'Elizabeth's government mounted its own propaganda campaign, issuing pamphlets justifying her death and printing correspondence from the Babington plot.'<sup>167</sup> It seemed that the Protestant cause had now well and truly taken hold, and as Patrick McGrath argues:

*'ever since 1559 the Elizabethan government had shown quite clearly that it had no intention of allowing more than one religion to flourish in England. If there had been no threats of invasion and no plots at home, the government would still have reacted vigorously against the revival of Catholicism, for it was determined to insist on religious uniformity.'*<sup>168</sup>

However, the question here is how far would the government have been able to go with this had the plots not taken place and turned Elizabeth more firmly towards favouring

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<sup>165</sup> Cecil, William. (1583). *The execution of iustice in England for maintenaunce of publique and Christian peace, against certeine stirrers of sedition, and adherents to the traytors and enemies of the realme, without any persecution of them for questions of religion, as is falsely reported and published by the fautors and fosterers of their treasons xvii.*

<sup>166</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I.* p. 182.

<sup>167</sup> Doran, (2007). *Mary Queen of Scots: An Illustrated Life.* p. 177.

<sup>168</sup> McGrath, (1967). *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I.* p. 182.

the Protestant cause? Though the government was all too happy to condemn the Catholic people, Elizabeth had demonstrated a level of reserve not found in the government's actions. As discussed earlier, she had vetoed a bill which would result in the persecution of more Catholics, and from the beginning of her reign had been reluctant to partake in the government's schemes for Protestant superiority. Even when the call came for Mary's execution, she was known to have hesitated under the pressure to order her death.<sup>169</sup> However, as the events of the plots against her unfolded, and the threat against her life became more serious and increasingly likely, Elizabeth allowed herself to be persuaded on a number of cases, especially where Mary was concerned. As Susan Doran notes, 'Elizabeth was still trying to avoid an execution, and preferred the warrant not to be used. Her privy councillors, however, had had enough of the queen's nervousness and vacillations,' and by the time the warrant was received, Elizabeth was ready to sign the death order.<sup>170</sup> Another example of this is in the case of Francis Throckmorton, as an author from the time states, 'her Maiestie was iustly and in reason per|swaded to put him to his trial.'<sup>171</sup> It would seem then, that Elizabeth was slowly acquiescing to the demands of her government, and seemingly her mind had now moved on from maintaining a balance between religions, to at least regulating her government but not overruling them all together. No doubt this was a result of her personal safety fears, but also the increased threat from the Catholic community every time anti-Catholic polemics increased.

However, without Elizabeth's support in the closing years of her reign, it is doubtful that the government would have gotten as far as they did. At the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth was careful to make sure that her government was kept in check and in line with her own visions for the future, and as we have seen in previous chapters, she was not afraid to oppose them. So, whilst it is true as McGrath states, that even without the plots against

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<sup>169</sup> Doran, (2007). *Mary Queen of Scots: An Illustrated Life*. p. 172.

<sup>170</sup> Doran, (2007). *Mary Queen of Scots: An Illustrated Life*. p. 174.

<sup>171</sup> Q.Z. (1584). *A Discouerie of the treasons practised and attempted against the Queenes Maiestie and the realme, by Francis Throckmorton who was for the same arraigned and condemned in Guyld Hall, in the citie of London, the one and twentie day of May last past.*

Elizabeth, her government would have acted vigorously, it is unlikely that Elizabeth would have reacted in the same way. For one thing, there would be a lot less solid ground on which to charge Catholic subjects, and for another, the work that the plots did in changing Elizabeth's attitude towards her Catholic subjects would not have taken place, and it is therefore unlikely that Elizabeth's opinion would have been changed in favour of her government any more than it was at the beginning of the reign.

