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# The Influence of the Reformed Tradition on the Elizabethan Settlement

By LOWELL H. ZUCK

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** This paper was presented at a symposium on the 400th anniversary of the Elizabethan Settlement, sponsored by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, May 9, 1959. The paper of coessayist Prof. Charles F. Mullett of the University of Missouri on the topic "The Elizabethan Settlement and the English Church" was published in this journal, XXX (Sept. 1959), 643 to 658.

**T**HOUGH the Church of England is now well past its 400th birthday, the sources of its distinctive doctrines and polity are still somewhat unclear. If we can agree that the conclusions reached by Queen Elizabeth I and her Parliament of 1559 were basic to the future shape of the Anglican Church, it is natural then to go into an examination of whether the outcome of the settlement depended primarily on Elizabeth, on someone else perhaps, or upon compromise between Elizabeth and her advisers. Needless to say, the still more difficult question of possible divine intervention in human affairs scarcely comes into consideration in the perhaps too mundane presuppositions of ecclesiastical historians. This paper attempts to trace the influence of the continental Reformed tradition upon the celebrated English religious events up to May in the year 1559, and thereby to indicate the importance for the Elizabethan Settlement of radical Protestant influences, which were non-English in their origin and program but which came to be part of the basic design for reform of the Church of England and modified considerably Elizabeth's more tentatively Protestant proposals.

The over-all importance of the Elizabethan Settlement ought not to be denied. The Oxford historian, T. M. Parker, putting it judiciously, says that the accession of Elizabeth is the turning point, though in no sense the terminus, of the Reformation in England.<sup>1</sup> Turning point it was. Never again was England to become officially Catholic, and the unique Anglican Church continued intact from the time of Elizabeth, with constantly growing prestige in English affairs. Yet something must be said on the other side as well. The religious unity of the country had been broken, and it was never again to be restored. The counterattack of Roman Catholics in the 1570s showed that though the traditional church was greatly weakened, the Anglican middle way scarcely satisfied Roman Catholics in England. Moreover, the Tudor attempt to hold together a national Protestant church, completely identified with the English crown and people, broke down in the 17th century in a period of regicide and radical Protestant democracy. The Anglican Church was not very firmly established through much of the 17th century! Neat as Elizabeth's middle way seemed to be, it still tended to splinter into mutually exclusive extremes. Thus we may accept, with some remaining questions, the suitability of the emphatic term "settlement" for the development of ecclesiastical forms in 1559 under the virgin queen.

<sup>1</sup> T. M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558* (London, 1950), p. 172.



It is more difficult to find out what actually did happen in 1559. The source of difficulty lies in the still incomplete evidence, which scarcely enables us to piece together accurately the diverse and obscure attitudes held by the actors in this brief drama or even to know fully what actions were attempted and what results were achieved. The most striking effort at reconstructing the events of the settlement has been that of Sir John Neale in an article in the *English Historical Review* and in his recent work on Elizabeth and her parliaments.<sup>2</sup> There are unsolved problems in Neale's surmises based on tantalizingly incomplete records.

This paper follows roughly the lines of Sir John's effort to reconstruct Elizabeth's compromises with a Parliament advised by divines newly returned from exile under Mary.<sup>3</sup> We wish to show in addition that the recently exiled Protestant preachers without exception followed the radical Protestant party line of the Swiss German and Rhineland Reformers, men of Strassburg, Zurich, Frankfurt, and Geneva who were advocates of what is known to us today as the Reformed tradition in its pristine freshness and radically Biblical form.<sup>4</sup> We shall first consider Elizabeth's

partially favorable attitude toward the new proposals of Reformation as that movement came to bear upon her. Then the events in Parliament leading up to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity will be reviewed, especially as the influence of Reformed divines on the queen and her ministers can be discovered. Finally, an evaluation will be attempted in regard to the over-all effect of the Continental Reformed theology on the Elizabethan Settlement.