The fact remains however, that the plots *did* happen, and Elizabeth's outlook *did* change. And for the Protestant cause, they considered themselves to be unbeatable now, and considered the Protestant church to be well and truly established in England. Richard Crompton captures the mood entirely when, In the same year as Mary's death, he wrote, 'If euer Kingdome were blessed, if euer Nation enjoyed happy dayes, if euer people liued in a golden age, surelie this is that Kingdome, we are that Nation, and we are that people.'<sup>172</sup>

### ***The End of an Era: Catholicism in the Last Years of Elizabeth's Reign***

As the end of Elizabeth's reign drew near, Protestant motives were now clear, and their attempts at driving Catholicism out were producing results. Catholic hopes were beginning to wane. There was no danger of anti-Catholicism dying out, in fact, it was further enforced. A number of Parliaments were called to session following the plots against Elizabeth, religion was discussed in nearly all of them, though famously during one Parliament of 1584 Elizabeth expressed grievance at the continued discussion of religion, and decreed that it be stopped for the remaining duration of that Parliament.<sup>173</sup> It was not

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<sup>172</sup> Crompton, R. (1587). *A short declaration of the ende of traytors, and false conspirators against the state & of the duetie of subiectes to theyr soueraigne governour: and wythall, howe necessarie, lawes and execution of iustice are, for the preservation of the prince and common wealth. Wherein are also breefely touched, sundry offences of the S. Queene, co[m]mitted against the crowne of this land, & the manner of the honorable proceding for her conuiction thereof, and also the reasons & causes alledged & allowed in Parliament, why it was thought dangerous to the state, if she should haue liued.*

<sup>173</sup> History of Parliament Online. (updated 2017). *5th Parliament of Elizabeth I, 27 Eliz. I.* Retrieved from <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/parliament/1584>.

until the later Parliaments that religion really came to be discussed with any real bearing, and in 1593 the final blow emerged for Catholics in England This took the form of a bill 'that exceeded in its ferocity all previous anti-Catholic laws.'<sup>174</sup> The Popish Recusant Act of 1593 was unlike anything that had ever been seen in England and contained harsh penalties for Catholics if they did not obey the strict order that it set out. These orders included 'confiscating the lands and goods of convicted Catholic recusants, barring them from public office, and committing their children into wardship' and it was further proposed 'to extend certain penalties to any other non-conformists.'<sup>175</sup>As Arnold Meyer states, 'the provisions of this law show the unbounded mistrust with which the English government regarded everything Romish,' and whilst this is certainly true in the written word of the act itself, as we have seen previously in Elizabeth's reign, it would be the enforcement of this Act which would decide to what extent it affected the religious face of England in the closing stages of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>176</sup>

The Act had in it some very harsh standards for the Catholic community to adhere to, a testament to the now thriving anti-Catholic polemics that swept through England in the aftermath of the plots against Elizabeth's life, and is an excellent example of how anti-Catholicism became more overtly apparent in the legislation put out by government. Where previously Catholic recusancy had only been touched upon, or vaguely referenced, now it was openly and viciously attacked. For one thing, Catholics over the age of sixteen were bidden to return to their place of birth (i.e. where their mothers and fathers resided) and once there, were only allowed to move within a five-mile radius of that place.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, Protestants took over the teaching of the Catholic people's children, indoctrinating them with the Protestant ways, a clear attempt at stamping out Catholicism

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<sup>174</sup> Morey, (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. p. 70.

<sup>175</sup> History of Parliament Online. (updated 2017). *8th Parliament of Queen Elizabeth, 35 Eliz. I*. Retrieved from <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/parliament/1593>.

<sup>176</sup> Meyer, (1967). *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*. p. 150.

<sup>177</sup> Hanover Historical Texts Project. (2001). *The Act Against Recusants (1593), 35 Elizabeth, Cap. 2*. Retrieved from <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er87.html>.

all together. Even further to that, a stipulation of the act was directed against the Catholic clergy, stating:

*And be it further enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that if any person which shall be suspected to be a Jesuit, seminary or massing priest, being examined by any person having lawful authority in that behalf to examine such person which shall be so suspected, shall refuse to answer directly and truly whether he be a Jesuit, or a seminary or massing priest, as is aforesaid, every such person so refusing to answer shall for his disobedience and contempt in that behalf, be committed to prison...<sup>178</sup>*

The Catholic faith was well and truly under direct attack. And whilst the Elizabethan government did not succeed in eradicating all traces of Catholicism from England in the sixteenth century, Catholic morale was at an all-time low, and hopes of a rebellion were very distant dreams. Arnold Meyer captures the mood at the time of the 1593 recusancy act when he states 'Catholics who were not among the first to suffer, lived in daily dread that it would soon be their turn, and felt no security in their possessions.'<sup>179</sup> Even now, with no threat of rebellion or plots against the queen, the Protestant government and Elizabeth were persecuting Catholics on a scale bigger than had been previously experience in Elizabeth's reign, 'every Catholic was suspected of being an enemy of his country and was treated accordingly.'<sup>180</sup> As Meyer rightly observes, the government measures put in place 'cannot be attributed to panic caused by pressing danger,' because there was no threat anymore. The Protestant government were seemingly persecuting Catholics for their own enjoyment by this point in the reign.

The Protestant community was surer than ever of its position as the now dominant and unwavering religion in England, and had even turned back to fully supporting the actions of Elizabeth now that Catholicism had been battered to the ground, all previous worries of the queen's sex and abilities were no longer a problem.<sup>181</sup> This Protestant dominance had now set the tone for the rest of Elizabeth's reign.

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<sup>178</sup> Hanover Historical Texts Project. (2001). *The Act Against Recusants (1593)*, 35 Elizabeth, Cap. 2. Retrieved from <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er87.html>.

<sup>179</sup> Meyer, (1967). *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*. p. 169.

<sup>180</sup> Meyer, (1967). *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*. p. 169.

<sup>181</sup> Haigh, C. (1988). *Profiles in Power: Elizabeth I* (4th ed.). New York: Longman Inc. p. 23.

Though there were still discussions of religion within Parliament, it was nothing like the scale that was seen in the early 1590s, and the religious state of England continued in much the same vein for the remaining years of Elizabeth's reign, this is perfectly summed up in an assessment made by the online History of Parliament, where it states, 'while it would be inaccurate to state that religion declined in importance during Elizabeth's later Parliaments, there was a reduction in drama associated with religious debates towards the end of the reign.'<sup>182</sup>

In summation, the Papal Bull of 1570 began a build-up of anti-Catholicism within the government and within Elizabeth herself that would ultimately lead to the unjust suppression of all Catholics in England, and was a major turning point in Elizabeth's reign, as it now gave validation to the Protestant argument that Catholics were the proponents of the ultimate sin against the Church of England. In a way, from the abhorrent timing of the Bull itself, to the reactions of the Catholic conspirators against the bills produced in direct reactions against Elizabeth's excommunication, Pope Pius and those highest up in the Catholic order, like the Jesuits and Catholic missionaries, were the orchestrators of their own religious downfall. Alongside the failed plots against Elizabeth's life and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots the Protestant cause gained momentum, with the situation in France contributing to mounting tensions in England and serving as an example to the English protestants, and with the eventual support from Elizabeth herself, the Catholic cause was considered well and truly suppressed in England right up until the end of Elizabeth's reign. Though it had not been truly stamped out, Protestants ended Elizabeth's rule full of respect for what she and they had achieved, and their worries that had perpetuated Parliamentary discussions at the beginning of her reign were well and truly put to rest as the Protestant community rejoiced in what they thought was victory.

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<sup>182</sup> History of Parliament Online. (Update 2017). *Religious Debates in the Elizabethan Parliaments*. Retrieved from <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/periods/tudors/religious-debates-elizabethan-parliaments>.



Upon Elizabeth's death no-one knew what the future of English religion would be, or indeed the future of the reformation itself. There was some hope, however, as her successor, James I, was raised a Protestant, just like Elizabeth. For the Protestants who lived through both of these monarch's reigns it was a victory. No-one could have foreseen the plots and turmoil which would come to hinder James' rule, and without the benefit of hindsight, Protestants across England could, for now, be safe in the knowledge that Catholicism was no longer a threat. They had achieved what they had set out to do, and it would take a number of years for Catholicism to recover from the vicious onslaught experienced at the hands of Elizabeth's government, and later Elizabeth herself.

## Conclusion

The English Reformation as a whole was a long and intense process mainly due to frequent changes in religious attitudes with almost every new monarch. The struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism was a characteristic of so many of these reigns, but under Elizabeth I the relationship between Catholics and Protestants experienced extreme turbulence, and it is because of this turbulence that toleration became a key consideration in the researching of this thesis. The turbulence, an after effect of Henry VIII's rule, meant that under Elizabeth's rule England experienced staunch opposition towards the government, and several notable plots against Elizabeth's life. It was the events of Elizabeth's tumultuous reign, and how they shaped religion in England in the latter half of the sixteenth century, that became the focal point of this thesis.