## I

THE INFLUENCE OF THE  
REFORMATION ON ELIZABETH

Elizabeth left little doubt upon her accession that she would be a worthy successor to her active, popular, very English father. Her first major effort as monarch, the religious settlement, properly bears her name and shows her influence toward comprehension of competing religious parties. Yet we must not allow the glamour of the age and the patina glowing ever since then around the magic name of Elizabeth to obscure the very real weakness and uncertainty which a doubtfully legitimate girl of 25 faced as she tried to assume the authority of a queen in a masculine and predatory era.

Elizabeth's personal attitude toward religion was obviously important in determining which direction the confused situation in the churches should take. Her personal faith, far more than being a private matter, was bound up with the destiny of the English people. At this point Elizabeth's shrewd instinct for duplicity and

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity," in the *English Historical Review*, LXV (July 1950), 304—332. J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, 1559—81 (London, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> Christine H. Garrett in the *Marian Exiles* (New York, 1938) has traced thoroughly the sojourns of all the English exiles of this period, though she exaggerates their influence as a political party when they returned to England in 1558.

<sup>4</sup> Though the influence of John Calvin and Geneva on these men was great, they did not mention Calvin as often as we should expect. Correspondence with him was scarce, nor did

they wish to be regarded as "Calvinists." Perhaps Calvin's influence, then, was not quite so overwhelming as it appears to us from a longer historical perspective.



vagueness on confessional matters came into conflict with the necessity for some kind of religious program which would be definite enough to establish a permanent national religious policy. In the end her religious settlement combined inward ambiguity in regard to personal belief with a demand for outward conformity. It is easy therefore to emphasize so strongly Elizabeth's political motivations in religious matters that her own faith vanishes. To be sure, her own religious attitude was anything but fanatical. No bloody Mary she, nor a hot Calvinist either!

Yet every factor in her background and situation indicates that Elizabeth's turn toward a Protestant solution involved a decision of faith and not only political calculation. It is important to point out that though she exerted a predominant influence upon the Reformation in England, the Reformation in England and abroad also had a significant impact upon her. That is, Elizabeth's political calculations had to be worked out to accord with her personal faith, which was Protestant, and at the same time the authority behind the program of religious Reformation would at times at least loom larger for her than merely the question of her personal dislikes and desires. It is not precisely true that her birth condemned her to be either Protestant or bastard, as if no personal choices were involved in maintaining her Protestant faith. That little matter might have been set straight had she made her peace with Rome. (The Protestants of course had had equal or greater difficulty over marital problems of princes.) Practically speaking, Elizabeth was the only living descendant of King Henry, and beyond her lay civil war. England was panic-

stricken at the time of her accession. The Scots were coming. The French were coming. The Roman Church supported the claim of both enemies that Elizabeth's cousin, Mary of Scotland, was rightful heir to the English throne. These factors might well have predisposed Elizabeth toward Protestantism for her own protection. Yet if Protestantism were to become a lost cause in the Netherlands, France, Scotland, and Spain, which looked very likely, it would scarcely be politic for Elizabeth to play for the wrong team in England. Her option for Protestantism greatly influenced further developments, but she would not have made the choice for the new church had not the Reformation movement exerted a prevailing influence through her education, environment, and orientation toward God, self, and world.

The early education of Elizabeth was entirely in the hands of bright young radical Protestant humanists from Cambridge, whose enthusiasm must have been contagious. Her first surviving letter, written at 10, reveals already her radical preference for the Italian language, which was to accompany her throughout life. Later more than one Catholic clergyman remarked at her ignorance of Catholic theology, while showing irritation at her friendship for "heretic Italian friars," no doubt referring to Peter Martyr Vermigli and Bernardino Ochino, both Italian Protestants, professors in England during Cranmer's regime and favorites of Elizabeth.<sup>5</sup> Under William Grindall, a Protestant tutor, Elizabeth translated Margaret of Navarre's "Miroir de l'âme pécheresse" ("Mirror of a sinful

<sup>5</sup> F. W. Maitland, "The Anglican Settlement and the Scottish Reformation," in the *Cambridge Modern History*, II, 563.



soul"), the work of that remarkable sister of King Francis I of France, who aided John Calvin and the French Reformation in its first stirrings. Until she was 15 years old, Roger Ascham, the foremost English Protestant humanist, perfected Elizabeth's training by beginning her mornings with the study of the Greek New Testament supplemented by Cyprian and Melancthon's *Loci communes*, which thoroughly grounded her in the methods and conclusions of the Continental Protestant theologians.<sup>6</sup> Ascham noted with pride to a Protestant friend in Strassburg that Elizabeth at 16 was eagerly making progress in the study of true religion and learning. She continued to read Greek with Ascham after her accession to the throne. Like her father, Elizabeth was proud of her achievements in theology. In a speech before Parliament in 1566, defending herself against critics who thought her indifferent to religion, she retorted with "It is said I am no divine. Indeed, I studied nothing else but divinity till I came to the crown."<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the Protestant leanings of the humanist scholars the wider environment around Elizabeth at her accession was definitely Protestant, including her councilors, the divines who had access to her, and the populace of London. The early appointment of Sir William Cecil and Sir Nicholas Bacon as Elizabeth's chief councilors

suggested a coming Protestant vogue, while clerical refugees flocked back from Frankfurt, Zurich, Strassburg, and Geneva with hopes high. During a pageant in her coronation procession, Elizabeth kissed an English Bible presented to her by a dressed-up allegorical figure who stated that this book taught the way to bring a commonwealth from a decayed to a flourishing state. At the concluding pageant, where she was greeted as Deborah, "the judge and restorer of the House of Israel," a child bade her good-bye in the following words:

Farewell, O worthy Queen! and as our hope is sure

That into error's place thou wilt now truth restore,

So trust we that thou wilt our Sovereign Queen endure,

And loving Lady stand, from henceforth evermore.

Elizabeth responded enthusiastically, "Be ye well assured I will stand your good Queen."<sup>8</sup> Again, though it may have been merely for effect, when Elizabeth met the abbot and monks of Westminster, with candles burning in broad daylight on the way to the opening of Parliament, she said: "Away with those torches! We can see well enough."<sup>9</sup>

Thus it seems fair to maintain that, in spite of Elizabeth's mocking tone on religious questions, her understanding of God, self, and the world was rather sincerely Protestant, of that mild and humanistic Melancthonian type which had not yet succumbed under either the dogmatic blows of the epigoni attempting to out-Luther Luther or under the manifestoes of the hard-nosed Puritans, ready to smash

<sup>6</sup> J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I: A Biography* (New York, 1957), p. 14. Erasmus, the great prince of humanists, exerted a significant influence on both the Continental Reformed and Anglican reformers, though his views had become subordinated to a more partisan reforming zeal by 1559.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England: True Religion Now Established*, III (London, 1954), 155.

<sup>8</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I: A Biography*, pp. 62, 63.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.



every indication of beauty or compromise. Elizabeth's courtesy toward mild Lutherans in Germany shows that it was the accommodating side of the Reformation which she favored rather than the advocates of unbending rigidity. She wrote on Feb. 6 to the agent of the Lutheran duke of Württemberg in South Germany that "she has no intention of departing from that mutual agreement of Christian churches, amongst which that of Augsburg appears to be the most weighty."<sup>10</sup> To be sure, she could be equally polite to the Spanish ambassador, Count de Feria, telling him at the end of April that she wished the Augustana Confession to be maintained in her realm and adding that "it would not be the Augustanean Confession, but something else like it, and that she differed very little from us [that is, from the Roman Catholic view], as she believed that God was in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and only dissented from three or four things in the Mass."<sup>11</sup> Sir John Neale maintains that far from being diplomatic prevarication, this was a *cri de coeur*. These two statements are consistent, showing politeness toward the Catholic position but at the same time remaining precisely, firmly, and respectfully Protestant. Moreover, her support of the Augsburg Confession does not necessarily indicate a preference on the part of Elizabeth for what was coming to be known as the Lutheran over against the Reformed position.<sup>12</sup> It was the rigid Lu-

therans who were to reject Melancthon, the author of the Augsburg Confession, not the Reformed divines, as the derogatory tag "crypto-Calvinist," hung on the Melancthonians by the gnesio-Lutherans, also indicates. Now this is not to say that Elizabeth liked Puritan extremes, into which the Reformed party fell on the other side of Lutheran formalism. Rather the Bucer-Melancthon-Bullinger viewpoint, South German and Swiss in geographical origin or locale, was the mild Protestant position which Elizabeth followed, and its proper theological family name is "Reformed."<sup>13</sup>