Throughout this thesis, Elizabeth's reign has been examined with a view to evaluating the initial reactions towards Catholics and Catholicism at the beginning of Elizabeth's rule compared to attitudes at the end of the reign. Firstly, we set out to discover the extent to which anti-Catholicism changed within Elizabeth England, and secondly, we aimed to demonstrate how Elizabeth's own motivations changed as her reign progressed.

Anti-Catholicism was of particular interest as the subject of this thesis due to the lack of published works relating solely to the progress of anti-Catholic rhetoric during Elizabeth's reign. However, it must be recognised that there are many works published on the Elizabethan Reformation, almost all of which touch upon the subject of religion, and it is these such works that have provided the inspiration and building blocks for the arguments that have been presented in this thesis.

Alexandra Walsham, for example, has written extensively on toleration in the early modern period, and it was her ideas of what toleration was that have informed the arguments in all three chapters of this thesis, and her work has provided the parameters on which to judge the rise of anti-Catholicism throughout Elizabeth's reign, due to her

statement that sixteenth century people cannot be judged according to twenty-first century standards.<sup>183</sup>

Through an examination of the legislative measures of Elizabeth's reign we discovered that Elizabeth was lacking a firm stance when it came to religion. Her accession to the throne was surrounded by uncertainty not only regarding religion but also her legitimacy and ability to rule England. Although she had a Protestant upbringing, Elizabeth was never directly anti-Catholic at the beginning of her rule, despite considerable pressure from those closest to her, especially the returning exiles who had so suffered under Mary's rule. The pressure came from the desire of the returning exiles to return England to the definite Protestantism that England had experienced under Edward VI. Unfortunately for Elizabeth, she was taking over a predominantly Catholic country, and any harsh rulings against Catholicism would risk ostracizing herself from a large majority of her subjects.

In our first chapter, an examination of the most important pieces of Elizabethan Legislation was carried out. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were intended to address the issue of religious confusion, but in the end were perceived as too lenient for the most radical amongst the Protestant community, whilst for the rest of the country, including both moderate Protestants and the Catholic community, the Acts still lacked enough clarity for them to be able to truly understand the religious state of England. Elizabeth had gone from inheriting a religiously volatile country, to a thoroughly confused one. If John Neale is to be agreed with here then Elizabeth was now under the influence of the 'Puritan Choir', a collection of radical Protestants intent on influencing the direction of the church and returning England to what they thought it should be, however as already stated this was not the case.<sup>184</sup>

Protestant dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan Settlement, and their attempts to change it, was the first indication of anti-Catholicism in Elizabethan England, and from there it only increased. Neale's interpretation is and outdated one, and there are many indications

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<sup>183</sup> Walsham, A. (2006). *Charitable Hatred*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>184</sup> Neale, J. (1967). *Queen Elizabeth I*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd.

that Elizabeth was not taking notice of the influencers around her, through things such as her refusal to change the Settlement, and the continued inclusion of *some* Catholics at court. So, although anti-Catholicism certainly existed within the government, Elizabeth at this stage was being rather inclusive of both Protestants and Catholics. Nevertheless, anti-Catholic propaganda already existed even at this early stage of the reign, and the publication of documents like John Jewels 'Challenge Sermon' meant that the spread of anti-Catholicism had already begun in England.

The publication of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion was meant to bring about a definite statement of religion, and whilst there was no direct anti-Catholicism within the articles themselves, the fact that they emerged more as a Calvinist document than anything else only helped to further the Protestant cause. Not only that, but it brought about a more Calvinist way of thinking amongst the most radical of Protestants, and since Calvinism is built on beliefs that are directly contradictory to those held by Catholics, it is clear that an even more radical form of anti-Catholicism was born out of the early stages of Elizabeth's reign, though Elizabeth herself was yet to be converted into a directly anti-Catholic monarch. Though not being 'tolerant' by Walsham's standards, Elizabeth was, at this point, certainly being more accommodating of the religion than the Protestant influencers around her would have preferred, and anti-Catholicism was beginning to emerge, especially from within Elizabeth's government.