## II

### THE INFLUENCE OF REFORMED THEOLOGY ON PARLIAMENT DURING PASSAGE OF THE RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENT

So far we have been indicating the marked influence of the Reformed party on Elizabeth's religious views. This does not mean, however, that her own proposed program for religious settlement would have shown much Reformed influence, had not the advice of her councilors and the pressure of Parliament forced her further along the road to Reformation radicalism. To be sure, we are on insecure ground here. We know the shape of the acts of supremacy and uniformity as finally passed

logical rigidity, which was reproduced in the Elizabethan Settlement. He was, of course, a great Lutheran also. His influence on England ought not to be overemphasized, but Lutheran influence on England ought not be overlooked either.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Bucer, who died as a professor in exile at Cambridge in 1551, aided Cranmer in liturgical innovation to the degree that the first *Book of Common Prayer* has been described as little more than a translation of Bucer's Cologne liturgy into English. His *De regno Christi* of 1551 was a blueprint for a Christian welfare state and influenced Elizabethan poor laws.

<sup>10</sup> Foreign Calendar, *Elizabeth I*, ed. J. S. Stevenson, pp. 115—116, quoted in Neale, *English Historical Review*, LXV (July 1950), 318.

<sup>11</sup> Spanish Calendar, *Elizabeth I*, ed. M. S. Hume, pp. 51—62, quoted in Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Melancthon is here included in the Reformed tradition because of his lack of theo-



by Parliament. There are some scattered records of Parliamentary procedures along with the diaries and letters of foreign diplomats. The two-volume translation of the "Zurich Letters," done a century ago by the Parker Society, is an additional collection adding documentary support to what precisely is the point of this paper.<sup>14</sup> Yet all of this evidence together is incomplete and indecisive. The question of just how the settlement was settled remains somewhat unsettled. A venture of interpretation necessarily follows. We might well, then, point up how pressure was exerted upon Elizabeth by her councilors and Parliament for a more thorough Reformation of the church, while the queen showed increasing irritation with Protestants, though she compromised grudgingly in their direction, and the pastors back from exile hovered uneasily in the background while waiting for preferment and offering significant advice.

Sir John Neale's hypothesis is most interesting at this point. He tries to prove that at first Elizabeth intended nothing more than a Supremacy Bill, which would maintain the old Catholic order of service, modified only by the sop of Communion in both kinds for Protestants. According to Sir John, Elizabeth imitated her father's policy, hoping to keep some of the accommodating Marian bishops and saving herself from undue dependence on the enthusiastic and demanding Protestant divines. Yet her Parliament was surprisingly Protestant in sentiment, with "at least 12 and probably 16 returned exiles in the house, including Sir Anthony Cooke (father-in-

law of Sir William Cecil, her chief minister), and Sir Nicholas Bacon, a man whom Sir Nicholas Throckmorton had suggested to the Queen as a possible Lord Chancellor; and Sir Francis Knollys, whose wife was the Queen's cousin, who had been appointed Vice-Chamberlain and Privy Councillor on January 14, always a godly, outspoken Puritan. Each was impatient of playing mere politics over religious causes."<sup>15</sup> Neale estimates that at least 100 out of a total of 404 members of Parliament sympathized with the *émigrés* and that the house went full cry after its radical leaders. A Puritan account a bit later pinpoints the temper of this time, telling us that "in the beginning of her Majesty's reign a number of worthy men . . . desired such a book and such order for the discipline of the Church as they had seen in the best-reformed Churches abroad."<sup>16</sup> The "best-reformed Churches" were those of the Swiss and South German pattern. The Zurich Letters indicate the progress of the Supremacy Bill through Parliament. On Feb. 12 Sir Anthony Cooke wrote to Peter Martyr in Zurich that he had presented personally to the queen the letters of the theologians Martyr and Bullinger and that Sir William Cecil had reported that the queen was so affected from reading them that she wept. These tears may well have been sincere, since she suggested that Martyr and Bullinger be invited to return to England. Cooke went on to report to Zurich that "we are now busy in parliament . . . expelling the tyranny of the

<sup>15</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, I, 57.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77. Note the discussion of Puritanism in the Elizabethan Settlement in M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago, 1939), pp. 163—187.

<sup>14</sup> *The Zurich Letters*, trans. H. Robinson for the Parker Society (Cambridge, England, 1846), two volumes.



Pope, restoring the royal authority, and re-establishing true religion." He added, however, that they were moving too slowly, noting the opposition of the Roman Catholic bishops in Parliament, yet "the zeal of the Queen is very great, the activity of the nobility and people is also great. . . . The result of this meeting of Parliament will, so far as I can judge, confirm my hope."<sup>17</sup>

Richard Hilles, member of Parliament from London, wrote Bullinger late in February that precise liturgical forms had not yet been determined. He reported that Catholic preachers had been silenced, while the Gospellers were allowed to preach before the queen herself during Lent, proving their doctrines from Holy Scriptures.<sup>18</sup> The general expectation is, he said, that all rites will shortly be reformed in Parliament either after the pattern used in the time of King Edward VI or according to that set forth by the Protestant princes of Germany in the Augsburg Confession. This latter possibility displeased Bullinger, who thought it not quite worthy of "purer churches." One can detect the sound of Elizabeth's feet dragging at this point. In the meantime, Feb. 21, the Supremacy Bill re-emerged from committee with more radical features than Hilles indicates.<sup>19</sup> It now included the 1552 Prayer Book and the Edwardian act of permitting marriage of clergy, not so radical as the worship of Frankfurt or Geneva but more Protestant than the queen desired, since it moved beyond supremacy toward uniformity.

By Feb. 27 another bill was introduced in Commons "for making of ecclesiastical

laws by 32 persons," evidently an effort to draw up a reformed body of church law to replace the Catholic canon law, like that produced earlier by Cranmer's commissioners. It quickly passed the Commons but died in the Upper House, no doubt under instructions from the government. Also the Lords, influenced by their Catholic bishops, were busy at this time trimming out objectionable Protestant features from the Supremacy Bill, and on March 17 the Commons, dissatisfied with delay, introduced and passed another bill that "no persons should be punished for using the religion used in King Edward's last year."<sup>20</sup> The intent of this bill was that if the Lords would deny uniformity on the basis of Edward's second Prayer Book, the Commons would retaliate by demanding non-conformity on the same basis.

On March 20 the radical Protestant preachers emerged at last into prominence, ready to plead their cause before Parliament in the Colloquy of Westminster. John Jewel wrote excitedly to Peter Martyr at Zurich that nine of his ministerial associates—Cox, Sandys, Grindal, Horne, Aylmer, Scory, Whitehead, Guest, and himself—were to confer before the council and Parliament with five opposing bishops on the 31st.<sup>21</sup> At this point the clerical influence behind the Protestant reforms is evident. All nine of the Protestant divines had been in exile, except Guest, and six, seven with Guest, were shortly to be made new bishops by Elizabeth and the government. It is not likely that the interest of the government in this disputation was impartial. Philip Hughes, in his able Catholic work, maintains that "none of the

<sup>17</sup> *Z. L.*, II, 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, I, 59.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> *Z. L.*, I, 10.