We then moved on to examine the effects of later legislation in Elizabeth's reign, specifically, the Papal Bull of Excommunication. As it was stated by Adrian Morey, the Papal Bull came at entirely the wrong time for the Catholic community in England, who were now firmly under suspicion from the Elizabethan government and from Elizabeth herself.<sup>185</sup> Not only that, but the compound effects of the plots against Elizabeth's life, and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, meant that Elizabeth now had no choice other than being firm as to her stance towards Catholicism. With Elizabeth's support, the Protestant government now

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<sup>185</sup> Morey, A. (1978). *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*. Guildford, Surrey: George Allen & Unwin.

had all the tools they needed to instigate a harsh anti-Catholic regime in England, persecution rose, and anti-Catholic rhetoric increased dramatically, especially attacks on the pope.

Legislation was particularly important for us to examine in the thesis because it was essentially the law. It was the cause of most of the unrest throughout this period, and had Elizabeth taken a more definite approach to religion at the beginning of her reign, it is unlikely that the 'Elizabethan Reformation' would have taken as long as it did. It would be remiss to say that there would have been no opposition had this been the case, but it may have been a shorter and swifter regime. Legislation throughout Elizabeth's reign became so much harsher as the reign went on, reflecting what we perceive to be her own personal inclinations and reactions to the Catholic dissent in her country.

We then progressed to an examination of the middle years of Elizabeth's reign, with a detailed insight into the written works promoting anti-Catholicism in Elizabeth's reign. John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was the most prolific example of anti-Catholicism to come out of Elizabeth's reign, and was a massive driving force behind the rise in anti-Catholicism after Elizabeth's excommunication. The book was appealed to a Protestant's humanity, and was incredibly accessible, leading to it spreading rapidly across the country and becoming widely successful. The detailed accounts of the deaths of Protestant Martyrs appealed to the emotions of the Protestant public and, as we discovered, prompted many Catholic responses. John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* demonstrates how influential works such as this were. This particular work even had the support of Elizabeth herself, revealing that although Elizabeth had not yet extended to physical persecution of the general Catholic population (save for a few isolated and extreme events) she was certainly amiable to anything which could enable the spread of Protestantism with ease across the country, and in perhaps another indicator of her inherent Protestantism, even though she had yet to make any direct judgement in favour of either religion. Though we now recognise the *Acts and Monuments* as a ferocious piece of propaganda, in Elizabethan England the work was well received, especially amongst Protestants. It played on the desires of the Protestant

population of England and played a monumental part in the rise of anti-Catholicism across the country, urging the immediate suppression of Catholicism.

Although the book was a massive advantage for the Protestant cause after the excommunication, it is clear from its contents that it would have been a popular book with or without the Papal Bull. The Pope's actions only served to concentrate its effects and strengthen the force behind it. This serves to demonstrate how Elizabeth's reign became a snowball of events, building and building upon each other in order to sway England firmly towards virulent anti-Catholicism. For persuasion was the main aim of Foxe's book.

Foxe's work, together with the pamphlets we have examined, such as Robert Abbot's '*A mirroure of popish subtilties*', demonstrate the power of the written word in Elizabethan England. This was a society who were taken in by such things as propaganda within text, and the power that books like Foxe's had was unprecedented, and indeed helped to spur the public on in their anti-Catholic endeavours.

At this point then, Elizabeth and her government were in a strong position, and Elizabeth was beginning to show some anti-Catholic tendencies, especially with the publication of the *Acts and Monuments*. These middle years of Elizabeth's reign demonstrate the snowballing of anti-Catholic rhetoric, and how it built from events of the Catholic's own devises, as they gave Protestants, the government, and Elizabeth herself more and more reasons to suspect people of the Catholic faith. It would only take one more decisive event to bring about abject and harsh punishments against the Catholic community.

In the final chapter of this thesis the violent after effects of Elizabeth's excommunication were highlighted. Plots against Elizabeth's life were now emerging thick and fast, with very serious consequences for those found to be involved. The Ridolfi Plot served to increase Elizabeth's own suspicions of the Catholics, as they now posed a real threat to her life, and especially so since the plot was supported by the Pope. It demonstrated to Elizabeth how firmly Catholic England felt against her, and caused somewhat of an awakening with the Elizabethan ranks. Furthermore, the massacre on St

Bartholomew's day in France, served as a real-life demonstration of the threat Catholics posed to a country. Elizabeth, disgusted by this event as she was, had to temper her reaction due to relations with France. But a massacre this brutal caused outcry within the Protestant community and yet again we saw how virile the Protestant instances of anti-Catholicism became.