exiles had any share in framing the new government order except those whom the government chose to call in as technical, liturgical experts."<sup>22</sup> One can quote against this the usually reliable testimony of the contemporary Catholic Mantuan agent in London, Il Schifanoja, who wrote that "the bishops are . . . attacked by the modern preachers, one of whom, who is their scribe, and a member of parliament, threatened that if things do not pass according to their will, he and his brethren, who call themselves ministers of Christ, will return to Geneva."<sup>23</sup> This emphasis upon Geneva accords exactly with the brief statement of the clerk of the House of Commons, who noted rather inexactly the disputation between the bishops and "Mr. Horne, Mr. Cox, and other Englishmen that came from Geneva."<sup>24</sup> Englishmen from Geneva indeed! Though none of them had come from that citadel of reform, the reforms of the "Englishmen from Geneva" were having their day. A more exact statement of the theological pedigree of the returned divines would be that of John Jewel writing to Peter Martyr on April 28: "We have exhibited to the Queen all our articles of religion and doctrine, and have not departed in the slightest degree from the confession of Zurich."<sup>25</sup> The disputation in itself amounted to little since the Catholic bishops would not dispute, and the Protestants had to settle for the superior advantage derived from dislike of Catholic obstinacy rather than having the opportunity to rejoice in that victory in open

dispute which the Protestants so much desired. At any rate, the Westminster Colloquy provided the occasion for Protestant religious propaganda which the divines had longed for to help launch their settlement.

At this point again, the queen's desires intervened in the settlement, as Neale's reconstruction points out. On March 22, with the Supremacy Bill past the Lords at last, the queen issued a proclamation announcing passage of the Act of Supremacy "in the present last session of Parliament." Since it was so close to Easter that copies of the bill could not be printed in time, the proclamation added that the Edwardian statute prescribing Communion in both kinds was to be in effect for Easter, "according to the first institution and to the common use both of the Apostles and the Primitive Church." The language of this no doubt pleased the radicals, but it blasted their hopes for uniformity and a prayer book in the first session of Parliament. Neale makes much of the fact that Elizabeth changed her mind two days later, on Good Friday, March 24, deciding instead to adjourn Parliament over Easter, until April 3, rather than to have its sessions end.<sup>26</sup>

Here was a break for the radical Protestants. Elizabeth suddenly had shown greater favor than previously toward their zeal for immediate reform and settlement. The reason seems to have been less the persuasiveness of Protestant propaganda on the queen than the renewed confidence which Elizabeth gained from news of peace with the French abroad. This news of the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis had reached her on Palm Sunday (March 19), and with

<sup>22</sup> Hughes, III, 146.

<sup>23</sup> Venetian Calendar, VII, 52—53, quoted in Neale, *E. H. R.*, LXV (July 1950), 322.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Z. L.*, I, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, I, 69.



less fear of Catholic interference abroad she may have decided that it was now prudent to risk immediate Catholic displeasure over religious reform at home, rather than to threaten her popularity with the radicals for the sake of mere prudence alone. Good evidence for this explanation is in a letter of Edmund Grindal, subsequently the puritanical archbishop of Canterbury, to Conrad Hubert in Strassburg, dated May 23. Grindal wrote: "We found our church miserably torn in pieces, and all but overthrown. We were indeed urgent from the very first, that a general reformation should take place. But the parliament long delayed the matter, and made no change whatever, until a peace had been concluded between the sovereigns, Philip, the French king, and ourselves."<sup>27</sup> Then Grindal went on to describe details of the settlement.

When Parliament reconvened after the Easter recess, Elizabeth found that the radical party, encouraged again, was pushing her farther than she wanted to go toward reform. The clearest evidence of struggle between the queen and Parliament lies in the fact that the third Supremacy Bill, passed after Easter in order to substitute "Supreme Governor" for "Supreme Head" of the Church, still contained the clause about Communion in both kinds, a dead giveaway that the government feared that the queen and the Protestant divines would not be able to agree over the Prayer Book. If no Prayer Book emerged, the Supremacy Bill would still provide for Protestant Communion in both kinds, where Elizabeth had started. The fact also that the Communion clause in a later case was taken out and inserted into a third, separate bill to be

added to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity in the Irish Supremacy Act supports this view strongly.<sup>28</sup>

The bargaining over what form the Prayer Book was to take touched the very sensitive issues dividing Protestants from one another and from Catholics over the Eucharist. In her letter to Feria, which we quoted earlier, Elizabeth states her preference for what must have been the first Edwardian Prayer Book of 1549. Her reasoning was clear: this would coincide with her conservatism on the Eucharist, it would mollify Catholics at home, and it would strengthen English ties with Lutherans abroad. Without doubt, the radical Protestant party just would not consider accepting Edward's first Prayer Book, with its strong statement of the Real Presence and prayers for the dead. If she wanted Parliament to agree on a Uniformity Act, Elizabeth now found it absolutely necessary to accept at least part of the second Prayer Book of 1552, with its Calvinist and Zwinglian memorial views on the Eucharist. She compromised. An agreement was reached — a new Prayer Book emerged and with it the Act of Uniformity. It looks like another easy Elizabethan compromise, where, for example, the Lutheran or even Catholic statement of presentation of the Eucharist, from the first Prayer Book, simply precedes that of the contradictory Zwinglian statement of the second Prayer Book. Yet in compromising the queen had given up the most, and she surely did not forget it.<sup>29</sup> The Protestant party had got

<sup>28</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, I, 76.

<sup>29</sup> Additional evidence of Elizabeth's compromise is in the wording of the first paragraph of the Act of Uniformity, which indicates a preference for the second Prayer Book of Edward,

<sup>27</sup> *Z. L.*, II, 19.



the statements it demanded, and the queen had begun to feel the unbending rigidity of the Puritans. She had inserted, however, a proviso of her own which was to produce the controversial *Ornaments Rubric* and set off the initial battle of Puritanism over the *Vestiarian Controversy*.<sup>30</sup> Neither side at that time saw in this ambiguous statement the cloud smaller than a man's hand, which was to storm around the heads of Elizabeth's successors.

There were nine lay votes against the Uniformity Bill in the House of Lords on April 19 in addition to the nine clerical votes against, an indication that there was feeling among the more conservative Lords that Elizabeth had been outmaneuvered by the Protestant radicals. On May 8 Parliament met for the closing ceremonies of the session, with Sir Nicholas Bacon's speech expressing the queen's earnest desire that the new laws of religion be obeyed.<sup>31</sup>

If Elizabeth had waited longer to try to pass a Uniformity Act, she might not have succeeded in reaching a comprehensive solution, which she most desired. She realized how volatile the Protestants were. Yet we must not falsely construct an irreconcilable Puritan party in England this early. To be sure the Zurich letters show Protestant disillusionment before long. John Jewel complained that "we are not consulted," and he regretted that appointments to bishoprics were proceeding slowly.<sup>32</sup> Bishop Grindal remembered in 1566 that from the very beginning of the settlement he

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against Elizabeth's wishes. See Henry Gee and William Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London, 1914), p. 458.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>31</sup> Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments*, I, 81.

<sup>32</sup> *Z. L.*, I, 23.

and his associates were unable to persuade the queen or Parliament to remove "the offending ceremonies."<sup>33</sup> As early as May 22 John Jewel wrote to Bullinger in Zurich with a trace of defensiveness in referring to Bullinger's exhortation that Jewel and his friends should act with great firmness and resolution. None of these men criticized the queen. Jewel said, "We have a wise and religious queen, and one who is favourably and propitiously disposed toward us."<sup>34</sup> At the same time he assured Bullinger that Bullinger's own letters and exhortations had contributed powerfully to the religious settlement. Jewel was bitter rather toward those in the government who were hindering the progress of the Protestants and to his former friends who had gone over to the opposite party. He did not show the slightest irritation towards the queen. Thus the Elizabethan Settlement embodied a considerable proportion of the Reformed theological program, yet in its more comprehensive design it had not chilled the loyalty of the radical Protestant divines toward their good Queen Bess.