The plots of Throckmorton and Babington gave the Protestant cause yet more material with which to charge the Catholic people, and though the plots were thwarted, they brought harsh consequences for the conspirators involved. These plots were demonstrations of Protestant power, and when compared to the early years of Elizabeth's reign, it is clear to see that there has been a drastic change in Protestant attitudes. No more content with arguing over legislative texts, the time for action had come and many Catholics suffered brutal deaths at the hand of their Protestant neighbours, many of whom under orders from Elizabeth herself, Mary Queen of Scots to name one. The plots heightened suspicions and therefore prompted violence and harsh sentences from the Elizabethan regime and showed how anti-Catholicism was no longer confined to the written word, but was now used in demonstrations of power.

It is easy to see then how this surge of Protestant power after the plots helped to secure England as a firmly Protestant country, and how the various events lead to Elizabeth's own mind being changed as a consequence of all the suspicion that arose in this turbulent time. Elizabeth changed from her initial unwillingness to immediately ostracize the Catholic community, to outright authorisation of persecution against them, and whilst this was Elizabeth's decision, there is no doubt that outside pressures also had an influence on this and ultimately pushed Elizabeth into making a decision.

These plots are imperative within this discussion as they display reactions to the most inflammatory events of Elizabeth's rule, and are an important part in the process of growing anti-Catholicism in England. They represent a move from polemical attacks, and propaganda in the written word, to physical horrible violence. Therefore, though they are

perhaps not the most important incidents throughout Elizabeth's time on the throne, their importance cannot be underrated.

Overall then, we have seen the progression of anti-Catholicism over the course of Elizabeth's reign and we have seen how the rhetoric against Catholics was born from dissatisfaction that Elizabeth herself had brought about in her Settlement of Religion right at the beginning of her reign. The point here being, that anti-Catholicism was a gradual process, which ended up being virulent and outright degrading towards the Catholic community in England. By the time the plots against Elizabeth had been thwarted and the new legislative matter brought in at the end of her reign, anti-Catholicism was rife across England, and the Protestant people were firmly in belief that they had succeeded in creating a Protestant England. Elizabeth herself tried hard at the beginning of her reign to remain on cordial terms with both religions, and had succeeded by omission for the first few years of her reign, but as those around her grew ever more anti-Catholic in opinion, so too did she, partly due to the demands of action from the Protestants, but also due to her own rising suspicions of the Catholic community.

We have seen throughout the course of this thesis that anti-Catholicism experienced a huge surge towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, a build-up of thoughts and feelings from the Protestant people that had been slowly developing since the Elizabeth Settlement all those years ago, and was present not only within Elizabeth's government, but also in popular culture, with the publication of books like Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and the harsh legislative measures instigated by Elizabeth at the end of her reign. Anti-Catholicism went through a process of transforming from the written word into physical attacks as a result of the rising tensions after Elizabeth's excommunication, and this is mirrored in Elizabeth herself. We have observed Elizabeth's own personal journey and discovered that had the Catholic people been less violent against her and her government, they may have survived Elizabeth's reign and emerged in a much better shape than they did as a result of their rebellions and plots. Had it not been for these uprisings against Elizabeth, it was likely that she would never have made a definite statement of religion throughout her whole time on



the throne, but ultimately, she was urged to make a decision, a decision she made on her own, that Protestantism was here to stay, at least for the duration of her reign.

Though it was not a wholly peaceful reign, Elizabeth succeeded in keeping Protestants on her side, and until it was demanded of them, the Catholic population even seemed reluctant to move against her. This perhaps demonstrates that above all Elizabeth's reign was a pragmatic one, and though it cannot be said to have been deliberately orchestrated, she stayed true to her own decision, and was not easily swayed by the people around her. That is the reason her reign is so interesting to us as historians, and why Elizabethan religion will be a topic of discussion for a long time to come.

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