### III

#### CONCLUSIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF CONTINENTAL REFORMED THEOLOGY ON THE ELIZABETHAN SETTLEMENT

A concluding estimate of the over-all effect of the Continental Reformed theology on the Elizabethan Settlement is in order. An historical interpretation from a Christian perspective ought to attempt to add something to an accurate description of the motives, accomplishments, and theological prejudices of the Elizabethan Settlement. We wish to emphasize that the

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 33.



religious factors involved in the settlement have a deeper basis than many interpreters allow. It is easy, too easy, to find support in Elizabeth's politique tendencies for the superficial view that religious affirmations are merely masks to cover strivings for petty political and economic self-aggrandizement, which can hypocritically assume high status by making moral and religious statements. Yet we here have not gone beyond stating that religious affirmations are important and that they ought to be taken seriously if any true historical picture is to result. Also, we do not intend to go into the difficult issue of whether and how divine providence can be detected and described in specific historic events, though this theological problem is very important and interesting. Perhaps historians are not properly equipped for this task. But if so, it is better for us to state this limitation humbly than to assume lightheartedly that the issue is meaningless.

Having restated a rather mild religious presupposition for this paper, we can best conclude by quickly summarizing the underlying religious tone of the Elizabethan Settlement, into which the influence of Reformed theology fits. Throughout the countryside at least, Englishmen preserved a still powerful Catholic tradition for which the queen, with her crosses and candlesticks and aversion to clerical marriage, also had respect. Real changes were still slow in coming, and the majority of parish priests mixed up Catholic and Protestant practices rather badly. Queen Elizabeth, however, was especially appreciative of the Continental Lutheran position on the Real Presence in the Eucharist (which Melancthon had compromised somewhat), and she could scarcely disapprove of the Lutheran

insistence on political loyalty to princes. Her Melancthonian education increased her understanding of the spiritual penetration of the Germans, if only they steered away from bullheadedness and excessive dogmatism. Elizabeth's first archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, agreed with her at this point. In spite of its external similarities to the Anglican Church, however, Lutheranism has been negligible in England from the time of Elizabeth until the present, and even Americans have understood Luther better than Englishmen.<sup>35</sup>

The Anglican Church was, of course, new, middle way, combining a great deal of Catholic practice with the learned and sensible secular nationalism of the Renaissance, and with much Lutheran and Reformed theology from abroad, tastefully diluted for Englishmen. We have not done justice to the genius of the Anglican Church in this paper, since our concern with influences makes the Church of England seem derivative. Much more could be said about the distinctiveness of the Anglican way.

However, like Englishmen generally, who distrust too great ideological consistency, Elizabeth and her advisers turned the derivativeness of the Anglican Church from a weakness to its chief strength.

<sup>35</sup> With Rupp, Watson, and Atkinson this particular English obtuseness shows signs of change right now, though only the last is an Anglican. For a sample of more recent English work on the Continental Reformers see the account by Rupp on Luther and the German Reformation in the *New Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge, 1958), II, ch. 3. Lutheran influence on England was more marked in the (earlier) Ten Articles of 1536, written at the time when Henry VIII was courting Lutheran princes abroad. By 1559 German influence had waned somewhat in England.



A church which seeks to be a bridge must necessarily select its building materials from both sides of the chasm to be bridged, and on the Protestant side of the chasm the steel of the radical Reformed tradition was more easily available. The final and most significant theological factor in the Elizabethan Settlement, then, is the Reformed influence. Since the Reformed were the most extreme Protestants respectable enough to be considered at that time, Elizabeth naturally distrusted them, as she did the Catholics at the other extreme. Ideologically, however, and in practice it was the Continental Reformed theologians who were leading what might be called the Protestant Internationale, and Elizabeth and her advisers followed at a distance, knowing that they would have to rely for support more and more in England on the Protestant party. To be sure, the Church of England developed unique elements.

Yet it was the virile novelty and theological power of the Continental Reformed tradition, above all, which laid the foundations for the Elizabethan Settlement. In spite of her hesitation, Elizabeth had to admit that the Reformed theological tradition was the most lively contender for influence in her settlement. Through that settlement England became the foremost Protestant power in Europe, to which Continental Protestantism was to look for support during the centuries to come. As we have seen, the basis for that settlement lay in the incompletely realized and modified program of the Bucer-Melanchthon-Bullinger movement, representative of the leading theologians of the Swiss and Rhineland Reformed tradition. The Continental Reformed theology exerted as much influence upon the Elizabethan Settlement as the great queen herself.

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